PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 130

HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1987-88

COMPRISING PERIOD
21 MARCH—31 MARCH 1988

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£65 net

HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP, JUNE 1987)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS—The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
LORD CHANCELLOR—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EMPLOYMENT—The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT—The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER AND MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ENERGY—The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP

LAW OFFICERS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
LORD ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC

MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE, (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development—Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Lord Glenarthur
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, HOME OFFICE—
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
John Patten, Esq, MP
Tim Renton, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, WELSH OFFICE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE—
Minister of State for the Armed Forces—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
Minister of State for Defence Procurement—The Lord Trefgarne
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT—John Cope, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT—
Minister for Housing and Planning—The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water—The Earl of Caithness
Minister for Local Government—Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE—Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD—The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP

MINISTERS OF STATE, SCOTTISH OFFICE
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
Minister for Public Transport David Mitchell, Esq, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
Minister for Health The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP

DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND MINISTERS

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food—
MINISTER—The Rt. Hon. John MacGregor, OBE, MP
MINISTER OF STATE The Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES
The Baroness Trumpington
Donald Thompson, Esq, MP

Arts and Libraries, Office of—
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP

Civil Service, Office of the Minister for the—
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE (MINISTER FOR THE ARTS)—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Defence—
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. George Younger, TD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Ian Stewart, Esq, RD, MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Lord Trefgarne
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES—Roger Freeman, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE PROCUREMENT—The Hon. Tim Sainsbury, MP

Education and Science—
SECRETARY OF STATE The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Baker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE Mrs. Angela Rumbold, CBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE
Robert Dunn, Esq, MP
The Baroness Hooper
Robert Jackson, Esq, MP

Employment—
SECRETARY OF STATE The Rt. Hon. Norman Fowler, MP
MINISTER OF STATE John Cope, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE
John Lee, Esq, MP
Patrick Nicholls, Esq, MP

Energy—
SECRETARY OF STATE The Rt. Hon. Cecil Parkinson, Esq, MP
MINISTER OF STATE The Hon. Peter Morrison, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Michael Spicer, Esq, MP

Environment—
SECRETARY OF STATE The Rt. Hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE
Minister for Housing and Planning The Hon. William Waldegrave, MP
Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water The Earl of Caithness
Minister for Local Government Michael Howard, Esq, QC, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE
David Trippier, Esq, RD, MP
Christopher Chope, Esq, OBE, MP
Mrs. Marion Roe, MP
The Hon. Colin Moynihan, MP (Minister for Sport)

Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs—
SECRETARY OF STATE The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE
The Rt. Hon. Lynda Chalker, MP
Minister for Overseas Development Christopher Patten, Esq, MP
David Mellor, Esq, QC, MP
The Lord Glenarthur
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE Timothy Eggar, Esq, MP

Health and Social Security—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES—The Rt. Hon. John Moore, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Minister for Health—The Rt. Hon. Antony Newton, OBE, MP
Minister for Social Security and the Disabled—Nicholas Scott, Esq, MBE, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Skelmersdale
Mrs. Edwina Currie, MP
Michael Portillo, Esq, MP

Home Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT—The Rt. Hon. Douglas Hurd, CBE, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
The Rt. Hon. The Earl Ferrers
John Patten, Esq, MP
Tim Renton, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—The Hon. Douglas Hogg, MP

Law Officers' Department—
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Sir Patrick Mayhew, QC, MP
SOLICITOR-GENERAL—Sir Nicholas Lyell, QC, MP

Lord Advocate's Department—
LORD-ADVOCATE—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, QC
SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND—Peter Fraser, Esq, QC,

Lord Chancellor—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mackay of Clashfern

Northern Ireland Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND—The Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. John Stanley, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
The Lord Lyell
Richard Needham, Esq, MP
Dr. Brian Mawhinney, MP
Peter Viggers, Esq, MP

Paymaster General—
The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP

Privy Council Office—
LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP
LORD PRIVY SEAL AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Belstead
MINISTER OF STATE—The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce, MP

Scottish Office—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND—The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, QC, MP
MINISTERS OF STATE—
Ian Lang, Esq, MP
The Lord Sanderson of Bowden
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP
Michael Forsyth, Esq, MP

Trade and Industry—
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE—
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Young of Graffham
CHANCELLOR OF THE DUCHY OF LANCASTER AND MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY—
The Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke, QC, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Trade—The Hon. Alan Clark, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY—Robert Atkins, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CORPORATE AFFAIRS—The Hon. Francis Maude, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDUSTRY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS—John Butcher, Esq, MP

Transport—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT—The Rt. Hon. Paul Channon, MP
MINISTER OF STATE
Minister for Public Transport—David Mitchell, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—
Minister for Roads and Traffic—Peter Bottomley, Esq, MP
Minister for Aviation and Shipping—The Lord Brabazon of Tara

Treasury—

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—
The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt. Hon. Nigel Lawson, MP
CHIEF SECRETARY—The Rt. Hon. John Major, MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL—The Rt. Hon. Peter Brooke, MP
FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. Norman Lamont, MP
ECONOMIC SECRETARY—Peter Lilley, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt. Hon. David Waddington, QC, MP
LORDS COMMISSIONERS—
Michael Neubert, Esq, MP
Tony Durant, Esq, MP
Peter Lloyd, Esq, MP
The Hon. Mark Lennox-Boyd, MP
David Lightbown, Esq, MP
ASSISTANT WHIPS—
Richard Ryder, Esq, OBE, MP
Kenneth Carlisle, Esq MP
Alan Howarth, Esq MP
David Maclean, Esq, MP
Stephen Dorrell, Esq, MP

Welsh Office—

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES—The Rt. Hon. Peter Walker, MP
MINISTER OF STATE—Wyn Roberts, Esq, MP
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Ian Grist, Esq, MP

Her Majesty's Household—

LORD CHAMBERLAIN—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Airlie, GCVO
LORD STEWARD—The Rt. Hon. The Duke of Northumberland, KG, TD
MASTER OF THE HORSE—The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Westmorland, KCVO
TREASURER—David Hunt, Esq, MBE, MP
COMPTROLLER—The Hon. Robert Boscawen, MC, MP
VICE-CHAMBERLAIN—Tristan Garel-Jones, Esq, MP
CAPTAIN OF THE HONOURABLE CORPS OF GENTLEMEN-AT-ARMS—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Denham
CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S BODYGUARD OF THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD—The Viscount Davidson
LORDS IN WAITING—The Viscount Long, The Lord Beaverbrook, The Lord Hesketh, The Earl of Dundee, The Earl of Arran

---

SECOND CHURCH ESTATES COMMISSIONER, REPRESENTING CHURCH COMMISSIONERS—The Rt. Hon. Michael Alison, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

THE SPEAKER—Rt. Hon. Bernard Weatherill, MP

CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Rt. Hon. Harold Walker, MP

FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Sir Paul Dean, MP
SECOND DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—Miss Betty Boothroyd, MP

CHAIRMEN'S PANEL

Donald Coleman, Esq, MP, Patrick Cormack, Esq, MP, Stan Crowther, Esq, MP, Miss Janet Fookes, MP, Geraint Howells, Esq, MP, John Hunt, Esq, MP, David Knox, Esq, MP, David Lambie, Esq, MP, James Lamond, Esq, MP, Michael Latham, Esq, MP, Ted Leadbitter, Esq, MP, Geoffrey Lofthouse, Esq, MP, John McWilliam, Esq, MP, Michael J. Martin, Esq, MP, Sir Anthony Meyer, MP, Michael Morris, Esq, MP, Robert Rhodes James, Esq, MP, Sir Michael Shaw, MP, Michael Shersby, Esq, MP, Sir John Stradling Thomas, MP, Nicholas Winterton, Esq, MP

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION—

Rt. Hon. The Speaker (Chairman), Alan Beith, Esq, MP, Frank Dobson, Esq, MP, Rt. Hon. Sir Barney Hayhoe, MP, Rt. Hon. Peter Shore, MP, Rt. Hon. John Wakeham, MP

SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION—W. A. Proctor

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—

C. J. Boulton, CB (Chairman), Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO, D. Menhennet, D. Phil., A. C. J. Poole, K. S. Morgan, W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT—G. A. Roberts

OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

SPEAKER'S SECRETARY—P. J. Kitcatt, CB

SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—H. Knorpel, CB, G. E. Gammie, CB

SPEAKER'S CHAPLAIN—Rev. Canon D. C. Gray, TD, PhD

TRAINBEARER—D. J. Lord

DEPUTY TRAINBEARER—P. L. Warwick

HEO (ADMINISTRATION/DIARY)—Mrs. S. Norvell

ASSISTANT TO SPEAKER'S COUNSEL—P. Harvey, CB

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS

SECRETARY TO THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS—D. W. Robson

DEPARTMENT OF THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—C. J. Boulton, CB

CLERK ASSISTANT—J. F. Sweetman, TD

CLERK OF COMMITTEES—M. T. Ryle

PRINCIPAL CLERKS—

J. H. Willcox CB (Public Bills)
D. W. Limon (Table Office)
H. M. Barclay (Private Bills)
W. R. McKay (Journal Office)
C. B. Winnifrith (Select Committees)
R. B. Sands (Overseas Office)
G. Cubie (Financial Committees)
J. R. Rose (Standing Committees)
A. J. Hastings (Select Committees)

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL CLERKS — R. J. Willoughby, S. A. L. Panton, M. R. Jack, PhD, D. G. Millar, Mrs. J. Sharpe, Ms. A. Milner-Barry, R. W. G. Wilson, W. A. Proctor, F. A. Cranmer, R. J. Rogers, C. R. M. Ward, PhD, Ms. H. E. Irwin, D. W. N. Doig, A. Sandall, MLitt, D. L. Natzler, E. P. Silk

SENIOR CLERKS — Mrs. S. A. de Ste. Croix, A. R. Kennon, D. W. Robson, L. C. Laurence Smyth, A. R. Gren, S. J. Patrick, D. J. Gerhold, C. J. Poyser, D. F. Harrison, S. J. Priestley, A. H. Doherty, P. A. Evans, R. I. S. Phillips, R. G. James, Miss E. J. Baker, Miss P. A. Helme, J. B. Ingram (acting), W. T. Deakin (acting), I. G. Gilbert (acting), J. Darling (acting)

ASSISTANT CLERKS—D. R. Lloyd, R. A. Lambert, B. M. Hutton, J. S. Benger, Ms. E. C. Samson, P. A. Hibbert, N. P. Walker, M. D. Hamlyn

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—K. J. Brown, G. E. Clayton, Miss R. J. Challis, P. G. Moon

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—L. L. Kaye, A. P. Hubner, Miss S. J. Fox, Mrs. P. Fisher, F. McShane, J. D. Whatley, S. D. Barrett, M. Clark, Miss A. M. Loader, Mrs. S. M. Barrett, Miss F. L. Allingham, I. C. Piggott, Mrs. L. M. Nugent (Temp.)

SPECIALIST ASSISTANTS—Ms. H. C. Beaumont, M. P. Hillyard, M. J. Cremin

EDITORIAL SUPERVISOR OF THE VOTE—G. H. Bright, DEPUTY—B. Tidball, ASSISTANTS—Miss B. Balcomb, Miss L. Lewis, J. Puricelli, K. B. Wood, P. D. Howlett, Miss J. M. Williams

EXAMINERS OF PETITIONS FOR PRIVATE BILLS—H. M. Barclay, J. M. Davies

REGISTRAR OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS—A. J. Hastings

TAXING OFFICER—H. M. Barclay

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—R. A. Broomfield, Mrs. K. J. Rodger, Miss D. Symes (Temp.), M. P. Oxborough (Temp.)

DEPARTMENT OF THE SERJEANT AT ARMS

SERJEANT AT ARMS—Sir Victor Le Fanu, KCVO

DEPUTY SERJEANT AT ARMS—P. N. W. Jennings

ASSISTANT SERJEANT AT ARMS—M. J. A. Cummins

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SERJEANTS AT ARMS—P. A. J. Wright, J. F. Collins

CLERK IN CHARGE—Miss M. Frampton, MBE

ASSISTANT CLERK IN CHARGE—D. W. Snell

ADMISSION ORDER OFFICE—E. D. Palfrey, A. Chipperfield, BEM, Mrs. S. J. Warren

PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—G. H. Sargeant

SECOND PRINCIPAL DOORKEEPER—R. T. Warboys

SENIOR DOORKEEPERS—H. D. Bloxham, S. E. R. Skinner, R. A. F. Chapman, J. D. Garnett, R. H. Usher, C. Gray

HEAD OFFICE KEEPER—W. H. Hazard, MBE

SENIOR OFFICE KEEPERS—M. Bryant, K. R. Kemp, K. R. Dickason

NURSING SISTER—Miss E. Needham

DEPARTMENT OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARIAN—D. Menhennet, DPhil

DEPUTY LIBRARIAN—D. J. T. Englefield

LIBRARY AND RESEARCH—

ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Division)—G. F. Lock, Miss J. B. Tanfield

DEPUTY ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS (Heads of Section) — J. B. Poole, PhD, S. Z. Young, Mrs. H. R. Coates, Miss P. J. Baines, BLitt, K. G. Cuninghame, Mrs. J. M. Wainwright, FI InfSc, C. C. Pond, Ph.D, Mrs. C. B. Andrews, R. C. Clements

SENIOR LIBRARY CLERKS—Mrs. J. M. Lourie, Ms. F. Poole, Mrs. J. M. Fiddick, C. R. Barclay, Mrs. C. M. Gillie, Miss C. E. Nield, R. J. Ware, DPhil, Ms. D. Gore, PhD, R. J. Twigger, B. K. Winetrobe, T. N. Edmonds, R. J. Cracknell, Miss O. M. Gay, Miss E. M. McInnes, Mrs. G. Allen

ASSISTANT LIBRARY CLERKS—Miss C. J. Gilmour, PhD, Miss M. Baber, C. M. Bowlby, Miss A. J. Saville, A. D. Lyall, Mrs. P. Carling (Temp.)

SENIOR LIBRARY EXECUTIVES — Mrs. S. M. Withers, ALA, Mrs. H. V. Holden, ALA, Miss J. Seaton, FLA, K. N. H. Parry, ALA, Ms. A. Muir

EDUCATION OFFICER—Mrs. E. R. Stones

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Mrs. P A. Bozdan, S. A. Wise

HIGHER LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—J. A. Prince, MLS, Mrs. P. V. Wiles, Mrs. D. W. Clark, Miss C. E. Fretten, ALA, Miss M. H. Fletcher, Mrs. G. C. Brown, Ms. V. R. Cattell, Mrs. P. E. Cook, ALA, Miss I. O. White, ALA, Ms. H. Armstrong, Miss E. J. Jones, ALA, Mrs. J. A. P. Skipworth, ALA, G. Haig, Miss B. Mee, MIInfSc, Miss G. L. Cooper

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—J. R. Hutson

LIBRARY EXECUTIVES—Mrs. M. A. Azim, ALA, Miss S. Holland, LLA, Mrs. F. M. Ward, A. D. Parker, ALA, Ruth Bacon, ALA, Mrs. E. H. Riley, ALA, Ms. J. B. Hall, ALA, R. Freebury, T. Holmes, P. M. Ward, Ms. F. Whittle

CHIEF OFFICE CLERKS—D. J. Plowright, Miss N. Harland

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—P. R. Davis, J. S. Came, Mrs. J. MacDonald, Miss B. A. Rowlands, ALA, D. B. Inns, I. M. Duncan, BEM (Head Library Attendant), Mrs. A. Mara, D. A. Brown

VOTE OFFICE—

DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—G. R. Russell

DEPUTY DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—H. C. Foster

ASSISTANT DELIVERER OF THE VOTE—O. B. T. Sweeney

SUPERINTENDING CLERKS—C. D. Lister, Mrs. S. Fuzio

VOTE OFFICE ASSISTANTS—T. S. Wilson, B. G. Underwood, G. Howard, C. P. Williams

SALE OFFICE—SUPERINTENDING CLERK—C. C. Clarke, MBE

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT—A. C. J. Poole

FEES OFFICE—

ACCOUNTANT—J. L. G. Dobson

DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT—A. J. Lewis

SENIOR ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT—G. P. Brown

ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANTS—F. W. Brewer, A. R. Marskell, M. J. Barram, Miss M. M. McColl

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER—

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICERS — R. Gunn, M. J. H. Caswell, Mrs. P. D. Page, Mrs. N. Norman, Mrs. G. Crowther, Mrs. P. M. Lowther, Mrs. D. Hill, Miss P. Hurford, Mrs. J. S. Peach

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss D. E. Johnson, D. M. Allen, Miss L. J. F. Clay, E. Sankey, Mrs. D. K. Euesden, D. J. D. Woods, Ms. M. R. Morris, Miss A. C. Cooper, Miss R. Harrison, G. L. Turner, Miss P. R. Mills, Mrs. J. D. Mead, Miss D. A. Murrell, Mrs. J. C. Ponting, Miss G. Beuman

ESTABLISHMENTS OFFICE—

HEAD OF OFFICE—G. A. Roberts

DEPUTY HEAD OF OFFICE—J. A. Robb

SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—Miss R. A. Cole, V. H. Stocker

HIGHER EXECUTIVE OFFICER—N.P. Crawley

SUPERINTENDING CLERK—P. C. Kingsley

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS—R. S. Harrison, Miss J. Bremner, M. Page

COMPUTER OFFICE—

COMPUTER OFFICER—R. S. Morgan, FBCS, FInfSc, ASSISTANT COMPUTER OFFICERS—Mrs. G. S. P. Smith, Mrs. S. C. White

STAFF INSPECTOR—R. C. Collins

WELFARE OFFICER—Miss L. Hunt

DEPARTMENT OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

EDITOR—K. S. Morgan

DEPUTY EDITOR—I. D. Church

PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT EDITORS—R. V. Hadlow, J. Gourley, F. G. Brotherston, OBE, J. Withers

ASSISTANT EDITORS—P. Walker, E. Holland, W. G. Garland, Vee Grainger

COMMITTEE SUB-EDITORS—J. Ledgerwood, D. Crosswell, Miss V. A. A. Clarke, Mrs. A. Roberts, Miss H. A. Hales, Miss L. Sutherland, S. M. Hutchinson, Miss V. A. Widgery, C. Fogarty, Miss H. Thompson, Miss M. Babington, Mrs. A. Street, L. Gilmore

REPORTERS—Mrs. E. J. Gregory, Ms. G. Hardgrave, P. Oglethorpe, P. Hadlow, Miss C. Hanly, Miss J. A. Bradshaw, M. Watson, Miss K. Stewart, Miss E. Morris, Miss E. Watt, Miss J. Goodman

PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBER—D. N. Harrington, MBE

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIBERS—Mrs. E. M. Bangay, Mrs. M. J. Harding

PRINCIPAL HANSARD ASSISTANT—D. J. Lawler

SENIOR HANSARD ASSISTANT—Miss R. Washington

ANNUNCIATOR SUPERINTENDENT—H. J. Wellings

REFRESHMENT DEPARTMENT

GENERAL MANAGER—W. J. J. Smillie, FHCIMA, FCFA, ACF

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER—E. J. Nash, MCFA

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR—Mrs. S. Nicholls

PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO GENERAL MANAGER—Mrs. A. G. Lunn

BANQUETING MANAGER—C. J. Griffiths

CATERING ACCOUNTANT—D. R. W. Wood, FCA

ASSISTANT CATERING ACCOUNTANT—Mrs. B. A. Langley

EXECUTIVE CHEF—I. Gabay

HEAD CELLARMAN—D. Balcombe

HEAD STOREMAN—A. E. Edmond

SHORTHAND WRITER TO THE HOUSE—Mrs. E. M. C. Holland

PARLIAMENTARY WORKS OFFICER (PSA)—B. C. Sewell

HEAD OF SECURITY—Chief Superintendent A. J. Coxon

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER—Mrs. J. Garbutt

POSTMASTER—J. Arnold

TRANSPORT MANAGER—R. H. Hyde

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTIETH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND
[WHICH OPENED 25 JUNE 1987]

THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 130**

THIRTEENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1987-88

House of Commons

Monday 21 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

WALES

AIDS

1. **Sir Raymond Gower:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the number of persons in Wales now diagnosed as having AIDS; what has been the increase during the past 12 months; and what estimate has been made of the probable increase over the next 12 months.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): At the end of February 1988, 19 cases of AIDS in Wales had been reported to the communicable diseases surveillance centre, of whom 15 died. Comparable figures for the end of February 1987 were 11 and nine. It is extremely difficult to make a reliable estimate for Wales.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is my hon. Friend aware that a number of recent studies, including one in the United States of America, suggest that the ultimate number of people suffering from the disease will be far greater than anticipated? I do not wish to be alarmist, but will there be an upgrading of current plans to meet that possibility?

Mr. Grist: I have noted the various interesting results of studies into mortality rates for men aged between 15 and 64. My hon. Friend may be pleased to know that I have every confidence in the existing voluntary system of reporting AIDS deaths, although I am aware that not all are recorded. There may be HIV-related deaths that do not fall within the clinical definition of AIDS.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: Do not the World Health Organisation and all medical authorities recognise AIDS as the greatest threat to human health this century? Are not the number of AIDS cases doubling every 12 months? Projected over 10 years, does that not pose a serious threat to a large number, perhaps even the majority, of the world's population?

In view of that enormous threat, will the Minister ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to use his voice in the Cabinet to plead for a massive increase in research funding so that a cure can be found for AIDS? Should not the Government introduce a major public education programme to prevent the spread of AIDS through promiscuity?

Mr. Grist: To begin at the end, a massive public education campaign has been launched through the Health Education Council and, indeed, the Welsh Health Promotion Authority, which has been active in schools, local authorities and elsewhere. I shall certainly pass on to my right hon. Friend the hon. Gentleman's point about international research. Indeed, I am sure that my right hon. Friend will read his comments.

Labour Statistics

2. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the combined total of persons employed in Wales in the coal and steel industries in 1979; what it is in 1988; and what are the equivalent figures for the electronic and information technology industries.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): Employment in the steel industry and on the colliery books of British Coal amounted to 86,000 in 1979 and to 32,100 in 1987. Employment in the electronic and information technology industries in the same years was 17,500 and 23,100 respectively. I am pleased to tell the House that

Race Electronics of Talbot Green, Mid Glamorgan, today announced a major additional investment of £11 million that will, over the next few years, produce 1,100 new jobs.

Sir Anthony Meyer: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for that reply, which I am sure will be greeted with enormous pleasure in south Wales. Does that trend show the advantages that will come to Wales from modernising the approach to the older, more traditional industries and, more important, the introduction of the new science-based industries?

Mr. Walker: Indeed, and I hope that the trend will continue.

Mr. Barry Jones: When the right hon. Gentleman meets tha Alyn and Deeside council later this week to discuss modern industries and electronics, will he bear in mind that the council has good plans for the now redundant site of Connah's Quay power station, which could accommodate modern industry? However, the plan has hit a snag. Will the right hon. Gentleman listen carefully and sympathetically to the problems of the district council, so that Alyn and Deeside has the benefit of that site?

Mr. Walker: I cannot comment on the specific scheme, but I shall certainly listen to the hon. Gentleman's constituents.

Dr. Thomas: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that we warmly welcome any announcements of job creation in Wales? Does he agree that for the future of the Welsh economy, it is essential that design, development and research development are carried out within Wales? Would that not amount to a more genuine science-based economy than would intermediate or low technology?

Mr. Walker: Yes, which is why I am hopeful that developments in the Welsh universities, through new grants to encourage research as joint ventures between industrial companies and universities, will have a considerable impact in Wales.

Mr. Alan Williams: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that we welcome all new jobs in electronic and information technology, even though, as his figures show, they fall far short of the number of jobs that are needed? Does he recognise that many of the predominantly women production workers in the new industries earn little more than half the average national wage? The new industries are not replacing the lost, high-paid, male jobs.

As 120,000 fewer people in Wales are now either employed or self-employed than when the Government took office, is the right hon. Gentleman not concerned about the latest unemployment figures, which show that Wales is eighth worst of the 11 regions in the decline in unemployment since February 1987?

Mr. Walker: I am gald to say that, in fact in terms of the rate of reduction on the normal basis that has been used by all Governments—*[Interruption.]*—Wales is in the top three of the league. So far as the figures are concerned, I note, as always, the deep depression of the right hon. Gentleman. In the past year unemployment in Wales has come down by more than 25,000. The people of Wales find the right hon. Gentleman totally out of touch with the mood of the country.

Labour Statistics

3. **Mr. Coleman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unemployment figures for (i) Wales, (ii) West Glamorgan and (iii) Neath; and what were the comparable figures for the same period in 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in Wales, West Glamorgan, and Neath districts were 145,458, 19,461 and 3,456 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

Mr. Coleman: What would the right hon. Gentleman's reaction be to those figures if they occurred in his own constituency? As for the quality of the jobs to which he has referred this afternoon, do they carry the same earning power as those that have been lost? What assurances can he give to places that are suffering colliery closures, such as my own area with the Abernant colliery, that new jobs will replace the jobs that have been lost?

Mr. Walker: I deplore unemployment anywhere. In the recent recession, there was a substantial increase in unemployment in my constituency. Indeed, it reached the kind of figures that is now the average for Wales as a whole. In terms of the jobs coming into Wales, since the last Question Time we have had announcements from major American, German, Japanese and Welsh firms, which are all putting in a great deal of investment and providing many new jobs. It is time that the hon. Gentleman, and others, cheered up about it.

Mr. Raffan: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the local economy in north-east Wales is recovering extremely strongly, as can be seen by the fact that unemployment has fallen faster there than in any other parts of Wales during the past year—in Delyn by 24·1 per cent., in Alyn and Deeside by 22·9 per cent. and in Wrexham by 22·5 per cent.?

Mr. Walker: Yes, I am pleased that the latest figures for advertisements for vacancies show an enormous increase. For example, the latest figures for the *Liverpool Daily Post* show an increase of 33 per cent. and the *Western Mail* and *South Wales Echo* show an increase of 47 per cent. over the same time last year.

Mr. Livsey: Does the Secretary of State agree that the cuts in home improvement grants in the Budget will create more unemployment in Wales, especially as we have the poorest housing stock in Britain? Does he not think that we should retain those grants?

Mr. Walker: I was amused to see the great outcry about that. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will put this matter into perspective. On the average loan for house improvements the result of the Budget change will be a detriment of £1·32 per week, but for the same person the tax savings from the Budget will be £4·58 per week. Therefore, the hon. Gentleman's suggestion that the Budget is bad is totally wrong.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Do those figures not reveal that yet again in terms of unemployment south Wales is the blackspot of Europe? Will the Secretary of State reconsider the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams), that in the past 12 months—February to February—our decline in employment is the eighth worst of 11 regions? Would this

not be a good time to launch a housing drive, especially when one considers that Scotland, with double our population, spends four times the amount that we spend on housing? Perhaps the Secretary of State is perfectly content to see homelessness rise and Rachmanism take over.

Mr. Walker: The one thing that the hon. Gentleman is always guaranteed to do is to depict south Wales as a blackspot, but he does great harm to it every time he does so. I am glad to say that this year the local authorities alone in the valleys of south Wales will spend £48 million on housing improvements. The success of this Government in improving the housing of Wales compared with the failure of the Labour Government is remarkable.

Wales Tourist Board

4. **Mr. Wigley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he last met the chairman of the Wales tourist board; and what matters were discussed.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts): My right hon. Friend last met the chairman on 13 January and discussed a range of issues. I met the chairman and the board on 19 February.

Mr. Wigley: Will the Minister tell the House whether the Secretary of State has discussed with the chairman of the Wales tourist board the effects of the arson campaign on second homes in Wales, which we all deprecate and condemn entirely? Has he had any response from the tourist board of the effect on the tourist industry, in view of the 130 houses which have now been burnt and the many people who are now having difficulty in getting insurance on holiday homes? What initiatives has his right hon. Friend taken to bring this campaign to an end?

Mr. Roberts: I am glad to hear the hon. Gentleman condemn the arson campaign, and this morning I was glad to read in the *Liverpool Daily Post* the condemnation of the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas). Naturally, my right hon. Friend and I join in that condemnation. We wholly deplore the arson campaign. The matter was not specifically discussed with the Wales tourst board, which is not the responsible body. It is a matter for the police and the Home Office.

Mrs. Clwyd: As Welsh lamb is a delicacy much enjoyed by tourists, was the Minister able to assure the chairman of the Wales tourist board that no radioactive lamb contaminated above the official safety levels was sold in Wales, as it undoubtedly was in England due to official bungling?

Mr. Roberts: I beg to doubt the hon. Lady's statement. Naturally we have taken every possible precaution to ensure that lamb that contains radiation above the accepted levels has not been sold. We have taken every possible step to prevent that, and I am glad to say that the outlook for the future is improving.

Sir Raymond Gower: Is it not singularly inappropriate at this time that there should be this campaign of burning down holiday homes, in view of the fact that numerous people in many countries, including Wales, are now buying second homes in other countries, such as Spain, Italy and France? Is that not incongruous?

Mr. Roberts: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I think that the entire House deplores the arson campaign that has been going on, as the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) described. We wholly deplore it. It is needless, cowardly and thoroughly condemned by the people of Wales as a whole. It does irreparable harm to tourism and our reputation as a hospitable nation.

Opera

5. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to encourage the development of opera in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Government's substantial support for the arts is channelled through the Arts Council of Great Britain in the first instance. Opera in Wales has been a major beneficiary of Arts Council grants, which have done much to encourage its development. I hope that that development will continue.

Mr. Livsey: We in Wales have an outstanding reputation for opera. Will the Minister say when there may be a decision on the future of Craig-y-nos castle in my constituency, the home of the late Adelina Patti, where prominent opera lovers in Wales, including Sir Geraint Evans, are keen to establish a music centre to train young opera singers?

Mr. Roberts: Many people would like to see the former home of Adelina Patti become the centre for opera and other kinds of music. There have been several other suggestions for the possible uses for Craig-y-nos, including the theatre. Tenders for the freehold of the property are being carefully considered and we shall take all relevant factors into account in reaching a decision. My right hon. Friend has already taken action to increase the protection of the theatre at Craig-y-nos by announcing its listing to grade 1.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Does my hon. Friend know of the proposal by a private developer, in co-operation with Rhuddlan borough council, to build a theatre adjacent to the Sun centre, which would provide a home for the Welsh National Opera when it visits north Wales? Will he take a benevolent interest in the project?

Mr. Roberts: We take a benevolent interest in all proposals to increase the number of venues available for the Welsh National Opera company. My hon. Friend will be aware that the proposal that he mentioned is not the only one. We are proud of the Welsh National Opera company and are anxious to see it succeed still further.

Mr. Coleman: I recognise the Welsh National Opera company's contribution to opera. Is the Minister aware that Craig-y-nos is not dependent on the Welsh National Opera for operatic performances? What help will he give to sustain possible future productions and the continuation of productions at Craig-y-nos over the years?

Mr. Roberts: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman has sung there with the Neath operatic society. Perhaps the theatre should be kept in his honour as well as that of Adelina Patti. Of course, whatever assistance is given to any future performance is basically a matter for the Arts Council.

Welsh Craft Industry

6. **Mr. Raffan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals he has to implement the recommendations

of Mr. Tony Ball's Welsh craft industry study for a co-ordinated marketing policy for Wales and Welsh products, to be implemented by the Welsh Development Agency, Mid Wales Development, the Welsh tourist board and other Welsh agencies.

Mr. Peter Walker: There has been strong endorsement of Mr. Tony Ball's Welsh craft industry study and of his ideas for developing a more co-ordinated strategy for promoting Wales and its products. I shall be considering with the main bodies concerned how best to implement the recommendations.

Mr. Raffan: Does my right hon. Friend agree that if a co-ordinated all-Wales marketing effort is to be achieved the Welsh Office must take the initiative? Does he also agree that such an integrated marketing approach could only increase the impact of each Welsh agency's marketing, without undermining their independence?

Mr. Walker: The report showed many weaknesses and duplications in the existing systems. As I said, I shall have further discussion with the bodies involved, and then we will come to our conclusions.

Mr. Alex Carlile: When the right hon. Gentleman reaches his conclusions, will he bear in mind that many small craft producers in Wales consider that the WDA and Mid-Wales Development are rather remote? Will he take steps to ensure that the distance between them is reduced as far as possible?

Mr. Walker: Part of Mr. Ball's recommendation was that, in the manner in which the system operated at the moment, many smaller craft users were unable to identify exactly where they should go and from whom they should obtain advice. The recommendations pointing out that they should have freely available to them a point at which they can seek any advice or help are important.

Mr. Ray Powell: Is the Secretary of State aware that the Welsh craft industry would be sadly neglected if the Department of Employment were to close the workshop for the blind in Pontypridd? Is he aware also that proposals have been under discussion for the past two years? Only a matter of weeks ago an Employment Minister decided that he would cancel any financial arrangements for the new workshop in Pontypridd. Will the Secretary of State carry out an investigation and ensure that the application for a workshop for the blind people of mid-Glamorgan is renewed and that a new building is provided?

Mr. Walker: That is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment. I gather that he or one of his Ministers will have talks with at least one Welsh Member in the near future.

Hospital Waiting Lists

8. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the latest information he has on the number of people waiting for in-patient treatment as *(a)* urgent and *(b)* non-urgent cases in (i) Clwyd and (ii) Wales.

Mr. Grist: The number of people waiting for urgent in-patient treatment in Clwyd at 30 September 1987 was 383, and in Wales 3,596. The numbers waiting for non-urgent in-patient treatment were 4,491 and 36,262 respectively.

Dr. Marek: Is the hon. Gentleman aware of the promise that he made last August? He pledged that by the spring of 1988 no patient waiting for an urgent operation should have to wait more than one month, and no patient waiting for a non-urgent operation should have to wait for more than one year. Today is the first day of spring. Every person in Wales knows that the waiting list is as bad as it ever was. Patients in the main specialties, such as general surgery, orthopaedics, ENT, and urology are dying before they get to the top of the waiting list. Did the Minister make his pledge last August out of simple political bravado, to build up the hopes of Welsh people, only to dash them cruelly today? If he did not, what has gone wrong?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman is spreading alarm rather unnecessarily. He mentioned particular sectors, which he also brought up in the last Welsh Grand Committee — general surgery, ophthalmology, urology and orthopaedics. I am pleased to say that in Clwyd the authority has reported that the urgent in-patient list in these specifications will meet targets. In addition, urology and ophthalmology non-urgent in-patient lists will meet targets in the same county.

Mr. Gwilym Jones: I naturally urge my hon. Friend to increase further spending on the National Health Service at the earliest opportunity. However, his campaign to improve waiting-list performance figures in Wales has already shown itself to be a remarkably effective way of achieving value for money and, at the same time, a worthwhile improvement in health performances.

Mr. Grist: My hon. Friend is right. Increased expenditure on the Health Service under this Government has led to a greatly increased provision of treatment for patients — for example, 24 per cent. more in-patients were treated than under the last Labour Government.

Mr. Alan Williams: Did the Under-Secretary of State notice that, just a week ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave away over £4,000 million, much of it to people who did not need it, when it could have been used to help our health and social services? Does the hon. Gentleman recollect a claim made by the Secretary of State for Wales in *The Observer* that when he went to the Cabinet, he received every penny for which he asked? In view of the appalling waiting lists to which the hon. Gentleman has just confessed, which are even worse than the temporary peak of the winter of discontent, does he think that the Secretary of State asked for enough? How does he explain to the people of Wales why the Secretary of State did not ask for more?

Mr. Grist: It is worth pointing out that the right hon. Gentleman knows very well that the Budget is not to do with expenditure. He is trying to beguile the general public, who may not appreciate that point. In the expenditure figures in the autumn, spending on the Health Service rose by £700 million more than the expenditure of a year before, which the right hon. Gentleman's party held out to be an electoral bribe.

Wales Tourist Board

9. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total amount allocated for (i) publicity and (ii) marketing, within the annual budget for the Wales tourist board in 1980-81 and 1987-88.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Wales tourist board's gross expenditure on marketing — including publicity which

cannot be separately distinguished — increased from £1·55 million in 1980-81 to an estimated £3·493 million in 1987-88.

Mr. Bennett: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Is he aware of the concern that is felt in many parts of Wales that the board's publicity and marketing budget is still less than 50 per cent. of total expenditure? As that ought to be the major part of its work, will he ask the board to increase the proportion that it spends on these vital sectors?

Mr. Roberts: The board spends a substantial proportion of its total budget on marketing, which is a very important part of its work, but it also has certain other costs, including expenditure on section 4 grants.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the Minister suggest to the chairman of the Wales tourist board that he arranges a meeting with the chairman of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, which has had a marked success in its publicity and marketing, and has developed a tourist initiative which works in harmony with the local community and benefits the local economy?

Mr. Roberts: I am sure that all these non-governmental bodies have a great deal to learn from each other, but no one should underestimate the achievements of the Wales tourist board or the money that the Government have made available to it. The allocation for the current year is some £8·7 million and for next year it will be £9·2 million —an increase of 9 per cent. There has been an increase since 1983-84 of some 90 per cent. in the funds made available to the board, and it is making good use of those funds.

Sir Raymond Gower: Should not my hon. Friend reconsider those figures in the light of the fact that the Wales tourist board will have to make substantial additional expenditure as it embarks upon an important programme of grading of hotels?

Mr. Roberts: An increase of 9 per cent. in the board's resources for next year is very substantial, and this year we are making available additional funds of about £250,000 to promote marketing. As for hotel registration, the board already operates a voluntary system.

General Certificate of Secondary Education

10. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the implementation of the GCSE examination in Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The hon. Gentleman will be aware from an interim report published on 8 March that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools found that the GCSE is being successfully introduced. It is leading to better teaching and has succeeded in raising the motivation of pupils.

Mr. Howells: The Minister will be aware that many leading educationists in Wales are worried about the plight of 16-year-old students. They say that many are under a great deal of stress and that they are overworked. If so, what plans does the Minister have to remedy the problem?

Mr. Roberts: I, too, have read the article from which the hon. Gentleman appears to be quoting, but in Wales there are others who welcome this development, and the HMI report is very favourable. We have spent more money on the introduction of this examination than on any previous examination.

Dr. Thomas: Does the Minister accept that we endorse what he has said about the performance of the examination? Will he ensure that the proposals in the Education Reform Bill, which will be the subject of scrutiny this week, will not undermine the positive gains made in the assessment used for GCSE, and that the testing which the Secretary of State for Education and Science has in mind will not revert to more traditional roles but will retain the gains made by the GCSE?

Mr. Roberts: We very much hope that the Education Reform Bill will enhance the performance of pupils. After all, the GCSE is intended to stretch children's ability. As for assessment, I am happy to tell the hon. Gentleman that in the coming year we shall spend about £855,000 in Wales on in-service assessment training for teachers.

Mr. Win Griffiths: Will the Minister join me in praising the efforts of teachers who have been working in extremely difficult conditions successfully to introduce the GCSE in Wales? Will he assure me that his Department will monitor the examination carefully, because early evidence suggests that pupils of average and below-average ability are having more than a little difficulty with the examination and that its purpose may be somewhat undermined?

Mr. Roberts: As the inspectorate acknowledged, there are some teething troubles, but that is due simply to the introduction of the new examination. On the whole, it is progressing favourably. I join the hon. Gentleman in paying tribute to the teachers, who have done extremely well in introducing the examination, amd I am happy to say that in the current year we have spent about £859,000 on training teachers in respect of the GCSE.

Hospital and Health Plans

11. **Mr. Michael:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he will take to ensure full public availability of financial information on hospital and other health plans in South Glamorgan and in Wales as a whole.

Mr. Grist: It is already my right hon. Friend's policy that the strategic health service plans submitted to him for his approval by health authorities should contain a reconciliation of the district's service objectives and priorities with the resource assumptions provided by the Department.

Mr. Michael: I am grateful to the Under-Secretary of State for that reply, and I am sure he will share my concern that a letter that I received this weekend from the chairman of the health authority seems to suggest that two promises will be broken. The first was that full financial information would be made available, although delayed from the date in December that was originally promised. The second was that the consultation period would be extended for the financial appraisal to be taken into account. Obviously, if the information was not made available, the extension will not make much sense.

Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the matter is of grave concern, and that it is impossible for us in the South Glamorgan area to take a sensible part in discussion about the plans? Will he draw to the attention of the chairman of the health authority the very sensible reply that he gave to my first question?

Mr. Grist: I am unable to comment on any promise that may or may not have been made to the hon. Gentleman.

On the other hand, I think he will understand that, in the initial stages of consultation, it is not normal for the financial implications to be spelt out. Normally, that comes later. As far as I can see, the procedure is following its ordinary course and the guidelines laid down by the Welsh Office.

Mr. Rowlands: Will the Minister tell the House how much it would cost to reopen the high dependency unit in St. Tydfil hospital in Merthyr Tydfil? Can he give no fresh hope that extra resources will be provided to reopen the unit, which has £120,000 of equipment lying idle?

Mr. Grist: I see that the Mid-Glamorgan health authority has stated its intention to operate the unit in the long-term and that there is no question of closing it. It also claims that it is making a saving, with only three places operative up to this date, of some £30,000.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Will my hon. Friend consider seriously the representations that he is receiving from the Pembrokeshire health authority concerning the roof of Withybush hospital, which has been seriously damaged in recent years because of its construction? The health authority is expected to find the £500,000 to repair it when, in the first place, it was built under Welsh Office construction supervision. Moreover, its quality was seriously reduced because of the cuts under the last Government.

Mr. Grist: We are in negotiation with the Pembrokeshire health authority, to which we have made an offer.

Mr. Roy Hughes: Will the Minister also give an undertaking to reveal the financial and health costs of introducing charges for eye tests? Are such charges not likely to hinder detection of illness and lead to a further deterioration in the health of the people of Wales? By supporting the charges—as he is on record as doing—in conjunction with the massive tax handouts which will largely benefit the south-east of England, is the Minister not proving himself yet again to be a defender of the indefensible?

Mr. Grist: I shall ignore the second half of that question. I think that the hon. Gentleman knows the argument very well. We do not expect that those who pay for the eye tests—and many, as he knows, will not—will pay £10, the figure that has been put around. They may not be charged at all, because of competition. Opticians will still be under an obligation to report any disease or injury to the general practitioners of their patients, so there should be no spread of disease — despite what has, unfortunately and rather irresponsibly, been put around.

Rates

13. **Mr Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the implications for rates in Wales following the House of Lords judgment on 11 February in the case of Clement *v.* Addis Ltd.

Mr. Peter Walker: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made on 9 March by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

Mr. Wardell: May I put on record my appreciation to the Secretary of State for any assistance that he gave in his discussions with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment preceding that statement? May I ask him specifically whether there is any opportunity whatever for the Welsh Office to make any additional financial help available to Swansea city council and West Glamorgan county council, which have suffered as a result of this decision of 11 February?

Mr. Walker: Provision is made so that the effects of an event such as this can be dealt with under section 67 of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980. We are having discussions to see whether that applies in this case.

Health Service Staff

14. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on staffing levels in the Health Service in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Operational and managerial responsibility for the determination of staffing levels rests with individual health authorities. Since the Government took office there has been an overall increase of 16 per cent. in front-line staff and of 11 per cent. overall.

Mr. Carlile: Is the Secretary of State aware of the recent British Medical Association report which revealed that there was a 50 per cent. shortage of medical record staff in Wales, with the result that treatment is being delayed, and carried out less efficiently in some cases, and that there are great problems of marrying laboratory results to medical records?

Mr. Walker: I hope that the arrangements to be made for manpower surveillance over the whole of the Health Service will help to make sure that manpower resources are available where they are most needed.

DUCHY OF LANCASTER

City of Leicester

29. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next intends to visit those parts of the city of Leicester which are Duchy property.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): I hope to visit the Duchy interests in Leicester as soon as the opportunity to do so arises.

Mr. Janner: Since the lamentable defeat of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in 1261, is it not right that the Minister and his Duchy acquired responsibility for the honour and county of Leicester? As he has now very wisely given up his responsibility for fiddling the unemployment figures and instead is turning his attention to covering up the adverse trade balance of the nation, may I offer him the opportunity to take advantage of Leicester as soon as possible by applying for admission to either the Trinity hospital or the Wyggeston hospital, both of which I understand he still owns?

Mr. Clarke: The penalties of political defeat were rather severe in 1265, so it is the case that the Duchy of Lancaster acquired entirely the honour and county of Leicester in the 13th century. We now own one property in the high street and have an interest in the Wyggeston and Trinity hospitals. I trust that the way in which the Duchy administers them gives rise to no complaints. The economy of Leicester is thriving rather well. Unemployment is falling and employment is rising. The

Highfields task force, for which I am responsible in Leicester, is achieving great success in getting projects moving in that difficult part of the town.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Education Reform

30. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, answering for the Church Commissioners, what representations the Church Commissioners have received on the implications for the area of the commissioners' responsibility of the Education Reform Bill.

Mr. Michael Alison (Second Church Estates Commissioner, representing Church Commissioners): The commissioners' involvement in the educational field is restricted to providing grants towards the stipends of chaplains in universities and polytechnics. They have received no representations on this matter.

Mr. Marshall: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the popularity of denominational schools underlines the desire of parents for religious education based upon the scriptures? Does he also agree that religious education should be taught by those with a sense of conviction, and is he happy with the role of religious education, in the Education Reform Bill?

Mr. Alison: I am delighted that the Education Reform Bill retains the compulsory provision of the 1944 Act for religious education and introduces a new complaints procedure in relation to the supervision of that instructuon. I agree with my hon. Friend that, almost universally, parents want religious education and they want it to be predominantly Christian and scriptural. I note that there will be an opportunity to debate these matters in the course of the next two or three days.

VAT (Religious Books)

31. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the right hon. Member for Selby, answering for the Church Commissioners, what representations he has received from the clergy regarding the implications for their standard of living of taxation on religious books.

Mr. Alison: The Church Commissioners have received no such representations. Parochial church councils are encouraged to reimburse a clergyman for the cost of books considered necessary to assist him in his ministry. Failing this, the Inland Revenue allows tax relief on certain categories of books. The imposition of VAT on books would have a significant effect on clergy, who, by the nature of their work, spend quite a lot on books.

Mr. Allen: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his reply. Is he aware that the European Community is still determined to impose VAT on books, and that this will not only be a tax on learning but in this instance a tax on religion as well? That will affect not only the members of the Church of England for whom the right hon. Gentleman answers, but Catholics, Muslims, Hindus and all the other religious denominations which he does not represent. Will he make representations to his hon. Friends to ensure that VAT is not imposed on religious books?

Mr. Alison: I note that a Treasury Minister in a written answer on 18 January stated that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has already made it clear that the United Kingdom will not accept proposals which restrict our right to apply zero rating.

Mr. Gow: Is not my right hon. Friend vigorous in his defence of the rights of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and of this House to determine taxation? Is not his reluctance to allow Lord Cockfield to impose taxation upon religious books just as robust as that of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Alison: I am not quite sure that I can reach Lord Cockfield with quite as ready accessibility as I can reach my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Public Accounts Committee

32. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission if he will give details of the occasions since 1986 when the Public Accounts Commission has received advice from the Public Accounts Committee under section 4(2) and (3) of the National Audit Act 1983.

Sir Peter Hordern (on behalf of the Public Accounts Commission): The Public Accounts Commission considered and approved the National Audit Office's proposed Estimates for the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89 at its meetings on 3 February 1987 and 15 December 1987 respectively. Before approving the Estimates the Commission had regard to the advice of the Public Accounts Committee as it is obliged to do.

Mr. Allen: Has the Public Accounts Committee advised the Commission on the number of National Audit Office reports issued to Parliament? Will the hon. Gentleman also give us his own view on whether enough time is allowed on the Floor of the House for these very important reports to be debated for the benefit of hon. Members on both sides of the House?

Sir Peter Hordern: Yes, Sir. We understand from the Public Accounts Committee chat the National Audit Office is expecting to produce 50 reports a year by 1992-93, which is a significant increase.

As to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question, much as I should like to give my personal view, I am happy to say that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is a member of the Commission and no doubt heard what the hon. Gentleman had to say.

Mr. Latham: Will my hon. Friend confirm that one of the matters on which the PAC has given such advice—he was involved in this—was the need for a decent salary for the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland? In view of the serious staffing difficulties in that regard, is he pressing Ministers to ensure that the matter is soon resolved?

Sir Peter Hordern: I can tell my hon. Friend that one of the matters that the PAC is considering at present is the salary of the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland.

WALES

Health Authorities (Financial Deficits)

15. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any proposals to help Welsh health authorities overcome their financial deficits.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Ian Grist): This year supplementary revenue funding amounting to £23·3 million has been provided to district health authorities in Wales to help them meet financial pressures. This brings the cash increase in DHA revenue funding to £60·5 million, or 9·1 per cent., over the 1986-87 provision. Loans of £2·3 million have also been provided to the two authorities with cash flow problems.

Mr. Griffiths: Does the Minister agree that the situation for all health authorities in Wales is extremely serious? Is he aware that, as we approach the new financial year, Mid-Glamorgan area health authority already knows that, unless the Government fund in full the nurses' pay award, it will be £5 million short in the coming year? Does the Minister agree that most of the deficit finance problems of the Health Service in Wales are due to the Government's previous failure to fund properly the pay awards to the nurses?

Mr. Grist: The hon. Gentleman will remember that last year some 97 per cent. of the cost of the review body awards were funded by central Government and were, therefore, not met from health authority budgets. If Mid-Glamorgan area health authority had put into operation cost savings and tendering programmes, as it was urged to do, it would not be in this position.

Mr. Raffan: How much less would be spent on the NHS in Wales if expenditure had remained at the 1979 percentage of gross domestic product, namely, 4·7 per cent. and not risen to today's level of 5·4 per cent. of GDP? The expenditure on the NHS in England and Wales is £2·9 billion. Will my hon. Friend tell us what the figure is for Wales alone?

Mr. Grist: Since the rise is about 35 per cent. in real terms I shall leave my hon. Friend to work out the mathematics of that one.

Labour Statistics

17. **Mr. Barry Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were out of work in May 1979 and on the latest available date in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales; and what increases these are in percentage terms.

The Secretary of State for Wales (Mr. Peter Walker): On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in Clwyd was 19,024. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

The seasonally adjusted numbers of unemployed claimants in Wales in May 1979 and February 1988 were 73,100 and 136,700 respectively. I am pleased to say the latest figure shows a decrease of 23 per cent. over the past months.

Mr. Barry Jones: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that later this week he will meet Clwyd county council? Will he give sympathetic consideration to the case that the council will make to build a new crossing of the River Dee? Does the right hon. Gentleman understand that, if he gives such sympathetic consideration many new jobs will be developed in an area where there is still mass unemployment?

Mr. Walker: I gather that it is a local authority scheme and I shall, of course, listen with interest to what the authority has to say.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Annunciators

33. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will make a statement on announcements about Government business on the House of Commons annunciators.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): On Mondays to Thursdays the House of Commons annunciators display continuously, from 1pm until the House convenes, any private notice questions and statements that are due to be taken at the commencement of public business. On Fridays any such announcement is usually shown first at 10 am and then at regular 15-minute intervals for a two-minute period until the statement is made.

Mr. Thurnham: I would be pleased if consideration could be given to keeping information about statements on the annunciators after 2.30 pm. Can my right hon. Friend say when he expects us to see that?

Mr. Wakeham: I hope my hon. Friend will recognise that there are physical limits to what can be done. However, it may be possible to accommodate the words, "Statement at 3.30 pm" or "Private notice question at 3.30 pm" on the top of the screen. In view of my hon. Friend's request I have referred this matter to the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committee for further consideration.

Mr. Tony Banks: While I would not necessarily want to hear every speech made in this Chamber if I were not present, is it not now technically possible to use the annunciator system to take a sound feed so that Members in their offices can listen to debates? When the Select Committee considers the televising of Parliament, could it consider the possibility of having pictures as well as sound on the annunciators?

Mr. Wakeham: I imagine that both those things would be possible, but they would require further consideration and decision by the House. I shall bear the hon. Gentleman's points in mind.

Mr. Sims: I appreciate that there are time restrictions with regard to private notice questions, but it is often the case that the Government know that a statement will be made, possibly even a day or so beforehand, yet no notice appears until 1 o'clock. Therefore, those hon. Members with lunch engagements go to those engagements without being aware that a statement is to be made. Is there any reason why, for example, the fact that there was to be a statement made today could not have been on the annunciator during the course of the morning?

Mr. Wakeham: First, there are questions regarding seeking Mr. Speaker's permission to make a statement and

so on, but I will bear what my hon. Friend has said in mind. However, I believe that the present arrangements are the most satisfactory.

Still and Carbonated Waters

34. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what quantity of still and carbonated waters were sold in the House of Commons Refreshment Department in the last year; from what countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Charles Irving (Chairman of the Catering Sub-Committee): I have been asked to reply.

In the year ending February 1988, 34,000 bottles of still and carbonated spring and mineral waters were sold by the Refreshment Department. Of those, 10,300 pints were British and 13,700 pints were French. The Catering Sub-Committee has recently decided to promote the sale of British waters by selecting waters from England, Scotland and Wales that will bear the House of Commons own label. It is hoped that those waters will be available for sale after the Easter recess, and we shall also be selling them in the Kiosk, thereby doubling the amount that we sell each year and making an increased profit.

Mr. Greenway: I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. May I remind him that he, the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds South (Mr. Rees) and I were members of the Sub-Committee that chose the excellent English, Scottish and Welsh waters that the House has so enjoyed? Has the time not come to eliminate French waters from this House?

Mr. Irving: We do not intend to eliminate Perrier water. That would be totally undemocratic and it would be very much more difficult to obtain.

Mr. Haynes: I am ashamed and disgusted that we carry foreign waters in this place. What about fighting for Britain? What about the British waters? It is high time that the policy was changed.

Mr. Irving: In reply to the hon. Gentleman, I can state that that is exactly what we are doing, and I am grateful to him for the compliment.

Welsh Language

35. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Lord President of the Council what assessment he has made of the cost of using simultaneous translation facilities in the Welsh Grand Committee so as to allow for the use of Welsh in its proceedings.

Mr. Wakeham: None, Sir. It is a rule of the House that all proceedings should be conducted in English.

Mr. Butler: My right hon. Friend will be aware of the divisiveness that the Welsh language can and does cause in the Principality. Would this not be an inexpensive investment in confirming the unity of the United Kingdom?

Mr. Wakeham: That is a matter for the House, not for me. However, I very much doubt whether it would be approved by the House.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: Bearing in mind that this year we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the translation of the Bible into Welsh and the fact that more than one-third of hon. Members from Wales now speak Welsh, does the right hon. Gentleman not believe that this year would be the appropriate time to introduce Welsh into the proceedings of the House?

Mr. Wakeham: No. The proceedings of the House have been conducted in English for many hundreds of years and I believe that that policy should continue.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: In view of the large number of English Members who signed the early-day motion on this subject, will my right hon. Friend arrange for them to have Welsh lessons?

Mr. Wakeham: That is not a matter for me.

Mr. Coleman: Will the Lord President of the Council resist this proposition? Is he aware that the proceedings of the Welsh Grand Committee are broadcast? Therefore, many of our countrymen who do not speak the language would be deprived of hearing the speeches made by Welsh Members if those speeches were made in Welsh.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman speaks with great experience. The rule regarding the use of the English language extends to the Committees of the House. I understand that on two occasions, once in the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs and once in the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, a language other than English was used by a witness giving evidence. However, an interpreter was present and the records of the meetings were produced only in English.

Mr. Forth: Does my right hon. Friend accept that the four-fifths of people in Wales who do not speak Welsh will be grateful to him for his sensible decision? Does he also accept that if he were to give way to this unreasonable request, groups speaking many other languages in the United Kingdom—and some groups may be as large as the Welsh-speaking group — would want to make a similar claim on the House?

Mr. Wakeham: As usual, my hon. Friend has widened the subject very well. He has made a very good point and I will take note of it.

Aerosols

36. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Lord President of the Council if there are any plans to ban the use of aerosols in the Palace of Westminster; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: No, Sir. I am not aware of any such plans.

Mr. Roberts: Does the Minister not realise that Prince Charles has already banned the use of dangerous aerosols——

Mr. Speaker: Yes, but we must not bring in the private opinions of members of the royal family to support arguments.

Mr. Roberts: It is a stated public opinion of the royal family that the aerosols are dangerous and the royal family are not using them in their homes. Prince Charles made his statement as an environmentalist who is concerned about the environment. In the light of recent reports that there has been a 3 per cent. depletion of the protective ozone layer over Britain, and that every 1 per cent. by which that

ozone layer is depleted causes the incidence of skin cancer to increase between 5 and 7 per cent., should not the Government take the issue seriously, set an example and ban the use of CFC-bearing aerosol cans in the Palace of Westminster and in all Government Departments, especially the Department of the Environment?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman realises that not all aerosols are subject to this restriction. The restriction applies only to those aerosols which contain chlorofluorocarbons. I am sure the hon. Gentleman is aware that by signing the Montreal protocol the Government are committed to reducing the use of those chemicals in this country by 50 per cent. before the end of the century. We are looking to all users in refrigeration, insulation and dry cleaning — as well as aerosols — to contribute towards that reduction. To that end the Government are adopting a more far-reaching and co-ordinated policy that will produce greater environmental benefits.

Mr. Dickens: Is the Lord President of the Council aware that if aerosol sprays are banned from the Palace of Westminister hon. Members run the risk of becoming extinct? A lot of hot air is spoken here late at night.

Mr. Wakeham: Any such ban would ultimately be for the House to decide. While I would not discourage any decision by individual Members or Officers of the House not to use aerosols containing chlorofluorocarbons, it would not be appropriate to ban their use. Voluntary action is likely to be more effective, and the British aerosol industry, which has already made a significant contribution to reducing emissions, expects virtually to phase out the use of CFCs within the next few years.

Terrorist Murders in Northern Ireland

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the recent killings in Northern Ireland, and especially on the murders of two soldiers in Belfast on Saturday 19 March.

I must remind the House of the background and sequence of events during the last week in Northern Ireland. On Wednesday the funerals were held of the three IRA terrorists killed in Gibraltar. In spite of the very large crowds and the extremely tense situation in West Belfast, the funerals had proceeded in an orderly manner, without violence and without any paramilitary display.

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This may be a point of disagreement. I shall call the hon. Gentleman in due course.

Mr. King: This was the position when a vicious attack took place at Milltown cemetery by a Loyalist gunman. In that attack three people attending the funeral were killed and a large number injured, of whom one remains in intensive care.

On Thursday there was the funeral of the IRA gunman shot by the Army on Monday. He was acknowledged by the IRA as one of its members. His funeral took place without disturbance and without paramilitary display.

On Friday the funeral took place of Charles McCrillen, a Catholic with no paramilitary connections, shot by the UFF; and of Thomas McErlean, one of the three killed at Milltown cemetery. These again took place peacefully and without any breach of the law.

On Saturday the funerals of the other two killed at Milltown cemetery took place, first that of John Murray, and secondly that of Kevin Brady, who was acknowledged by the PIRA to be one of its members. It was at this funeral that the quite horrific events took place that have so shocked the world.

I would like to tell the House the facts as far as they can be established about these events. Just after midday on Saturday, following the funeral service at St. Agnes church, the cortege moved off along Andersonstown road towards the Milltown cemetery. At that point, a civilian car attempted to reverse away from the cortege. Despite the television coverage of the subsequent events, which many hon. Members will have seen, it remains unclear how the car came to be in that position and for how long it had been on that road. What is quite clear, however, is that as it reversed away from the cortege its way was blocked, both forward and backward, by taxis accompanying the funeral.

What immediately followed is a matter of sickening visual record. A number of those in the funeral cortege immediately set upon the car with the obvious intention of pulling out the two occupants. Photographs indicate that at this point the driver of the car leaned out of his window and fired one shot in the air — the only shot which both occupants fired in the course of the attack upon them. After only a moment's pause the crowd resumed the onslaught on the car, some of them smashing at it with iron bars, and eventually succeeded in hauling out both occupants. Both men were then dragged by the crowd into an adjacent stadium, the gates were closed, and it appears that a smaller group of attackers continued to assault them, stripped them and searched their clothing, subsequently threw them over a wall, and then bundled them into a black taxi which took them to a nearby piece of wasteland, where they were shot.

It subsequently emerged that the two victims were corporals in the Royal Corps of Signals — Corporal Wood and Corporal Howes. Shortly beforehand they had left the joint police and Army base in North Howard street mill, after completing a routine maintenance task, in order to return to their unit at Lisburn. They had no reason to be in the vicinity of the funeral. This is not an approved route for soldiers who are not on operational duty at the time, and there is absolutely no question of their being involved in any way with surveillance or any other duties connected with the funeral. I am therefore unable to tell the House with any certainty why they were there. If the most likely explanation is that they decided to take the shortest route back to their base, without appreciating the presence of the funeral, this can only be conjecture, and it will probably never be known why they were there.

Whatever the reason, however, nothing can conceivably justify the utterly appalling outrage that then occurred and which resulted in their deaths. The whole House will join me in extending the utmost sympathy to their families, and even more so in view of the awful television pictures of the occasion. Nor has it gone unnoticed, and rightly so, that, although they both had loaded personal protection pistols, they showed incredible restraint in using them only to fire a warning shot in the air.

In the face of this outrage, and the others in the week, the first and immediate objective is to bring to justice those responsible. In respect of the Milltown cemetery attack, a man will shortly be charged with these murders, and also a number of other serious offences. In respect of the killing of the soldiers, two men are already in custody. In addition, a massive murder investigation is under way, in which all possible resources are involved to identify all those responsible.

The next issue that I wish to address is that of the approach of the RUC to the conduct of these funerals. Large funerals and processions are arguably the most difficult events from a public order and a terrorist threat situation that the security forces face. They have been used quite unscrupulously by paramilitaries for propaganda purposes.

The Chief Constable, in determining the most appropriate method of policing any funeral, takes account of all the relevant circumstances in reaching his decision. Clearly a prime consideration has been that they should be conducted within the law and without paramilitary display. He would also have regard to the degree to which other elements would seek deliberately to exploit the presence of the police to provoke violence and disorder.

There have been suggestions that the arrangements for the funerals were the consequence of a political directive and that there had been some interference with the independent operational responsibility of the Chief Constable. This is quite false. The Chief Constable has asked me to make it quite clear that he takes full responsibility for the arrangements for the funerals, and that these were policing decisions, taken after the most careful assessment of all the relevant circumstances. I

[Mr. King]

would emphasise that I fully support the decisions that he took in these matters, and in which the initial outcome had clearly been successful. However, the two incidents that subsequently occurred are clearly wholly unacceptable and require immediate review in regard to policing to be followed at any future funeral. The Chief Constable has informed me this morning that he is carrying this through as a matter of urgency. I can tell the House that he will carry through this work with great professionalism and sensitivity, but the House knows well how difficult it is to ensure that funerals can proceed in good order and within the law when there are elements who have absolutely no scruples or respect for family feelings in the way in which they seek to exploit them.

Faced with the appalling violence of the last weeks—not only in Belfast, but the vicious murders of Jillian Johnston in Fermanagh and Constable Graham in the Creggan in Londonderry only this morning—the House may remember the words that I spoke last Thursday about the desperate need to break the awful cycle of violence and retaliation and end the suffering and heartache that is achieving nothing but more misery for all. This is now urgent, and it is the time when every person with a spark of human decency must determine to give his full support to the fight against terrorism, from whichever quarter it may come. The security forces will take the lead, as they have done so bravely over the years, but they must have the whole-hearted co-operation of everybody in the Province, in the island of Ireland and throughout the United Kingdom, in their task. I saw this morning Archbishop Eames, Cardinal O'Fiaich, the Moderator and Secretary of the Presbyterian Church and the President of the Methodist Church, on the need for all in the Province to take their share of responsibility and to condemn violence in all its forms.

It is vital that we also help the community, in any way, to support the fight against terrorism, and in that connection we are improving significantly the confidential telephone system. Very shortly indeed we shall be supplementing the present system with a single and easily memorable freephone number usable right across the Province. I have asked the broadcasting authorities to publicise the number, and they have readily agreed. That will be a valuable strengthening of the present facility, which is, in fact, being used by a considerable number of people in their horror at the events of Saturday.

The fight against Republican terrorism must be waged also beyond the confines of Northern Ireland, and it particularly raises major challenges for the Government of the Republic of Ireland. A significant number of steps have been taken to help improve cross-border co-operation, and we particularly appreciate the amount of weapons and explosives that have already been recovered by the Garda. We have to keep working to improve that co-operation in our common interest to defeat terrorism. I have this morning agreed with Mr. Lenihan that there will be a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference this week, at which we shall be discussing cross-border security co-operation, and which will be attended by Mr. Lenihan and myself, as co-chairmen, by Mr. Collins, the Irish Minister of Justice, by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State and by the Chief Constable and the Commissioner of the Garda.

The common phrase this weekend is that the troubles of Northern Ireland have plumbed new depths of horror. That was the phrase at Enniskillen, that was the phrase at Milltown cemetery, and it is now the phrase in the Andersontown road following the events of Saturday. The truth is that there will be new depths again so long as this awful and violent campaign of terrorism and revenge continues. It has got to stop, in the name of humanity, if there is to be any decent future for the people of Northern Ireland and for all those living in the island of Ireland, and if the evil shroud of terrorism is to be lifted from the United Kingdom as a whole.

We all have our part to play, whether in actively combating terrorism through the security forces, whether working to build bridges across communities or whether in deciding we do nothing in our words or actions that can increase the tensions. We all have our part, and the duty that we owe to all the tragic victims of these outrages is to play that part to the full.

Mr. Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull, North): It is my unhappy duty once again to have to pass on the condolences of Opposition Members to the families of those who have been so tragically killed in Northern Ireland. Our sympathies today are with the families of Corporals David Howes and Derek Wood, but we must not forget Jillian Johnston, and we hope that her fiancé will have a speedy recovery. Our condolences must go also to the family of Constable Graham, who was killed in the Creggan.

In the past four days the Secretary of State has twice had the melancholy task of coming to the Dispatch Box as the bearer of bad news. Five tragic deaths have occurred at funerals, three at the hands of a maverick gunman, and two after being cornered by a bestial pack that had trapped its quarry.

However, the important thing is that in this House we maintain cool heads. Our justified and righteous anger should not be allowed to overcome a reasoned judgment, for if it does the men of violence will have won.

On Thursday Opposition Members supported the decision of the Chief Constable in the attitude that was taken to the policing of Wednesday's funerals. He took a similar decision on Saturday, and in the successful funerals that occurred earlier last week, which we tend to forget. We thought that he was right then; we think that he is right now. He must decide how best to police events in emotionally charged atmospheres. That is sensitive policing, not soft policing. He must take each case as it comes, on its merits. We welcome his review, but we welcome also the knowledge of his integrity and of the fact that he will do what is best for the rule of law and for the feelings of the families of the dead in Northern Ireland when he comes to his decision.

None the less, questions need to be asked and observations need to be made. First, is the Secretary of State in a position to tell the House if, and when, the Army was informed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary of the type of policing practices that were to be used at the funeral on Saturday, and indeed at previous ones? What general procedures for liaison between Army personnel and the RUC exist on these matters?

Secondly, can the Secretary of State confirm that instructions were given to the two corporals about the route to be followed and that they had been briefed about the funerals?

Thirdly, we welcome the statement that a man is to be charged for what happened at Milltown and that two people have been arrested in connection with what happened on Saturday, but many more people were involved in the soldiers' murders. Can the Secretary of State say whether it has been decided to bring charges against the two who have been arrested and if he expects further arrests to follow?

Fourthly, it has been alleged that the security forces in the area were prevented by orders from seeking to protect the soldiers, the mere suggestion of which I find completely reprehensible. Will the Secretary of State confirm to hon. Members, who may have heard other hon. Members making that statement, that such was not the case?

Finally, in terms of questions, can the Secretary of State say what role the helicopter that was in the vicinity played in seeking to summon assistance to the cornered soldiers?

We welcome the Secretary of State's statement about the Intergovernmental Conference to be held later this week. Obviously, Opposition Members welcome the continuance of that development. We prefer it to suggestions in some quarters that there should be an early meeting between the right hon. Lady the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach. Our general view is that, while we welcome the support and statements that are coming from the Republic in the wake of recent incidents, gesture politics of a summit nature would not be proper at the present time. Perhaps there should be a summit meeting, but it should take place only after a period of careful planning, with an agreed agenda, and when each of the Governments know what they want to achieve. At present, the mechanics exist in the Intergovernmental Conference for other matters to be discussed.

We believe that the Prime Minister should start once again to play a more active part in Irish affairs. In the past six months horrific events and political misunderstandings have increased. As a signatory to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, many of us believe that the Prime Minister should resume that keen interest which helped to lead to the signing of the agreement. This will be essential in the period leading up to the re-examination of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

There is a responsibility on the elected leaders of the communities in Northern Ireland, who have seen enormous tragic changes taking place in their communities. They must come together. They must sit together, with good will and no preconditions, to attempt to find a peaceful way forward. The vacuum in constitutional politics has for the moment been replaced with a surfeit of violence—the gunman, the bomber, the lynch mob. It is time for the political leaders from both communities in Northern Ireland to find an antidote to this poison in the midst of the communities.

All that the British Government can do, and all that we as an Opposition can help them to do, is to maintain the position in which the political leaders can come together to talk. The Secretary of State has a crucial role to play in this process. We are talking about British subjects directly ruled from this House. If that is his course of action, I am sure that he will be given the full support of all men and women of good will in both these islands. He will have our support in upholding the rule of law against the law of the jungle.

Mr. King: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his closing comments and for the way in which he has approached this appalling and difficult issue. He said that he supported the decision as being right at the time, but clearly in the light of subsequent events it requires close review. That will be done. There is close liaison between the Army and the police. In all their activities they work in close co-operation.

In terms of what the soldiers knew, I understand that there was a general briefing at the beginning of the week about the problems posed by the tensions arising from the funerals. As I said in my statement, the route that the soldiers were on is not an approved route at any time for soldiers who are not on operational duties in the area.

I cannot add to what I said about charges, but obviously the House will await further information with close attention.

There is absolutely no truth whatever in the suggestion that the security forces were in some way prevented from intervening. That is a gross calumny on the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the integrity of the senior officers at the time. There is no justification whatever for that claim and I am sorry that certain people have chosen to raise that point.

At the time, the police were obviously assisted by the helicopter. It is no secret that it can provide helpful information of events on the ground, although sometimes it takes time to interpret exactly what is happening. The police did not have access to the sort of television film inside the cameras which subsequently we have all been able to see and with hindsight form other views. In the initial stages it took time to clarify what was taking place. The police knew that there were certainly no security forces or soldiers in the area. As far as their intelligence went, nobody was there. It is no secret that the first impression was of a further attempted bomb attack on a funeral. That was one possibility. As soon as it was clear that the matter was indeed serious, the police acted with considerable determination.

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): In fairness to the two young corporals, will the Secretary of State accept that he seemed to say by implication that the route they chose was the direct route to Army headquarters in Lisburn? Will he confirm that the alternative route, which is an extension of the M1 motorway, has been a no-go area to all Army personnel for years? Were the two corporals informed that the motorway extension was out of bounds to them? Were they directed to use a route which had not previously been authorised for military personnel?

Can the Secretary of State now answer the question that I put to him in the House last Thursday, when I asked him to explain precisely how the stand-off decision was taken and what wider considerations and discussions preceded the Chief Constable's directive? Does he agree that dual control of the security forces, the Army and the RUC, as required by article 7 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, is proving to be utterly disastrous?

Mr. King: I note that the right hon. Gentleman does not choose to repeat in the House the allegations that he made outside about some political interference. I am glad that he did not, because they happen to be absolutely untrue.

Mr. Molyneaux *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We cannot have interventions in the middle of answers.

Mr. King: If the right hon. Gentleman intends to quote from the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it would be more candid

[Mr. King]

with the House to recognise that the Anglo-Irish Agreement specifically reserves the operational independence of the Chief Constable. The Chief Constable has made his position clear. What has happened is deeply regrettable. The right hon. Gentleman opened his question out of deference to the two corporals concerned. We feel that deference throughout the House. The right hon. Gentleman does no good to misrepresent the position about the sad circumstances that surrounded their deaths.

In my statement I made clear the position about the road. It is not a no-go area. There are no no-go areas in Northern Ireland. There is a difference between routes that soldiers or security forces use when on operational duty, and those that they use when they are not on operational duty.

Sir Bernard Braine (Castle Point): Whatever our private feelings about the atrocious happening on Saturday, I am sure that all of us welcome my right hon. Friend's frank, moving and firm statement. With regard to the future, will he take it from me that hon. Members and the country cannot accept any suggestion of no-go areas in any part of the United Kingdom? I hope that he will make that absolutely clear. Although we expect the Government to continue to seek reconciliation between two sorely tried communities by every reasonable means, they must not flinch from the task of eradicating men of violence, wherever they may be found.

Mr. King: I appreciate my right hon. Friend's comments. This has been a tragic and most awful occurrence. Whatever the circumstances in which it arose, it is simply intolerable that this could happen, not just in the United Kingdom, but anywhere in the civilised world. I do not think that I was the only person who sensed the utter barbarity that happened on Saturday. Against that background, I assure my right hon. Friend that there are no no-go areas. The writ runs throughout Northern Ireland, as it does throughout the United Kingdom, but I draw the distinction, which right hon. and hon. Members will recognise, between routes where there are no no-go areas and routes that are more sensible, or less sensible, to use when not on operational duty.

Mr. John Hume (Foyle): I join the Secretary of State and right hon. and hon. Members in expressing the deepest sympathy to the families of those who have been murdered in the past week in Northern Ireland and in sending a particular word of sympathy to the families of the soldiers who were murdered in such barbaric circumstances. The dictionary is no longer full enough of words to express proper condemnation and the revulsion that people feel about what happened. I agree with the Secretary of State. There is no shortage of those who, in hindsight, would tell us what we should have done.

I tell the House with conviction that the feeling in west Belfast last week after the Gibraltar incident was such that had the security forces mounted normal operations at these funerals the violence would have been serious and there would have been many more deaths. Unfortunately, political leaders, policemen and soldiers in Northern Ireland are faced, not with the normal choice between what is right and what is wrong—not with black and white—but often with the choice between the roads of lesser risk and lesser evil. In the circumstances, the police and the Army took the proper and correct decision, and I support them. These events have underlined for everybody across the board in Northern Ireland the desperate and terrible futility of killing human beings in order to unite a people.

What that deep feeling, right across our community, cries out to everybody in this House, and particularly to me and the hon. Gentlemen who sit behind me, is that there is a desperate need for dialogue, not to conquer one another, but to accommodate our differences. *[Interruption.]* I also say to those who criticise and say that because of these horrific events the Government should be deflected from the road on which they have chosen to go, together with the Irish Government, that they are saying that both Governments should be blackmailed by the people who committed these horrific crimes, and that is unthinkable. *[Interruption.]* Strength must be shown, and there is no better way to show that to the people of Northern Ireland than by the two Governments, with all their resources, working as closely as possible to face down and tackle all these problems.

Mr. King: I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's opening comments, which drew attention to the appallingly difficult decisions that the Chief Constable, who has the responsibility, has to take. It is easy enough to shout abuse, and the House heard an illustration of that during the hon. Gentleman's contribution, with the shouting and the heckling that will always come from one side or the other. There is plenty of abuse that can be shouted. The problem is how to take decisions in the best interests of the people.

I was particularly concerned about the contribution of the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), because he has a part to play in leading. He is looked to for leadership, and I hope that he will be able, as I hope that the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) will, to show total support, in the fight against the violence, for the efforts of the security forces, and in the total commitment of both the Unionist and Nationalist constitutional parties to realise that they owe it to their people to encourage dialogue and discussion and not to leave a vacuum in which violence breeds.

Mr. Peter Robinson (Belfast, East): I join the Secretary of State, not only in his condemnation of the killings that he had to report to the House, but in his expression of sympathy to the families of those involved.

Is it the Secretary of State's view that some contribution to the fact that the two soldiers were killed was that they restrained themselves and did not open fire? Is any part of that due to the fact that soldiers, and the security forces in general, are concerned at the repercussions should they attempt to defend their lives or those of other people in the community, because there may be calls for inquiries, disciplinary charges and even court cases? Will the right hon. Gentleman make it clear that he will stand behind any member of the security forces who has to defend his life in such circumstances?

What contribution does the hon. Gentleman feel that the decision of the Chief Constable to abdicate policing of west Belfast played in the events of Saturday? Will he be pressing the Chief Constable, in his review of policing funeral arrangements, to ensure that if those circumstances should recur there will be taken into consideration

the fact that the IRA takes over the policing of an area if the RUC abdicates that role? It is not simply a case of there being no policing in the area.

Does the Secretary of State feel that the vacuum into which undoubtedly violence and terrorism go can be taken up by political movement in Northern Ireland to get a replacement for a system that has failed not only politicians but the people of Northern Ireland? Can we not move towards a system of government that can produce peace, stability and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, and does he not think that with that stable structure of government we might have a firm and resolute security initiative to defeat terrorism in our Province?

Mr. King: It is right that the soldiers concerned had an absolute right to defend themselves. The terms of engagement are to save their own or other people's lives. At the same time, we must recognise the appallingly difficult situation that they were in and the incredible restraint that they showed in the circumstances, to their tragic cost. They would have been entitled to defend themselves.

In no sense do I accept the phrase that the Chief Constable "abdicated policing" in west Belfast. I do not know why we assume that funerals ought to be policed. Should we not expect funerals to be one occasion when there is no need for policing? The appalling and unscrupulous intentions of those who exploit the grief of funerals has in the past made the policing of funerals necessary. There is no question of abdicating policing. Moreover, there is no question of tolerating any suggestion that the IRA, Sinn Fein or anybody else will set up some alternative police force.

Whereas the first funeral was clearly conducted in good order and without display, there were discouraging signs by the time of the funeral on Saturday. Although, as far as we know, there was no firing party, there were signs of some attempts to push the boundary back towards paramilitary displays, and I know that the Chief Constable is concerned about that.

If I read the hon. Gentleman right, I welcome the last part of his contribution, which was in line with other contributions that have been made. It is by dialogue, discussion and a constitutional approach, and not by violence, that we shall find the right way forward.

Mr. David Alton (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): In associating myself and my right hon. and hon. Friends with the condolences that the Secretary of State has expressed, I assure him of our full support for him personally in circumstances which have required great fortitude, courage and resilience. We strongly believe that the ritualistic calls for his resignation and that of the Chief Constable are gratuitously offensive, and should be treated as such. We reiterate our support for the Anglo-Irish Agreement as the best tool for defeating the lynch mobs. We welcome the announcement of the Intergovernmental Conference, and we hope that there will be an early summit at which the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will meet. We hope that on the agenda on that occasion will be the question of a joint security commission.

Will the Secretary of State review the policy of letting soldiers on duty drive through the Province in unmarked cars while wearing civilian clothing and armed only with pistols? Is it not the case that the only crumbs of comfort to be drawn from a week of funerals, with yet more to come, is that the IRA has been exposed at its most bestial, ruthless and violent, and that no Irishman or Briton who calls himself civilised or Christian can give succour, hiding place or even acquiescence to the IRA or other paramilitary organisations?

Mr. King: I apologise for the fact that I have not yet replied to the question about a summit, which was raised also by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). As I announced, I and the Tánaiste, the Deputy Prime Minister, are to have a meeting this week. Any question of a meeting between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will be a matter for later consideration, but there are no present proposals.

As to the question of the rules about soldiers travelling around the Province in unmarked cars while wearing civilian clothes, where there are major troop movements there is no question of that happening. However, in terms of administration and maintenance tasks — I see the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) nodding in agreement—the best way to safeguard the lives of soldiers, without massive organisation, is a degree of anonymity. Provided that the normal arrangements are adhered to, and sensible precautions are taken, it has worked extremely well in the past.

I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's comments about me. I agree about the bestiality of what took place. I hope that everybody knows that what they saw are the people who, with the Armalite and the ballot box, have used the phrase, "Who shall object if we take power in Ireland?" Not just north of the border, but throughout the island of Ireland, through the medium of television, people saw the sorts of people who want to take power over them. It was no coincidence or impulse that made those people rush towards the cameras to try to obliterate the shots. Whatever the tragedy and awfulness of this, it has revealed the IRA in its real, unspeakable nastiness. Those pictures will not be forgotten in the island of Ireland.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): In expressing the full support of Conservative Members and the House as a whole for my right hon. Friend in his enormously difficult task, may I put it to him that, although it is almost impossible to find adequate words to describe the ghastly tragedies of last week, one thing that stands out is the heroic restraint of the murdered soldiers in not using their weapons to defend themselves against their brutal attackers? We should all pay tribute to them for that and remember them with honour. It should be a memorial and an example to everyone in Ireland.

Mr. King: We all feel deeply humbled at the way in which those soldiers reacted with discipline and restraint in the circumstances. It may interest the House to know that the GOC told me last night that the Army has never received as many messages of sympathy, concern and respect from members of the public across the Province as have been flooding into Army headquarters in Lisburn, where the two soldiers were based.

Mr. Ken Maginnis (Fermanagh and South Tyrone): First, I join other right hon. and hon. Members in expressing my sympathy and the sympathy of my constituents to the families of the two young soldiers. My constituents know from bitter experience how the families and comrades of those two soldiers feel. Only the evening

[Mr. Ken Maginnis]

before the death of the two soldiers, which was seen so vividly on television, an unsuspecting young girl of 21 was gunned down, by 47 shots from high-powered weapons, in the yard of her own home. She was the 196th victim of terrorism in my constituency, and the 111th victim since a date exactly 12 years ago. Of those 111 people, 110 were victims of the IRA.

We have heard people talk, because they saw it on their television screens, about the unbelievable savagery of what happened on Saturday. I and those whom I represent live with that same unbelievable savagery day in and day out. That is why we are so bitter and feel so helpless when a decision is taken to remove the police and the security forces from west Belfast, giving the freedom of the streets to those who, equipped with radios and mobile in their black taxis, can take complete control on behalf of the Provisional IRA.

It is not true to say that there was no paramilitary display and no disturbance in Belfast as a result of withdrawing the police and the Army. No shots may have been fired over the coffins, but the deceit is that the terrorists go round the corner into the next street, set up a shrine and there, before the media invited for the occasion, display the same paramilitary activity as they used to display over the coffins.

We must not be fooled by the platitudes that we hear from those who take it upon themselves to speak on behalf of the paramilitaries who supervise the funerals. I refer to the SDLP. I refer to the Irish Catholic Church and to those priests who can describe a terrorist who died in Gibraltar as someone who died like Jesus Christ. Neither I nor those of my co-religionists who heard those words can accept such blasphemy.

I ask the Secretary of State to try to listen to the voices of those, Protestant and Catholic, who want nothing to do with any paramilitary organisation and who would condemn the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Freedom Fighters as they would condemn the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein. Will the right hon. Gentleman now listen to the voice of the people and those who try to be responsible elected representatives on their behalf, and not give way to something that may appear to have short-term advantage, but which will provide nothing but long-term disadvantage, suffering and tragedy for the people of Northern Ireland?

Mr. King: The whole House understands the depth of feeling with which the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) speaks. The name of his constituency says it all to anyone who knows anything about recent events in Northern Ireland.

In my statement last Thursday I made clear my concern about some of the comments that are made in addresses at funerals. I include such people in the categories of those who have a part to play in trying to ease tension and build bridges. It is incumbent on everyone to have great regard to the phrases that they use, whatever the emotion of the moment.

In that connection, although I obviously do not approve of paramilitary displays in which people slide down side alleys and set up little stunts for the television cameras, that is markedly preferable to their appearing at the graveside as they have in the past. Having said that, it is obvously against the law and should not happen. Although we prize highly freedom of speech and publication, the broadcasting authorities for which those stunts are arranged, and without which they would have no purpose, should consider their responsibilities in such matters.

In all the horror of the murder of the young girl in the hon. Gentleman's constituency, what revolted me as much as anything was the expression of regret from Mr. Adams, who said that he thought it was a mistake.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I fully understand the importance of the matter, especially to those who represent Ulster constituencies, but I remind the House that there is an important debate to follow this. I hope that questions will be brief so that answers may also be relatively brief.

Mr. James Kilfedder (North Down): I join in the expression of sympathy. Is not the photograph of the naked young soldier poignantly relevant to this season leading up to Good Friday, and does it not remind us that we must never give way to despair?

The Secretary of State said that IRA funerals pose a serious problem. When he spoke to Cardinal O'Fiaich this morning, did he point out that the IRA uses its funerals for the glorification and justification of terrorism, and did he ask the Cardinal whether the Church will excommunicate the terrorists? Did he ask him to ensure that IRA funerals will be reduced to private funerals, with minimum rites and only a small number of people? That would save the security forces from danger.

Finally, did the Secretary of State raise at the Anglo-Irish Conference the question of allowing the coffins from Gibraltar to be landed at Dublin, thereby prolonging the funeral and inciting people to violence?

Mr. King: I do not think that it was any wish of the Irish Government for the coffins to arrive in Dublin. That was the choice of the families, and of others who may have been seeking to influence them. It posed significant problems for the Irish Government in policing the funeral as well.

I commend to hon. Members the editorial in the *Irish News* today. I am struck by some of the phrases in it. It states:

> "The participants in the brutal orgy may well have formed part of the congregation that had just celebrated the ritual of the sacred liturgy."

It goes on to say:

> "The barbaric murders of Corporal Wood and Howes were a satanic rejection of the Christian faith."

I think that the leading Nationalist Catholic newspaper in Northern Ireland brings across very forcefully the strength of decent Catholic feeling about those matters.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): The Secretary of State told us at the beginning of his statement that the soldiers who were killed had been briefed earlier in the week. Is he aware that the individual whose funeral took place on Saturday was still alive at the beginning of the week, and would he care to comment on that?

My right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), the leader of the Official Unionist party, made it clear that the Royal Ulster Constabulary could not have moved to the rescue because of a directive from the Chief Constable. Will the right hon. Gentleman take it from me that the people of Northern Ireland expect more from him than a new telephone number if we are to deal with IRA terrorism?

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman's contribution falls somewhat short of the level that I would have looked for on this occasion.

First, let me say to him that the warning and guidance given to soldiers concerned funerals in west Belfast during the course of the week. He will be aware from my recitation that, sadly, there was a funeral every day from Wednesday through the whole of the week in west Belfast. As I have made clear, the route that the soldiers were on was never approved for non-operational use, whether for funerals or other matters.

As for the directions that were given, it was a police decision when to intervene. Allowing for the uncertainty at the start about just what was happening, and the difficulty of identifying events, the police arrived on the scene fairly soon, and in some numbers, but, sadly and tragically, not soon enough to prevent the deaths of the corporals.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): My constituents and I join Members of the House, who, genuinely and sincerely, send their sympathy to the families who have been so sadly and tragically bereaved.

On Saturday, shortly after the two corporals were murdered, I stood at the bedside of my constituent, young Stanley Liggett, whose girl friend was being prepared for her coffin. As I stood at the bedside, that young man did not know that his young partner was dead. He was hoping, as he spoke to me, that soon he would be joining her in happiness, for the love that was in their hearts the one for the other.

I assure the Secretary of State that the people of my constituency do not feel happy about the security decision. Whether hon. Members accept it or not, it is different for those who live with this problem day after day. It is different for those who watch coffin after coffin going down the road. It is different for those looking into the faces of their loved ones—their kith and kin—who have been murdered.

People are lecturing us on how we are supposed to feel at the time of our sorrow and grief. We do not take very kindly to lectures at present. For 20 years our hearts have been cut asunder and our homes have been butchered. I know, because that happened to my family. I know what it is to carry the coffins of two young people down the road together.

There are Members of the House who have played along with the terrorists, and with a terrorist organisation, inviting its members to this country and sitting down with them. Indeed, in recent days, the leader of the SDLP has been in consultation and negotiation with the head of Sinn Fein. It was a Conservative Member who said on Northern Ireland radio this morning that the hon. Member for Newry and Armagh (Mr. Mallon) was an apologist for the terrorists. That was not my statement. It was made by a member of the Secretary of State's own party, who was trying to get out of the present tragedy of condemnation of the awful, brutal, savage murder of our people.

We want to live, and, whether or not it is accepted by hon. Members, we want to live in peace, but we can never live in peace with murderers. We cannot live in peace with men who have the weapons to kill our people. I ask the Secretary of State, genuinely and sincerely, to tell the House when he will fulfil the promise that he made at that Dispatch Box that he would bring peace to Northern Ireland with the eradication—that is the word used both by him and by the Prime Minister—of terrorism. I beg of him: let it be soon, for that is what my people cry out for.

Mr. King: The whole House understands the reasons, and the most recent reminders, that have prompted the emotion with which the hon. Gentleman has spoken, and I know that every right hon. and hon. Member will respect them. The hon. Gentleman, too, will respect the fact that he is not the only Member of the House who feels deeply and tragically about the extent of the suffering and sorrow. I have taken certain responsibilities as Secretary of State. I hope that I do not lack feeling, and I share the concern that the hon. Member feels so acutely, with even more personal knowledge of the people concerned.

Against that background, however, we all have a duty to work for the future, to try to make it better for people, and to find a way through the problems and tragedies. That is why I say that it must be through co-operation. We should not try to find people whom we can criticise or make into scapegoats. We should try to find people with whom we can build and improve a life for all those in the Province.

Mr. Seamus Mallon (Newry and Armagh): While expressing my horror and revulsion at the horrible killings of the recent past, and the 2,600 killings that have already taken place over a number of years, let me say that the understanding and sensitivity shown by the Secretary of State over a very difficult recent past have been recognised and much appreciated.

As one who publicly urged the Chief Constable of the RUC not to allow a confrontation to develop at the funerals, I feel that it would be absolutely wrong to allow the Chief Constable to be ultimately responsible for that decision, which I believed then was right, and I still believe was right. Having said that, may I ask the Secretary of State whether he agrees that the essence of the problem has not been changed by the terrible events of recent days? The essence of the problem remains the same, and therefore the essence of the solution must necessarily remain the same.

I strongly urge the two Governments, through the structures that they have developed for themselves, to approach a solution to the problem in terms of creating, not just peace, but the type of political stability that is so essential. If that were done, there would be a response, believe it or not, from the political community in the North of Ireland. Without that, every other effort is to no avail.

Mr. King: The challenge for political dialogue and progress is now within the Province, and that must now be addressed. To those who believe that there might be some solution through violence, the events of recent months, and above all the horror of Saturday, have shown where violence leads and shows the evil of the people who seek to perpetrate it.

I note what the hon. Gentleman said about the Chief Constable. He made a comment about the Chief Constable not having to take the responsibility. The Chief Constable does not shirk responsibility, and I have the greatest admiration for him in that respect. I hope that the House recognises that I will not shirk my responsibilities either. In making my statement I did not wish to cause confusion and suggest that responsibilities are different from what

[Mr. King]

they are. I have no hesitation in making it clear that I stand fully behind the Chief Constable in the decisions that he took.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must tell the House again that I must have regard for subsequent business. Many hon. Members who are rising have already spoken in the Budget debate, and there is a long list of hon. Members who wish to speak in the debate today. I shall allow a further five minutes of questions on the statement, and then we must move on.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, like all my constituents in Carshalton, I and all hon. Members were deeply shocked and appalled by these tragic murders at the weekend? Our hearts go out to the parents and family of Corporal Derek Wood, who lived in my constituency. Is my right hon. Friend further aware that we were gratified by his words of sensitivity and sympathy for the families and that these will be of great comfort to them in their time of trial? Will he see to it that the results of the review that he has set in hand about the policing of funerals are speedily considered and acted upon?

Mr. King: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. As he said, Corporal Wood was one of his constituents, and we understand very well my hon. Friend's feelings on the matter. I hope that he will draw to the attention of the family the words of my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow), who has just returned to the Chamber. The House will have noticed that he spoke most movingly, and my hon. Friend will draw attention to the strong approbation of my right hon. Friend's admiration for two very brave young men.

Mr. Clive Soley (Hammersmith): There is considerable sympathy for the Secretary of State in what must have been the most difficult week of his political career in the most difficult job in British politics. We must also recognise the special courage that enables two NCOs not to use their weapons when they could have done so in the closing minutes of their lives. Have we not seen a chain reaction of events that can be dealt with only by the very closest co-operation between London and Dublin?

Bearing in mind the events, not only of the last week, but of the last few months, will the right hon. Gentleman state clearly that the British Government's response to paramilitary organisations, whether Unionist or Republican, will always put first the British national interest of protecting the democratic forms within which we operate, and the rule of law? If we are ever seen to operate, or are believed to be operating, outside those, we shall undermine our own position. If we can reiterate that and operate within it, we will not only carry Dublin with us, but will triumph in the end, because democracy can triumph only when we operate on that basis.

Mr. King: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the close interest that he takes in this subject. He will excuse me if I do not reply in detail, but, broadly, I agree very much with what he said.

Sir Antony Buck (Colchester, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that, while this is a tragic occasion, it is none the less an occasion on which we can all appropriately unite to commend the work of the heroic forces of law and order in the Province—the UDR, the RUC and our own armed forces? Does he agree also that probably no armed forces in the world but ours could have sustained the burdens that they have had to sustain over a prolonged period? I hope that he will join me in hoping that before very long there will be condemnation of the violence direct from the Vatican.

Mr. King: My service in Northern Ireland forcefully brings home to me the debt that we owe to the security forces, not only for the effectiveness of their operations, but for the restraint and good humour with which they are conducted. In all the annals of their activities and service in Northern Ireland there has been no greater illustration of that restraint than the courage of those two young men.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): On behalf of my constituents and myself, I, too, wish to place on record my sympathy for the relatives of the two young soldiers, for the family of Jillian Johnston and for the family of the constable who was murdered in Londonderry, Constable Clive Graham. Many hon. Members have spoken about the courage and bravery of those two young soldiers. I hope that the message will go to their colleagues who are still serving in Northern Ireland that we do not want any more of them to sacrifice their lives unduly. I can tell the Secretary of State that my constituents see that there are still no-go areas. As long as our people perceive that there are such areas, the Secretary of State must take note and with the Chief Constable take steps to ensure that there is proper policing throughout the Province.

May I also convey to the Secretary of State our very grave concern that in the absence of proper security and policing at IRA demonstrations those who are there already tooled up for murder and violence will use any excuse to perpetrate that violence? It is fine to suggest that the problem has to be solved within the Province. We as Unionists accept that, but we will play our part only when the conditions are right. The conditions can be made right by the Government of the Irish Republic and our own Government—with the agreement of the SDLP, if it is genuine—setting aside the obstacles to progress and the disgraceful so-called Anglo-Irish Agreement, which has produced nothing of success. It is being bolstered up. We must admit that we shall never have progress until the conditions and the opportunity are made available so that all the people in Northern Ireland can suggest a way forward that can be accepted and supported by both Governments.

Mr. King: I should like the hon. Gentleman to give me any details of any no-go area of which he is aware. I would appreciate it if he could give me those details. The determination and courage of the security forces ensures that such areas do not exist. The hon. Gentleman sought to widen this into other political issues. I should be happy to debate those with him at any time.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall bear in mind those hon. Members who have not been called on this statement when we return to this subject again.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. William Ross: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am on my feet. I shall take points of order in a moment.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Ordered.

That the draft Minors' Contracts (Northern Ireland) Order 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

Northern Ireland Statements

4.38 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to make it absolutely clear that I make absolutely no criticism of your position. This is a genuinely serious matter. Over the past 12 months I have sat through almost every statement on Ireland and have attended almost all the debates that have taken place. I want to draw your attention to a matter that worries me. It is one that is often discussed privately by my hon. Friends and is about the whole arrangement for calling hon. Members to ask questions about matters relating to Northern Ireland. We had a good example today.

We understand your difficulties, Mr. Speaker, because you feel that you have to call Northern Ireland Members. Today no Labour Back Benchers were called. I say again that we understand your dilemma, Mr. Speaker, but this matter is one for the whole of the United Kingdom. If, by any chance, you can hear us speaking among ourselves, you will know that we are commenting on the fact that we do not believe that the problems of Northern Ireland will be resolved by Northern Ireland Members coming to the House periodically to complain about what has happened during the course of these violent days. That is not the way forward. The time has come for other hon. Members, particularly on the Labour Benches, where there are many differing views, to be given the right to make their case. I regret that, once again, that has not been possible today.

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a heavy day ahead of us and the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) is one of those wishing to speak later, if he is lucky.

The Northern Ireland Members who have spoken today and told us that they live daily and nightly with this tragedy have a right to express their strong feelings. I fully understand that this is a United Kingdom matter, but I hope that the House agrees that those who are most directly affected and those who have lost constituents in such tragedies should take precedence.

I hope also that the House will realise that, if we were to have an extended question time on such matters, we would put in jeopardy those hon. Members who rightly believe that they should be called during the subsequent debate. It is question of balance and I do my best to ensure that.

Mr. Nelson: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. While supporting everything that you have just said, I ask you to bear in mind that the comments of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) apply equally to those Back Benchers on the Government side of the House, who represent other parts of the United Kingdom, feel equally strongly about the matter and have not had an opportunity to participate in the questioning.

I wish to ask for your ruling on two points. I believe that you were right to call those hon. Members who have spoken, but those of us who believe that a much tougher policy needs to be instituted immediately did not have an opportunity to put that point to you. You, Mr. Speaker, are uniquely sensitive to the mood of the House. You know the mood of the country after such events. If this were a unique occasion and you felt that you could and

[Mr. Nelson]

should do so, you would extend question time on this matter. I ask you to bear that point in mind. I know that you have not done so before, but, such is the mood of the House, that I urge you to give other hon. Members an opportunity to express their heartfelt view that we need to get tougher.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is enough. The hon. Gentleman is one of a number of hon. Members who have in the past written to me to express their distress at not being called in debates. It is difficult for the Chair to balance the rights of those hon. Members who wish to make speeches in a debate and those who wish to ask questions after statements.

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am highly sensitive to the interests of the whole House in this matter, but I must balance the rare opportunities that hon. Members have to make speeches in this place. There are opportunities to raise points during questions on Northern Ireland. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman comes in for Northern Ireland questions, but I shall bear in mind those hon. Members who have not been called today when we next have Northern Ireland questions.

Mr. Ray Whitney (Wycombe): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I support the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson). This problem is quite different from those we have faced in the past. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to reconsider the matter. We are now in our fourth day of debate on the Budget, in which I have had an opportunity to participate, but the horrors of Saturday put in context the issues of the Budget and suggest that all hon. Members, not only those directly concerned with Northern Ireland, should have an opportunity to speak.

Mr. Speaker: I accept that, but the hon. Gentleman has already been called in the Budget debate. He must have regard to his right hon. and hon. Friends who have not yet had that opportunity.

Mr. William Ross: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. We on the Official Unionist Bench fully understand the frustrations of hon. Members on both sides of the House who, because of pressure of time, cannot be called. In an effort to be helpful, I suggest that, as the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House are both present and can hear what I say, they might take the opportunity now to arrange a debate on this matter before the House rises for Easter, so that we may explore the differences between us.

Mr. Speaker: I think that that was a helpful suggestion.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Although I appreciate the great difficulties that you face at present, may I suggest that, when dealing with matters of great emotion, the normal rules of procedure should be adhered to even more strictly? Many of the points raised were not in the interrogative, but in the form of long statements. That makes it much more difficult for the Chair and limits the opportunity of other hon. Members to speak. The House should support you, Mr. Speaker, in trying to ensure that the interrogative and the proper aspects of procedure are used at such times.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I share the frustration of the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), but I hope that the House will note that very few Northern Ireland Members have been called in the first 15 questions to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on Thursdays. We are not objecting to that. That is the way the House works and those of us who have come regularly to try to participate in the debate know how difficult it is to do so. That is the price of the House's democracy.

Mr. Speaker: I fully understand the concern of the House about such matters. I hope that hon. Members understand the difficult position in which the Chair is placed in seeking to be fair to everyone.

Orders of the Day

WAYS AND MEANS

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [15 March].

Mr. Speaker: Before I call the Secretary of State for Employment, I remind the House that 26 right hon. and hon. Members are seeking to participate in today's debate of whom nine are Privy Councillors. Not all Privy Councillors will be called as early as they would perhaps wish, but I beg the House to make short speeches so that as many Back Benchers as possible may be called.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry to press you again, but I raised this matter on a previous occasion when we had a listing of this nature. Will you please ignore the status of Privy Councillors when calling hon. Members to speak in the debate?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that I ought to ignore their status, but I have already said that Privy Councillors may not be called as early as they would normally hope to be.

AMENDMENT OF THE LAW

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That it is expedient to amend the law with respect to the national debt and public revenue and to make further provision in connection with finance; but this Resolution does not extend to the making of any amendment with respect to value added tax so as to provide—

(a) for zero-rating or exempting any supply;

(b) for refunding any amount of tax;

(c) for varying the rate of that tax otherwise than in relation to all supplies and importations; or

(d) for relief other than relief applying to goods of whatever description or services of whatever description.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

Question again proposed.

Budget Resolutions and Economic Situation

[Relevant documents: European Community Document No. 9561/87, Annual Economic Report 1987-88 and the unnumbered document, Annual Economic Report 1987-88 (final version as adopted by the Council).]

4.48 pm

The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Norman Fowler): I shall seek to follow your advice, Mr. Speaker, on the length of speeches. This is the last day of the Budget debate and I wish to concentrate on the Government's economic policy and the part that the Budget of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will play in carrying forward that policy.

The Budget has many strengths. It reduces taxation to the benefit of both individuals and companies. It reforms taxation by removing the long-standing unfairness of the system regarding married women. It recognises that the primary function of taxation is to raise revenue, not to punish success.

I believe that those individual changes will be welcomed throughout the country and will add to the reputation of my right hon. Friend. But the Budget is far more than a series of individual measures. It is a further step in a strategy that is summed up in the very first sentence of the Budget Red Book:

"the objective of the Government's economic policy is to defeat inflation and to maintain a vigorous and enterprising economy with sustained growth of output and employment".

Now that, doubtless, is a general statement of policy that would probably attract widespread support. It would probably have the support of some Labour Members—certainly, I suspect, the support of the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) who is replying to this debate and leads the revisionist faction of the Labour party. Indeed, over the past four days of the Budget debate, right hon. Gentlemen who have led for the Opposition have set out their interpretation of a "vigorous and enterprising economy" and their hopes for

"sustained growth of output and employment".

But on one point there has been a deafening silence from the Opposition Front Bench—that is on policies to "defeat inflation". If one reads the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition, the shadow Chancellor and the shadow Secretary of State for Social Services one will search in vain for any serious mention of inflation. It is not just that they have no major passage on it—the word hardly crosses their lips. Yet the whole point of the Opposition's attack on the Budget has been their claim that there is a conflict between the Government's economic policy and the demands of social justice. I find it inexplicable that in a case that majors on social justice the need to control inflation does not even rate a passing comment. Surely the most significant feature of life in Britain today compared with 10 or 15 years ago—the most important social advance—is that we do not suffer from the evil of inflation.

The most important change in the lives of people in this country is that we now live with an inflation rate of just over 3 per cent. Even that is too high, but compare it with what went before and one sees the contrast. Between 1974 and 1979, inflation averaged over 15 per cent. For 13 months in 1975 and 1976 inflation never fell below 20 per cent. At its peak, Labour's inflation rate reached the banana republic heights of almost 27 per cent. We have heard a great deal from the Opposition about social justice, but the truth is that there is nothing more socially divisive than inflation. Nothing is more likely to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Inflation strikes at the weak, and the victims of inflation were literally millions of people in this country who no longer had the power to look after their own interests. The victims of inflation were the elderly living on fixed incomes and it is to the shame of the previous Labour Government that they knocked the heart out of a whole generation of elderly people in this country.

I am not prepared to take lectures from the Opposition on social justice. There was no social justice in old people being brought to their knees by the financial incompetence of the previous Labour Government.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Fowler: I shall give way in a moment.

There was no social justice in a Government who were prisoners of the worst prejudices of the most outdated trade unions in the western world. Above all, there was no social justice in the inflation that Labour inflicted on this country. What the Opposition have never understood is

[Mr. Fowler]

that the basis of any social policy worthy of that name must be a sound economic policy. Above all, it is that sound economic policy that the Government have achieved.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: The Secretary of State has talked about social justice for pensioners. Where is that justice when, from April, as a result of Government policy, 700,000 pensioners will no longer be able to claim housing benefit?

Mr. Fowler: I will come to that and a whole series of other points regarding social security, inflation and concern for the elderly.

Low inflation, steady growth and a balanced budget have made possible improving productivity, rising levels of investment, falling unemployment and real and sustainable increases in spending on social programmes. It was precisely the failure of the previous Labour Government's economic policy that forced them into social policy "U" turn after social policy "U" turn.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) has spoken of social security, but the cut made by Mrs. Barbara Castle in 1976, by fiddling the method of uprating, cost pensioners more than £1 billion — the biggest cut in the social security budget made by any Government since the war. That cut was made by the previous Labour Government.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Fowler: In a moment.

The Opposition now talk of health, but the cut of 30 per cent. in hospital building made by the previous Labour Government was the biggest cut in the Health Service made by any Government since the war.

The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith), the shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, referred to his Government's specific record in 1978. Let us consider what was said in 1978 about the Health Service and Labour policies. The *Sunday Times* commemorated the success of Labour policies with a three-part series entitled "Crisis in the NHS". The chairman of the British Medical Association was calling for an injection of £1 billion into the Health Service and said that the National Health Service in Britain was sick, inadequate and impersonal. Some months previously the general secretary of the Confederation of Health Service Employees, the late Albert Spanswick, said the National Health Service was more in danger and more in fear for its very existence than ever before. That was the state of affairs in 1978 and that is what the shadow Chancellor specifically put before the House as an example of what happened under the previous Labour Government.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): The Secretary of State appears to have reversed Ministers' custom of giving the history lesson at the end of speeches — we have had it at the beginning. Will he address himself to a statement that has been made by an independent research body that states that the social security changes to be introduced in April will put the lives of those most vulnerable in our society at unacceptable risk? That body refers specifically to many pensioners and the families of the unemployed. Will he explain why the Budget did not recognise the great hardship and financial problems that are faced by many pensioners, many low-paid families and unemployed families? We do not want a history lesson. We want to know what the Government will do for those people. They have failed miserably in the Budget to help those people.

Mr. Fowler: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman does not want a history lesson. However, when the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends seek to lecture the Government on their social conscience and in particular about their social record we have a right to point out precisely the social policy record of the previous Labour Government. In terms of social security and health they have a deplorable record. The hon. Gentleman is concerned about social security changes, but family credit is one of those changes and that will provide more money and £200 million of additional resources for low-income couples. The whole purpose of that change is to target and direct resources to low-income people.

Let me try to reach a point of agreement with Labour Members. At the beginning of the Budget debate the shadow Chancellor — he was here a moment ago, but perhaps he does not like being contradicted on what he has previously said—stated:

"one of our top priorities should be to see how to build a strong, competitive industrial economy that can sustain growth, not in episodic spurts or election-oriented booms, but powerfully, continually and steadily"—[*Official Report*, 16 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. 1123.]

Let us test that statement.

We are now about to enter the eighth successive year of economic growth at an average of 3 per cent. a year. Last year the British economy grew faster than that of any other major industrial country. If that is "episodic" growth, it is the kind of episode for which Labour Governments of the 1960s and 1970s would have given their eye-teeth.

Mr. Doug Henderson (Newcastle upon Tyne, North) *rose*——

Mr. Kevin Barron (Rother Valley) *rose*——

Mr. Fowler: I will not give way at this time.

Let us take another indicator — employment. At the time of the election Labour Members appeared on platform after platform around the country to say that if the Government won the election the improvement in employment would quickly disappear and unemployment would rise. What has happened? Since June last year, unemployment has come down by almost 400,000. More than that, it has come down every month for the past 19 months. It has now fallen by 680,000 and that is the biggest sustained fall in unemployment since the war. Within those figures, there are further encouraging features. It is encouraging that the biggest falls in the rate of unemployment have occurred in some of the areas where the problem has been worst — for example, in the west midlands, the north-west, the north, and in Wales. It is encouraging——

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Fowler: I will give way in a moment.

It is encouraging that there have been record falls in school-leaver unemployment and that there has been a record fall in long-term unemployment after unemployment rose continuously from the early 1970s.

Mr. Gould: I know that the right hon. Gentleman will not make predictions about the future trend of

unemployment because that is the position that he and his right hon. Friends have taken consistently. If he will not make a prediction, would he be prepared to make a calculation? If unemployment continues to fall at the current rate, how long will it take before it reaches the level which the Government inherited?

Mr. Fowler: As the hon. Gentleman said, this Government are following the practice adopted by the previous Labour Government by not making predictions of that kind. The hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) must take some credit for the position that existed in 1979. He knows as well as I that the recession hit our economy then just as it hit every other western European country. The significant difference is that the reduction in unemployment and the growth in jobs in this country are now far greater than the reduction in unemployment and growth in jobs in not just one or two countries in Europe, but in all Europe.

The challenge now is to ensure that the improvement continues and spreads. The Budget helps in that. It improves incentives, increases disposable income and reduces the burden of taxation on business, particularly on small business.

We should always remember that one of the outstanding features of the past nine years has been the development of small businesses. In the years to 1979, the number of self-employed people fell by 100,000. Since 1979, the number of self-employed people has increased by 1 million. The outlook for jobs is better than it has been for more than a decade. If we can continue to strengthen the economy and create employment through growth, we shall have the opportunity to keep unemployment on its present downward trend.

Mr. Barron: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fowler: I will not give way at the moment.

We know that there are 700,000 unfilled job vacancies in the economy. Our duty is to ensure that unemployed people are given the chance to acquire the skills that they need to fill those jobs. That is the purpose of the new employment training programme.

I want to emphasise that further improvement in the employment position is not automatic. Barriers stand in the way of job creation and the continuing fall in the level of unemployment. One of those barriers is excessive pay settlements. They threaten our progress in generating the many thousands of new jobs that we need and will continue to need. They have that effect because they discourage employers from taking on more staff, they reduce opportunities for increasing profitable output, and they hold back investment in the future. At the same time, excessive pay settlements reduce our competitiveness in world markets and that, again, can only restrict the growth of output and jobs.

There is another barrier to jobs — strikes and bad industrial relations. The simple truth is that strikes destroy jobs. The industrial anarchy of the late 1970s reduced industrial output in this country and exported British job after British job overseas. It did more damage to our reputation overseas than any other single factor.

There has been a remarkable improvement since 1979. The number of working days lost on account of industrial disputes has fallen dramatically. There have been fewer strikes in each of the past three years than in any year since 1940. That record has made a very substantial contribution to Britain's economic recovery.

In the past few days we have seen an absolutely clear demonstration of the connection between jobs and industrial relations in the dispute at Dundee over which union should represent the workers at the proposed Ford plant. More than 1,000 jobs are at stake. The responsibility will be heavy if the plant does not go ahead and the new jobs are destroyed. The only hope now is that union objections to the agreement that has already been reached will be withdrawn. I hope that the hon. Member for Dagenham will confirm that that is also the Opposition's view.

The dispute at Dundee has illustrated with the utmost clarity the importance of inward investment to this country. In the past five years non-oil inward investment has grown from £1·1 billion a year to £4·1 billion a year. Such investment brings jobs and it has brought jobs to some of the areas most in need of employment as the people of Sunderland, south Wales, Plymouth and, indeed, Scotland know well enough.

It is no coincidence that those jobs have increased steadily over the past nine years. Companies from the United States, Japan and Europe have seen that investing in Britain makes sense because of what Britain has to offer, because of our good work force and because those companies have confidence in this Government and above all in the Government's economic policies.

Mr. Barron: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Fowler: I will not give way at the moment.

Does anyone seriously believe that companies overseas are delaying their inward investment plans in the hope that in, say, the early 1990s there could be a Labour Government? Does anyone seriously believe that companies overseas really want a return to the Labour policies of the 1970s?

Mr. Barron: Give way.

Mr. Fowler: I will not.

That is a self-evidently ludicrous proposition. Yet it is the acid test. Companies will not invest here unless they believe that we have a strong economy and sound economic policies. The most significant change over the past nine years has been in the view that the world takes of Britain. Today Britain is seen as productive, competitive and profitable.

Mr. Henderson: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Fowler: No.

Today Britain is seen as enterprising and efficient. Above all, Britain is seen not as a nation in decline, but as a strong and powerful economy. This Budget will reinforce the policies that have made our economy strong. It is a Budget for economic growth and it deserves the support not only of the House, but of the nation.

5.7 pm

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): We are debating a Budget today that has been received rapturously by the rich. The rich and the powerful have showered all the plaudits on the Budget that one would expect from those who are the great beneficiaries of the Chancellor's largesse. However, behind the deafening applause from that small, privileged group we can hear the cries of despair and pain

[Mr. Bryan Gould]

from those who have been left by the Government, and by the measures that the Government are yet to introduce in the social security changes and changes in housing benefit, with no benefits and very little hope.

There are also cries of protest from those who are perhaps not directly affected by the unfairness at the heart of the Budget, but who nevertheless recognise that unfairness and want to express their feelings. Those people have puny voices. They do not control the media. They do not hold the great offices in the land. They will not take home thousands of pounds in extra pay and be prepared to use it to express their thanks. Such people have a weak voice, but it is echoed and repeated by the Opposition. We accept the responsibility of speaking for them and for pointing out the fundamental immorality of what the Budget represents. Although those voices may be heard only pitifully weakly, they will, in the end, come to stir the conscience of the nation. They will even disturb the sleep of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

However, I want to address the Budget on a different point. I shall set aside, as the Chancellor manifestly has done, all considerations of morality, social justice and fairness. I shall take on the Chancellor's argument on its own ground. Let us assume that such considerations do not matter—it is difficult to make such an assumption about any self-respecting Chancellor—and that the sole test is whether the things that the right hon. Gentleman has done in his Budget will be in the national interest and for the good of the country's economy. As I understand the Chancellor's argument, there need be no limit to inequality — it should be celebrated and gloried in. Inequality and incentives that give more to those who already have the most will benefit the national economy most, as I understand his argument. Ultimately, it has a further sophistication: even those left out and wholly ignored will derive some minuscule benefit—the crumbs from the rich man's table argument.

This is a convenient theory, which just happens most to serve the interests of those who advance it. That is immediately a reason for great suspicion in deciding whether to take the theory at face or any other value. It is immediately suspect because it is so selective. It applies, so it seems, only to the economic interests of the richest 5 per cent. of society. If the argument is that by giving people more they will work harder and create greater wealth, why does it apply only to the richest 5 per cent. and not to the rest of us? Why is it right to reduce the marginal rates of tax for the richest but to pile the burdens on the rest of us?

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton) *rose*——

Mr. Gould: Why do the rich, who are already taking the lion's share of the rewards, need their mouths stuffed yet more full of money before they can produce the wealth on which it is said the rest of us depend?

Mr. Hamilton *rose*——

Mr. Gould: I have hardly begun and I have things of greater substance to say, but I shall give way in a moment.

Why is it right to release the rich, already swimming in their money, and at the same time to entrap the poor in the poverty trap and offer them no way of escape? Why is that so beneficial to the economy, when most of us are denied the incentives that the Chancellor proclaims are the heart and origin of economic success?

How does the Chancellor know that the great rewards he is offering the richest 5 per cent. will go to the productive people in our economy? Does he not understand that many of the richest 5 per cent. have little to do with productive capacity or activity? Most hold assets and derive income from them, push bits of paper around, go in for speculative deals in the City, invest speculatively in property and sail close to the wind when they become involved in insider dealings and similar enterprises. So how can we and the Chancellor be sure that, even if his theory is right, he is directing incentives at the right people? What assurances does he have that the money will not be snapped up gratefully by those who are already rich but idle, and who will be confirmed in their idleness and ask why they should work any harder or do more when they can sit back and wait for a munificent Tory Chancellor to come forward with more goodies? How will this stimulate greater economic activity or wealth?

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that everyone in his former country — New Zealand — is rich because that country now has a maximum top rate of 34 per cent?

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman has his facts wrong. Fortunately, as a British citizen and long-standing hon. Member, I no longer have the slightest interest in or responsibility for the policies of Governments in my native country.

It is hardly flattering that the Chancellor should so demean even the rich in his expectations that he believes that Sir Ralph Halpern and all those others will be so ready to respond, like Pavlov's dogs, to the sign of yet more money bags being floated in front of them and will work harder as a result. That is not true, and the Chancellor is wrong if he believes it.

If this theory is correct, what evidence to support it comes from our experience and that of similar countries? We have relatively recent experience of what cutting the top rate of tax means; the Chancellor's predecessor cut it in 1979. What an economic miracle we had then. We had the worst recession that any advanced industrial country has ever experienced, together with the worst fall in output and investment and the worst rise in unemployment. That was the earlier consequence of the strategy upon which such faith is now pinned. So there is little in our experience to sustain the Chancellor in his view.

What of the experience of other countries? There is one country about which Opposition Members have made rather generous and flattering comments in recent years, but whose economic performance has been severely criticised by Conservative Members. I refer to the United States and the wicked policies it has been pursuing. Yet the United States happens to be near the bottom of the international league of top rates of tax. Of the other countries that deserve even more praise for their economic performance, Japan, for example, is near the top of the league for marginal rates on top income earners. And of all the countries of western Europe perhaps the one that has been the most successful economically in recent years has been Sweden. What is Sweden's rate of tax for the top income earner? It is 77 per cent. I express no view on whether that is the right figure, but I ask the Chancellor or the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to explain how the Swedes have done so much better than we have on

almost every count over the past few years while appearing to contradict the fundamental tenets of the right hon. Gentleman's Budget. I see that we have no answer.

If the Chancellor has no evidence to offer it is not because none is available. The evidence is there because the Chancellor asked for it. He asked his Treasury officials to commission a great study from Professor C.V. Brown of Stirling university, asking him to investigate incentives so that—one assumes—the whole ludicrous notion could be substantiated. The report has now been available for a long time. Of course, we rarely hear it mentioned or have our attention directed to it. When the Chancellor brings himself to mention it, he denigrates it with all the power at his command.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): The report cost us £500,000.

Mr. Gould: As my hon. Friend says, the report involved a great deal of public expenditure to produce the answer, which was that there was no evidence for the Chancellor's basic theory that cutting taxes increases incentives and induces people to work even harder.

There is an American study. Maybe the Chancellor or the Secretary of State will say, "What about the study done by Professor Lindsey in the United States?" He made a valiant effort to disentangle the various factors which may be at work here, but he concluded that if there was any detectable consequences—he was doubtful about it—of reducing the marginal tax rates of the top earners, any such reduction would have to be offset by removing tax shelters which they had previously enjoyed. What a pity it is, if the Chancellor aheres to that view—there is no evidence of it — that he did not follow it through. Instead of removing tax shelters, he has created new and much more offensive ones.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher): Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that tax revenue from the top 5 per cent. has risen since 1979 despite the fact that tax rates have gone down substantially?

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman demonstrates the fact that the Government have not waited to manipulate the tax system to benefit their friends at the top of the income scale — they have already widely increased inequalities and substantially increased the salaries of people at the top. To pray that in aid as justification for yet further tax cuts is ludicrous and offensive.

If the Chancellor is left with nothing by way of evidence or experience to justify his theory — we are told it underlies his Budget strategy—what is he left with? I suggest that what he is left with is political prejudice, and an unattractive one at that. It is the prejudice which says simply, "It is right for the best off to have yet more. Greed is in itself a good thing." We remember Ivan Boesky travelling the world delivering highly paid lectures to adoring audiences, telling them, "Feel good about greed." We know what happened to Ivan Boesky. We know what the Chancellor has said in his Budget. He has said to the British people, or at least to that minority who benefited so enormously, "Feel good about greed." What we have sitting on the Government Front Bench is the Boesky of the Budget. Just as Boesky came to a grim end, and just as justice caught up with him, so will it catch up with the Chancellor.

The view that inequality is somehow the key to economic success is denied by anybody with eyes to see. If we look around the country, we see alienation, bitterness, division and apathy. Nobody in his right mind could conceivably argue that widening social divisions and increasing inequalities could be anything other than utterly harmful to our social cohesion and our economic prospects. Inequality is inefficient. Any strategy which is designed to increase inequalities is doomed to failure. That is the conclusion that anybody with wit and eyes to see must reach.

The Chancellor is completely wrong if he believes that, by widening inequalities, he will usher in an economic miracle for Britain. We shall see, but I believe that we shall all have a rude awakening on this central question.

I shall now change the focus slightly, away from the Chancellor's dealings as between one taxpayer and another. The richest 5 per cent. are the only people who have enjoyed tax cuts until this Budget—everyone else has paid more in tax. The Chancellor's dealings with the top 5 per cent. are a monument to immorality and unfairness. I shall consider whether the Chancellor's use of the money is in the national interest and in the interests of the economy as a whole. What should he have done with the money at his disposal?

We know exactly what the answer is. The demand was made and endorsed time and again—by the public, by doctors, nurses and others who serve in the Health Service and by patients. They all agreed that if the Chancellor had money available, the Health Service was where it should go as a first priority. They did not say that they never wanted tax cuts in any circumstances, just that the first priority should not be tax cuts but the NHS. The demand was made repeatedly by those who are best placed to know.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Gould: No. I do not intend to linger on this point.

The money could be put to a range of purposes. Britain today has been characterised by Professor J. K. Galbraith as private affluence combined with public squalor. Anyone who travels abroad and compares what they see in other more prosperous countries with what is increasingly apparent on our streets must see the public squalor over which the Government have presided. That is another priority to which the Chancellor could have directed resources. Instead, he chose to make his tax cuts.

The Opposition contend that that was a sin of both omission and commission. By cutting taxes for people who are already consuming at a frenetic rate, the Chancellor has ensured that a further powerful stimulus is given to a consumer-led boom which is already running the country into deep trouble. The Chancellor has no idea how to control the explosion in private credit. His only response is to make the consumer boom forest fire yet worse. We cannot afford it—even the Chancellor predicts a balance of payments deficit for the coming year of £4 billion.

In itself, that deficit is not too serious. It is reasonably easily financed if that is where it stays, but the real cause for worry is the trend — the rapid, terrifying and dizzying descent into a balance of payments deficit, even with the enormous benefits of North sea oil. That is what should be worrying the Chancellor. While one ought not to attach too much importance to one month's figures, we can hardly say that January's figures were the most auspicious beginning to this calendar year's trading results.

[Mr. Gould]

The true awfulness of our position can be appreciated only if we divert attention for a moment from the overall balance of payments to the manufactured trade deficit, because it is there where we chalked up a deficit of £6 billion last year. Even the Chancellor's prediction is of an £8·5 billion deficit this year. That is evidence of an economy that is increasingly unable to pay its way and increasingly dependent on North sea oil, which is running out. That is why we should be worried—it is not a matter of whether a static debt is financable. We should be worried about what that state of affairs tells us about our loss of competitiveness, output, productivity and performance, bearing in mind the fact that our economy depends on its ability to sell to international markets. The problem is a trend which is running us into a deficit which speaks of a failure of economic policy and of productive capacity.

Last Thursday, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said that of course Britain is running into a rather worrying balance of payments deficit, but it ought not really to be a source of worry because we are growing so fast and it is natural that we should suck in a lot of imports. That is an astonishing assertion. Has he never considered the example of the really strong and successful economies which have consistently maintained high levels of growth, and where the corollary of growth has been a substantial balance of payments surplus?

Why are we told that if our country is to grow we must increase our already famous propensity to import? An explanation was offered, in part, by one of the Chancellor's hon. Friends on Thursday, who said that Britian was running into a balance of payments deficit because it had to import a great deal of machinery, capital equipment and all the other goods needed to build a strong economy. Why do we not produce those goods in this country? It is because the Government's economic policies have decimated our industrial base. That is the dilemma. It is not an excuse or an explanation; it is a definition of our problem. That is why imports and the balance of payments deficit are so worrying.

Despite all the Government's propaganda and the constant statements by Ministers that Britain is much more competitive now than it has ever been before, the truth is that, measured by virtually every index of competitiveness, Britain is less competitive now than it was in 1979. That is why we are in difficulties, and that is why our balance of payments deficit is so worrying.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): If that is true, why is it that Ford's head of manufacturing in Europe came to us last week and explained graphically how rapidly Ford is beginning to close the gap between itself and its competitors? Indeed, he said that it was by no means a unique phenomenon.

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman prefaced his question with the words, "If that is true". I assure him that it is true, and he can establish that quite clearly simply by reading the official statistics produced by the Government. I hope that he will do me the courtesy of doing exactly that, as I am sure that he will then confirm that on all the indices of export competitiveness Britain is less competitive today than it was in 1979.

The problems to which I am trying to direct the rather reluctant attention of the Chancellor and his colleagues have been made very much worse by another aspect of the Budget. It has little to do with the right hon. Gentleman's tax policy, but it excited a great deal of interest. I am, of course, referring to the much-publicised disagreement between the right hon. Gentleman and the Prime Minister about their policy on exchange and interest rates. Some commentators listened to the Chancellor's rather elliptical words—brave in their own way, but brief and unclear—and noted that wonderful 0·5 per cent. cut in base rates, and said, "What a magnificently strong Chancellor. We will award him a win on points, even over such a formidable Prime Minister." If the right hon. Gentleman is to be reckoned the winner in the battle—and it is a continuing battle—we shall demand of him a great deal more than a 0·5 per cent. cut in interest rates and the odd phrase tossed away in a Budget speech.

We want an explanation of and real action to deal with interest rates that are twice as high in real terms as those in Germany. Can the Chancellor or anyone else explain that? Can we be given one simple, intelligible reason? Can we have one comprehensible answer? Is there an answer? *[Interruption.]* Surely this is an important matter. The Confederation of British Industry and everyone else agrees that high interest rates are a great burden on industry, yet not a single explanation for them has been given. Is that not rather peculiar?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Gould: I am seeking an answer from the Government Front Bench. I have no doubt that Back-Bench Members wish to do their best, but until the Prime Minister's eye falls upon them they are not entitled to speak for the Government. I want an explanation from the Government of such a remarkable state of affairs.

The Prime Minister stands on the proposition that we must not buck the markets. I do not know whether that is the Chancellor's view—it may well have changed. The Prime Minister's statement is quite remarkable. Is she unaware that the market is very much influenced by interest rates at twice the level of most other countries? Is that not bucking the market? If the Prime Minister is serious about the effect on the market, why does she not get interest rates down? Is not that the obvious remedy?

Mr. Neil Hamilton: I find it a little difficult to reconcile what the hon. Gentleman is saying now with what he said earlier about the greatest problem being excessive growth of credit. He now asks that interest rates be reduced even further. How does he reconcile those propositions?

Mr. Gould: The hon. Gentleman, perhaps unwittingly, gives the game away. As a hangover from the last trappings of monetarism—[HON MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I am about to do so. The Chancellor has tried so hard to divest himself of the last trappings of monetarism, yet he still has to use interest rates to choke the explosion of credit. High interest rates are ineffective — indeed, they are often counter-productive, as is immediately discerned by anyone who bothers to study the evidence from the unavailing attempts to use interest rates in that way during the past eight or nine years. Apparently, however, that does not faze this Chancellor. He continues to force high interest rates, oblivious to the fact that they have little impact on credit but are very damaging to British industry and the exchange rate.

The key to the issue is the level of interest rates. A Government who pursue high interest rates show that they

are unwilling to forgo immediate consumption for the sake of future investment. Yet the role of interest rates is to make just that division and allocation of resources. High interest rates show a Government who want to encourage immediate consumption; low interest rates show a Government whose policy is to encourage future investment.

Interest rates have another function — to allocate income between those who hold assets and derive income from lending them, and those who want to use the national wealth productively to create new wealth. Interest rates inevitably and diametrically establish the priority of those who hold assets over those who want to increase our productive capacity. High interest rates are clearly a further and most damaging expression of that very disease about which the Chancellor has spoken from time to time, short-termism. A country that pursues a policy of high interest rates shows that it is not concerned about the need to invest in the long term or about those whose true vocation is to create national wealth; it wants to give priority to immediate consumption and to the holders of assets.

The effect of the exchange rate is exactly the same. By forcing up the exchange rate, every over-valued pound will buy more goods, usually foreign, than would otherwise be the case. Of course, it is attractive to Governments to offer a higher standard of living in the short term, but that cannot be sustained in the long term. We shall have to pay a severe price for that short-term gain.

Ricardo, an economist with whom I do not always agree, said many decades ago:

> "If we sell our goods at a high money price and buy foreign ones at a low money price, it may well be doubted whether this advantage will not be purchased at many times its value, for to obtain it we must be content with the diminished production of home commodities."

That is an exact summary of what the Government's policies will produce. We will buy in cheaper foreign goods and derive a short-term advantage, but with the consequence of shutting British factories and throwing British workers out of work. That is the hallmark of a policy that pays no attention to the future, but is instead solely concerned with the immediate gratification of those who want to consume to the highest limit that the Chancellor can make possible.

This Budget is not just immoral or offensive, or one that fails the NHS or that fails to invest; it is an anti-productive Budget that takes its place in the context of an anti-productive strategy. It reinforces the divisions that prevent all our people from making their proper contribution to the creation of our national wealth. It encourages ostentatious and short-term consumption at the expense of investment. It encourages the very short-termism that the Chancellor has criticised. It shows a lack of care for the future which is the very antithesis of what a prudent Chancellor would be expected to show.

It is a Budget for the rich, but also for the irresponsible —and not the least irresponsible is the Chancellor who introduced it last week. The Prime Minister proclaimed that the Budget would be the epitaph for socialism—we shall see. It is certainly a celebration of greed and selfishness. If that is the ground on which the Prime Minister and the Chancellor wish to fight, we are ready to trust that matter to the common sense, better instincts and good conscience of the British people.

5.40 pm

Mr. Edward Heath (Old Bexley and Sidcup): After the Budget the Chancellor has every right to look satisfied with his reputation as a great reformer of the structure of our taxation system. He has every right to look satisfied, and he never hides it. I commend him for the changes that he has made in the structure, because they continue the process of himself and his predecessor, and for that matter his predecessor in 1974, whom he helped to prepare his plans. His Budget has done an immense amount to improve the structure of our tax system.

I suppose that one aspect that will last longest and will always reclaim his fame is the change for married couples. It is not an aspect of which I have any personal experience, but I am told that it will give great satisfaction, and my right hon. Friend has been absolutely right to make that change. My right hon. Friend is quite right to have made various changes to block up the loopholes and escape exits in the tax system, and I fully endorse them.

I fully agree with writing off the system of capital gains until 1982. However, I do not know whether I am quite so sure about combining capital gains with income tax. I must reveal my doubts on that. It seems that in capitalist economies we are always differentiating between capital and income, and we are now combining the two. I cannot see that that simplifies the administration very much. The problems of checking on capital gains will still remain. I have grave doubts whether it is right in principle to combine income and capital gains in that way. Perhaps in replying to the debate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will be able to convince me of that.

Those are all excellent measures in the reform of the structure of taxation. The controversy arises not so much about the structure — there was little criticism of the structure from the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould)—as from the level of the taxes that have been achieved inside the structure.

I advise my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment, who opened the debate, that he would do more to help me and our supporters in the country if he were to concentrate on the raison d'etre for the specific rates of change, rather than spend his time abusing the Opposition of long ago. I must confess that I find it very difficult now to concentrate on what Mrs. Barbara Castle did or did not say, let alone what she did or did not do decades ago.

I have always objected to what Lloyd George did in the coalition directly after 1919, but I have never held it against the present leader of the Liberal party. I have always believed that one of the most foolish decisions ever taken was by Mr. Churchill to go back on the gold standard at a rate of $4·85, which he could not sustain, in 1925, but I have never blamed my own party particularly for that foolish action. It would help all of us if we had rather more weighty arguments on the exact nature of the change of taxation inside the Chancellor's structure.

I must make one thing plain—I am not opposed to reductions in taxation. I refer to an article in *The Economist* this week, which displays that bigoted ignorance that is now so characteristic of *The Economist* and the reason why it has become purely a table magazine for would-be intellectual hostesses in the United States. It states:

> "Mr. Edward Heath, who, as Prime Minister, presided over top tax rates of over 90 per cent., sourly dismissed the changes as 'way over the top'."

[Mr. Edward Heath]

That displays the most remarkable ignorance by those who write for what was once a great and distinguished paper. In fact, the first Budget in the Government of 1970-74 immediately cut tax rates——

Mr. Neil Hamilton: That was a long time ago.

Mr. Heath: It is nothing like as long ago as Mrs. Barbara Castle — *[Interruption.]* If my hon. Friend wishes to support the ignorance of *The Economist*, he should kindly do so—it would not in the least surprise me.

What I want to point out is that we reduced taxation in that Budget. If my hon. Friend wants to come up to date, what is even more relevant is that in 1973—the end of our period of office—the proportion of GDP taken by tax was 32·4 per cent. If my hon. Friend wishes to supply the figure for today, he will know that it is 37·5 per cent. This shows that at that time a substantially smaller proportion of the gross domestic product was being taken for taxation than is taken today. I hope that my hon. Friend will now acknowledge that, but not by intervening.

Therefore, the Chancellor will recognise that there is still considerable progress to be made, even though he himself may not be prepared to make it.

When we come to the relationship between the rates, one asks whether it is right to have gone to 25 per cent. and, so drastically, to 40 per cent. That is rightly a debatable question.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Will the right hon. Gentleman remind his hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) that under the last Labour Government the effective tax rate was 34 per cent.?—[HON. MEMBERS: "That is history."]

Mr. Heath: It may all be history, but at least it bears relevance to what is being said today and to my right hon. Friend's speech, although if it is part of history I am surprised that he did not use it in his speech.

When we come to the debate on the rates, we must recognise that today there are still 2·5 million people unemployed. How can they look at the Budget for any benefit? According to the European Economic Community, 7 million people in this country live below the level that is described by the Community as the "decency threshold" for people living in Europe as a whole. If we have more than 7 million people below the threshold of decency, and 2·5 million people unemployed, that raises the question whether measures could have been taken in the Budget to help those people. I believe that measures could have been taken in a variety of ways, by way of allowances, and that that need not have prevented the Chancellor from lowering the rate to, say, 45 per cent. However, I shall not vote against the Government because of that, because it is a matter of personal judgment.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), who is not in his place at the moment, explained that he would vote against the Government because he did not believe that the rate should have been reduced from 27p to 25p. I find that argument difficult to understand. My right hon. Friend said quite frankly that he had never understood economics, which is a fact that some of us recognised many years ago. If he had said that the dangers of cutting the higher tax rate from 60p to 40p were too great so he had decided to vote against the Government, it would not be up to me to complain.

I want to consider the general problems facing my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because he is facing a dilemma which many of his predecessors faced and it is necessary realistically to recognise the dilemma if we are to deal with it properly. The fact is that we now have great consumer demand and as a result we have increased both production and productivity. The Chancellor himself asked how long it could continue. We must ask that, because, although we have 2·5 million unemployed, we lack skilled labour, and the labour available is not in the right place for employment. Unfortunately, those two problems have characterised this country for many years and we have still not come near to solving them.

If there is a responsibility on the Government, it is to take urgent action to train far more people in the skills that are necessary for them to fill the vacancies available. [HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] I hear some helpful hon. Friends saying, "Rubbish", but the core of the problem is that we lack skilled people and the unemployed are where the demand does not exist. Why? Because the housing is not available where demand exists. This problem has faced us before. The dilemma now is that all too many steps are being taken to ruin the environment by providing more housing, rather than to deal with the problem by placing industry where labour and trained people can be.

Naturally, my right hon. Friends are right to emphasise the trade union problem that we have seen in Dundee. I hope that that can be speedily settled, and I understand that there are possibilities of that.

Mr. Nicholas Budgen (Wolverhampton, South-West): I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his observations about industry and housing, but is he in favour of some form of direction so that industry is forced to go to areas where there is labour?

Mr. Heath: I do not know why my hon. Friend, who has known me for many years, should ask such a stupid question. Never in my life have I been in favour of direction. I was the Minister in the 1959 Government who abolished conscription.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): What about the Housing Finance Act 1972?

Mr. Heath: The last thing that I want to see is any form of direction of labour. But—*[Interruption.]*

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order.

Mr. Heath: I want to raise the basic question of what will face us in future as a result of the Chancellor's policies. There will undoubtedly be increased consumer demand.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Heath: The Chancellor shakes his head. I do not see how he can say that that will not be the case, even with a reduction of 2p in income tax. Even if all those who will get a reduction in income tax from 60p to 40p invest every penny of it, I do not see how that will prevent an increase in consumption.

We have an undeniable tendency to import more and more when there is more money available. Even now we

are faced with the problem that if we did not import our industry could not meet the demand because we do not have the skilled labour, or the labour in the right place, to meet the increased production necessary for the increased consumer demand. That problem will face the Chancellor, if not this coming year, then his successor next year or the year thereafter.

How do we deal with that? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State emphasised the need to deal with inflation and said that 3 per cent. is far too high. The way to deal with inflation is to allow sterling to rise. That view may be being expressed privately in the Government—these things leak out. The more that sterling rises, the more difficult it is for our exports to be maintained. Let us never forget what happened in 1980-81, when sterling rose to $2·20 or more. That destroyed much of the industry which today could otherwise meet the consumer demand that will result from this Budget.

Let us never forget what happens when sterling reaches that level. It is a way of keeping down inflation, because when we import and allow sterling to rise the price of the goods remains about the same, but it now damages our export industry. At present, sterling is $1·85 on average, and that is too high for our exporters. Moreover, according to reports from firms, it is reducing their profitability because of what they receive in the transfer of dollars to sterling. Some of our great firms are reporting reductions in profits purely because of the movements on the exchanges of the dollar-sterling rate.

The Chancellor faces a dilemma. He can let sterling continue to rise, in which case it may help him to control inflation but will put more British businesses out of operation and damage our exports, or he can keep sterling stable, in which case it will remain too high, or he can reduce sterling by reducing our interest rates, in which case there is the risk of increasing inflation, which will affect selling. The Chancellor wants to maintain stability, and I strongly support him in that. He must get sterling down further and join the European monetary system. We know that the Bank of England and the Treasury want that, and I believe that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor wants it. That is the test. He should take sterling into the EMS. That would help our stability, by preventing sterling from rising too high and, if the balance of payments continues to deteriorate, from beginning to fall against his wishes. These are genuine dilemmas in handling the economy. It is not right to allow sterling to keep on rising. It should come down in order to help our exporters.

We are now in an international system in which it is impossible to prevent an inflow of money into the country. That makes nonsense of monetary figures, targets and limitations, if any remain. This, again, can be handled only by interest rates. If the Chancellor does not want the money to come into the country, he must reduce interest rates to reduce the effects of monetary expansion on the system. At the same time, he runs the risk of inflationary rises in prices because of imports, whether of raw materials or of manufactured goods, entering at higher prices. That is another dilemma. This is all a question of the management of the economy.

What is left to the Chancellor to manage the economy is only the interest rate. He has discarded taxation as a means of dealing with the demand that is created among consumers. He has nothing left except the interest rate. That is why it is crucial, and why it is tied to our membership of the EMS.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Does my right hon. Friend agree that another weapon in the hands of the Chancellor is to diminish public borrowing or to repay debt? Could he bring himself to pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor for having been the first Chancellor for many years, not only to repay debt of about £4 billion this year, but to budget for a £3 million repayment of debt in the coming year?

Mr. Heath: I am strongly in favour of that, but the consequence can be damaging. Unless the money is reinvested, or paid abroad, it becomes consumer money. If the Chancellor repays debt in the ordinary sense, the money is going into some system. The question is whether it will be used for consumption or reinvested. If we assume that it is reinvested, he is right to repay debt.

I shall make two suggestions to the next reforming Chancellor. First, having reached the stage at which great earnings can be made in this country—my right hon. Friend said that we have one of the lowest rates of taxation in the industrial world—the Chancellor has a responsibility to deal with family trusts. This is the system—it does not exist in the United States, Japan or some other Western industrial countries—whereby great estates can be handed on from generation to generation, with no taxation, or minimal taxation. With a system in which, in contemporary ways, one can create great wealth, there is no justification for maintaining a system in which, having made that wealth, one can hand it on from generation to generation without any generation doing anything about it. That will not appeal to my right hon. and hon. Friends behind me, but it will become a basic tax structure issue. That is the first matter that a radical reforming Chancellor should tackle. Of course, it will bring in considerable revenue.

Secondly, the Chancellor should opt for the tax credit system. It will be beneficial to us. It means combining allowances and taxes and operating under one system. It was always calculated that computerisation would save 20,000 personnel. I still believe that that is desirable, and I hope that the next reforming Chancellor will devote his attention to it. It will need further simplification of the system. It will enable the Chancellor to focus on what is required to help poorer sections of the community and to deal with them through the tax credit system. He will then be fully justified in saying that he reduced the overall maximum tax level to something that is reasonable in modern times, that he changed a great deal of the tax structure, and that his successor is carrying on with the reform of the system of family trusts. If he prides himself on having stopped some tax loopholes—family trusts are by far the biggest of all tax loopholes—he will introduce a tax credit system.

I hope that the next Chancellor will do those things. In the meantime, I hope that the risks inherent in the Budget—encouraging though the structure is—will prove to have been taken rightly, that we shall not find inflation increasing, that we shall not find a great consumer boom, and that we shall find our industry and skilled labour force rapidly expanding. Unless that happens, there are grave risks of being forced into other activities.

6.2 pm

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): I have undertaken to keep my remarks extremely brief. Therefore, I am grateful to the former Prime Minister, the

[Mr. David Steel]

right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), for not expecting me to defend the decision of Mr. David Lloyd George or anybody else of similar vintage. As I shall mainly be critical of the Budget judgment, I shall begin my remarks by making two statement of appreciation of Budget decisions.

First, I refer to the decision regarding taxation of married couples. The Liberal and Social Democratic parties fought not only the last election but the one before it on that issue. We welcome that long-overdue change.

Secondly, I refer to forestry. I speak not only on behalf of a party that is concerned about the environment, but, obviously, with extensive constituency interests. The change from dependence on tax avoidance measures to planting grants is extremely welcome. We look forward to the details of the planting grants being announced, and, in particular, the hint contained in the Chancellor's speech about the way in which planting grants will be used to encourage the development of broadleaf as well as conifer planting.

With those two exceptions, the Budget judgment is sadly deficient.

In her speech to the Conservative party at the weekend, the Prime Minister said:

"Most people don't manufacture their own morality. They take it from the culture in which they live."

She went on to talk of the responsibility of leaders. Our young people live in a culture whose values are being warped by the kind of judgments in last week's Budget. The Prime Minister herself said:

"No one would have remembered the Good Samaritan if he'd only had good intentions. He had money as well."

In an unscripted answer to a television interview question, the Prime Minister said:

"Society. There is no such thing as society, only the individuals who comprise it."

I give the House a more up-to-date word on the same lines from a junior Minister in the Scottish Grand Committee debate this morning in Edinburgh. Talking about private sector education, he said:

"Parents exercise choice with their cheque books."

I suspect that much of the thinking behind the Budget is that more and more people shall be able to exercise choice with their cheque books and that more and more people should be enabled to buy their way out of the inadequacies of the Health Service and the education system. Because of that basic judgment and the basic purpose behind it, we are strongly opposed to the Budget. Indeed, one wonders why, when community care provisions are sorely stretched, the Government should choose this year to abolish the dependant relative's allowance. I should have thought that we would want to give every encouragement to people to look after their relatives in their own homes whenever possible. We want choice for all, not just for those who can afford it. That is why the Government should have concentrated on maintaining public services at a level of which we could all be proud.

The Budget is severely redistributive in an upward direction. It is always better to give specific examples than to talk in generalities. Today, a married man on a low income of £100 a week with two children takes home £96 a week. But, after the tax changes in the Budget and the social security benefit changes that have already been announced, that man's take-home pay will be down to £87 a week. That reinforces the call of the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup for a tax credit system, to which my party is committed. It will not only be more efficient and cheaper to administer, as he rightly said, but more just for individuals who are still caught in the poverty trap.

Of course, the Chancellor's Budget is only half the story. Much of the downside of finances for the less well-off was announced before the Budget. I refer to eye test charges, dental care charges, and the prescription charge increases that were separately announced. Of course, many of the changes that affect individuals form no part of the Budget. So it was that, in my constituency surgery this weekend, a lady came to me and showed me her pension book. She showed me how the calculated increase in pension to which she and her husband were looking forward was already swallowed up by the circular letter that she held in her other hand. It was a rent increase demand from the Scottish Special Housing Association, which, again, is under financial pressure from the Government. That is an example of someone, even with the promise of a pension increase, whose standard of living will be reduced.

We can now perceive that, in the warped culture in which we live, the number of rich individuals will increase — I do not dispute that — but they will live in an impoverished society, in which the crime wave will continue at its present level, squalor will not be eliminated, and in which there will be an increase in drug addiction. Such things are consistent with those parts of the country in which chronic long-term unemployment still exists.

My party supports an enterprise culture. The great majority of British people — not all — support an enterprise culture. But it is an insult to suggest that, because they support an enterprise culture, they do not also support a culture that is fair and just. The emphasis that is placed by the Budget and by much of the Government's philosophy on acquiring more money is one of the reasons why we have seen an enormous leap in the scale of personal borrowing in recent years. Last year alone, personal credit was up 18 per cent. As has been rightly said, that results in the sucking-in of more imports.

The Government are guilty of creating a society in which it is thought to be easier to make money than it is to earn it in manufacturing. In the Budget, the Government should have done four things to encourage British manufacturing. The first concerns exchange rate fluctuations—in fact, almost deliberately increasing the pound rate. It remains a mystery why the Prime Minister has some sort of personal veto over our entry into the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system. The Chancellor now at least appears to be a convert to this, but I do not understand how the Government can be committed in principle to the completion of the internal market by 1992, and yet not take the step, which is in our interest, of joining fully in the exchange rate mechanism. It is high time that that was done, in the interests of our manufacturing industry.

Second, and here I agree again with the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup, we have among our 16 to 25-year-olds a greater proportion of the unskilled than is the case in any of our competitor countries. That has been acknowledged in some of the speeches made by the Secretary of State for Employment, and I am glad to see him nodding. Are we doing enough to bring training and education together, and to invest more in making sure that that age group has more access to all forms of higher

education? It is a constant complaint of modern manufacturers that they are finding skill shortages, even now, when there is a large pool of unemployed.

Third, the Government have been grossly neglectful in failing to take any measures to deal with the regional imbalances and disproportions in unemployment. Why is it not possible to reduce the national insurance contribution on a regionally varying basis in areas of high unemployment, to encourage people to take on more workers in the areas that are suffering most? Why is it not possible to do the same with corporation tax, to place more total investment at a regional level? I have some doubts about the changes in the regional development grants which the Government have announced, but I can accept that there is some logic in them, provided that the total resources available for regional development are to be kept going. We suspect that they are not.

The House has been greatly entertained by the exchange of public correspondence between the Secretary of State for the Environment and his predecessor the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) as to which of them is the more responsible for the destruction of the environment of the south-east of England. Underlying all the correspondence is an assumption that I do not accept, which is that the economy of the south-east has to be overheated anyway, and nothing can be done about it. Without going into the absurd propositions about the direction of industry, I can say that something can be done about it. If more investment were steered towards the north, Scotland and Wales, a great cheer would go up from many of the communities in south-east England, which find that they are suffering from the pressure of people and resources and new developments in this one corner of England.

Fourth and last, the Government should do much more to encourage profit-sharing and industrial partnerships than they have done in this Budget. It is significant that we had a great success in the Nissan plant in Sunderland, where there is a single union, single status and a co-operative system of production. That is the industrial relations for the future. It was lamentable that the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), speaking for the Labour party, had nothing to say about the 1,000 jobs lost in Scotland through the failure to introduce precisely the system which exists in Sunderland, where trade unionism is alive and well, and people are enjoying prosperity. That is the pattern of the future, and the Government should have done more to encourage it.

We shall vote against the resolution on income tax rates because, in the truest sense of the word, this is an anti-social Budget, produced by an anti-social Government, and they should not be surprised if it continues to have anti-social consequences.

6.13 pm

Mr. Terence L. Higgins (Worthing): I shall begin by taking up two of the points that have been raised by Opposition Front Bench spokesmen. It was noticeable that, in their remarks about income tax, they tended to concentrate on the reduction in the top rate of tax from 60 to 40 per cent. and skilfully ignored the reduction in the standard rate, and the fact that the threshold has been raised twice as much as would have been required merely by indexation to account for the cost of living. I tried to recall in how many Budgets introduced by the previous Labour Government any such reduction in taxation at the bottom of the income tax scale took place. It is a fact that by those standards this Budget, even if one takes that tiny segment of the concessions that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has given to standard rate income tax payers, is a success.

The other point that it is important to stress is that there is undoubtedly a flaw in our system of considering economic matters with a division between the raising of taxation and the expenditure of it. The public at large do not understand that the Budget presented by the Chancellor is concerned only with the raising of taxation and not with the spending of the money that has been raised. It is tremendously important, since the Opposition have put so much stress on the National Health Service, that this Budget should be seen in the context of the public expenditure White Paper, published a few weeks ago. As my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary pointed out, that involves an increase of £1 billion this year, £1 billion next year and £1 billion the year after.

I do not recall any Labour Government making such an increase in funds for the NHS. Furthermore, I hope that when the nurses' pay claim is decided, which should be before the end of April, the Government will fund whatever settlement is agreed in full. That will involve a further charge on the contingency fund, which itself will be a substantial increase in the expenditure on the Health Service.

This division between expenditure and taxation presents many problems, although I note with interest that Mr. Sam Brittan took up this point today. It was made many years ago by the Armstrong committee, and the Procedure Committee (Finance), which I chaired, examined it closely. In future, we should consider bringing together more closely the two sides of the measures.

I greatly welcome other measures in the Budget, not least the removal of discrimination against marriage which I know, from experience in my constituency, many groups, not least those involved with the Church and so on, have been advocating for many years. At last, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has managed to do something about it, albeit with some delay in some of the proposals.

There are so many aspects of the Budget that it is difficult to know on which to concentrate, but I shall concentrate on two. One which has been neglected because it is so traditional is the increase in indirect taxes, notably that on tobacco. This puts into context the Government's attitude to the proposals coming from the EEC with regard to the approximation of indirect tax rates. I am passionately in favour of the single market and I believe that 1992 and the move towards it will give this country many opportunities, which I hope we will be sensible enough to take.

That being so, it is important, if one is enthusiastic for that opportunity, as I am, to disagree with proposals that seem unnecessary or perhaps even damaging. I am struck by the evidence given recently by Lord Cockfield with regard to the proposals for harmonisation of indirect taxation within the EEC. It was significant that he seemed far more preoccupied with the removal of customs barriers and transit between one country and another — when clearly, because of the Channel, the United Kingdom is in a somewhat unusual position — than with getting a system of indirect taxation which was the best that could be devised. He admitted as much when he said that we wanted the easiest way to get agreement, when the right

[Mr. Terence L. Higgins]

approach should be to argue that we should decide what is the most appropriate system of indirect taxation and then seek to achieve it.

The report of the Select Committee on the Treasury andCivil Service, which was published a few days ago, stressed that there is a danger that the moves towards the approximation of indirect taxation run across the use of a tax system that may be designed for social or health reasons. From that point of view, there may be a case for not going along the route of approximation with regard, in particular, to excise duties. Therefore, I noted with great interest that in his Budget my right hon. Friend the Chancellor put up the effective cost of a packet of cigarettes by some 3p, whereas the proposals by the EEC would involve reducing the cost of a packet of cigarettes by 12p. This can be taken as a clear sign of the way in which the minds of my right hon. Friend and the Government are moving. But other important aspects of the move towards 1992 present opportunities without such disadvantages.

The move towards approximation of indirect taxes in the EEC without regard to whether the structure of those taxes could reasonably be regarded as good would cause serious problems, because once the rates are approximated and finalised by agreement there is no mechanism in the EEC for adjusting their level. That is a great deficiency, because it will mean that the rates are set in concrete. It will also have considerable implications for the management of Britain's economy, not least because a much greater weight will be thrown on direct taxation, over which we shall still have some control. We shall need to be able to take necessary fiscal measures now and probably for many years to come because of continuing differences between member states. The EEC proposals for harmonising corporation tax would give us even less scope for more fiscal adjustments. It is important to retain flexibility in that respect if a uniform system of taxation is not to be imposed, which will cause problems for some countries.

The other aspect on which I wish to concentrate is the Government's policy on economic management. I noted with interest my right hon. Friend's proposals for a balanced Budget, but one must take into account the large margin of error in estimating the public sector borrowing requirement. It was a significant change from last year, when he suggested that the PSBR should be 1 per cent. of GDP. I hope that that point will be clarified. I urge my right hon. Friend not to be afraid to say that policy has been changed. He has a slight tendency to say, as though it was a virtue, that there has been no change in policy. From time to time, changes in policy may be appropriate, and I welcome some of the changes that have been made.

In the run-up to the Budget, the exchange rate policy seemed to create much anguish in the press. The matter was grossly exaggerated on the basis of two answers to supplementary questions on the Floor of the House. There is no difficulty reconciling the answers given by the Chancellor and by the Prime Minister, but we must consider some important issues of exchange rate policy. The item that caught the headlines was the Prime Minister's remark that we cannot buck the market, but we should realise that the answer that she gave before that was entirely consistent with the remarks of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Of course, there is a market price for sterling at any given time and one cannot buck the laws of supply and demand, if that is what is meant by the market. But, as any student of economics knows, the laws of supply and demand are very different in macroeconomic policy from those in microeconomic policy. The famous diagrams associated with them are very different. The supply, price of and demand for potatoes is not the same as the supply, price of and demand for sterling or the dollar.

Although we cannot buck the market, by using the laws of supply and demand we can significantly influence the market and the price at which the dollar or sterling may operate. But we can do that in various ways. It can be done be currency intervention — throwing money at the sterling exchange rate or the dollar exchange rate. That is likely to be expensive, and it is difficult to buck the market in that sense. But that does not mean that we cannot seek —indeed, there may be strong arguments for it—some stability in exchange rates by co-ordinating interest rate and fiscal policy. I welcome the fact that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has been active in that respect.

My right hon. Friend seemed to change his mind on the first form of intervention—going out into the market and buying or selling a foreign currency. It is clear from the outcome of the Louvre agreement that relying on intervention without sufficient co-ordination on interest rates and fiscal policies is dangerous. In that sense, too, it is difficult to buck the market. None the less, the measures that the Chancellor has taken in that respect are important and I hope that he will press on. I am sure that the Prime Minister wishes him to do so, as it was clear from her answer at Question Time that she wants to achieve more international co-ordination and stability in such matters. But it will involve co-ordination of all the points that I have just mentioned.

The Budget should be memorable because of the measures contained within it, but I fear that it will also be memorable for the events of Budget day itself. I was appalled by what happened. The House is often rowdy and noisy. There are often points of order and occasions when hon. Members react passionately and the noise reflects it. That is vastly different from mindless chanting clearly intended to prevent freedom of speech. It was greatly to be deplored, not least because it succeeded in its objective: the sitting had to be suspended and my right hon. Friend was prevented from making his speech. I hope profoundly that, on reflection, those who participated in the incident will realise that democracy is a fragile thing and that it is not easy to defend freedom of speech in this place. But it is incumbent on us all to make sure that we do.

6.27 pm

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): I agree with what the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) said about bringing together debates on spending and the raising of revenue. We have had something similar, but we do not have the factual basis or the proper background to enable us to discuss expenditure and revenue at the same time.

Despite all that has been said about this reforming Chancellor, I expected more from him. As he has given so much of his effort to such matters, I thought that this time we would see something exceptional. I am not talking about our expectation of fairness, which we did not see in this Budget, or the complete disregard for anything other than a reduction of taxation on the rich and the almost

humorous justification for such discrimination. I had in mind a Chancellor who had had years of preparation for a Budget in which he could have achieved what so many of us wanted and what he must have wanted a year or two ago — to introduce the real reforms in taxation that would have marked him out for special distinction in matters that he used to consider important. They include mortgage interest relief, which is nonsense and a shameful blot on our financial timetable, the enormous reliefs that are available on personal pensions, the nonsense of stamp duties, and inheritance tax. I thought that he would have wished to turn his attention to those matters at this stage of his Chancellorship.

Of course, it could be said that a Chancellor of the Exchequer who has created such social upheaval in the redistribution of wealth to the rich has done more than enough in tax changes. But tax change is not tax reform, and the one does not inhibit the other. Those who believed that the light-burning in No. 11 which traditionally takes place before the Budget was the light of the tax reformer have been greatly disillusioned. As the *Financial Times* put it, the Budget was intellectually unexciting. But a proper analysis of these tax changes — and how much more could have been done — really ought to await the Finance Bill and the debates on it.

The political aspects of the Budget have been dominated by two matters: money for the rich, and the argument between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister about the exchange rate. That argument really is important. It lies at the very heart of our economic management, and it is the critical test of the right hon. Gentleman's Chancellorship. Getting it right will determine the balance of payments, the promotion of exports, the discouragement of imports and the relationship of our economy to the world at large. In a word, it will determine the outcome more than anything else that the Chancellor is able to do. It represents the maximum of his power or influence. It is more than an economic indicator. It represents in itself almost an entire economic strategy. It is the one economic signal that can claim the privilege of keeping the Chancellor awake at night. The exchange rate is the precursor of trade patterns. It determines the order books of our most important industries, affects the level of unemployment and anticipates the real level of industrial prosperity.

As a lesson, we need only remind ourselves of what happened in the exchange rate madness of 1980-81, when so much industry was damaged and destroyed. As an example of what a disastrous exchange rate policy can do, I have only to turn to my constituency, where, in those two years, we lost one third of our manufacturing industry. This was not low-tech industry; it was not cotton, for instance. It was medium-tech. It involved skilled engineers and skilled engineering firms, producing articles that the whole world makes. They are made in Japan, Germany and the United States. Those firms were destroyed by the high exchange and interest rates. They could not sell on the home market or the overseas market, and they went to the wall. They will never recover or restart.

That was not unimportant, not just in Ashton, but everywhere. We saw a community with higher than average pay and lower than average unemployment — in the country as a whole, not just the north-west — suddenly turned to an area of high unemployment, low pay and all the problems of dereliction that compound those disadvantages.

When there is an argument about exchange rate policy between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister, we are not talking about a bit more money for this, or a little less for that; a bit more on this tax, or a bit less on that tax. We are talking about the central economic issue of our country. On that, the Prime Minister has one view and the Chancellor has another. When the Prime Minister says, "You cannot buck the market", she is offering too simple a view, as the right hon. Member for Worthing pointed out. It is true that Governments must listen to markets, but it is also true that markets must listen to Governments. They interact, and a wise Chancellor uses the relationship to the benefit of our economy as a whole. In that respect, I believe the Chancellor to be right and the Prime Minister to be wrong. I think that they both started off with the same view, but the Chancellor has learnt and the Prime Minister has not.

At one time the Chancellor was even more extreme than the Prime Minister. He wanted to enable the Bank of England, through legislative powers, to decide these matters independently of the House of Commons. He held that view in 1977, and, although he may wince at the recollection, we can at least congratulate him on changing. The *Financial Times* says that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has jettisoned his "ideological baggage", and we as a House commend him at least in that particular.

Let me demonstrate the complacency of the present Government. Last week, when the Chief Secretary to the Treasury talked about the economic miracle — perhaps he will regret mentioning that again; we have had too many such false dawns — he joined the long list of those who, since the war, have awaited its coming with more hope than good sense. I must say that I find the exultations rather cloying, as well as the self-satisfaction that I see oozing from every statement. It seems that it is exceeded only by the Government's amnesia about the cause of the present economic position. That, as we all know, is North sea oil.

It is not the revenue aspects that are of such importance. It is the balance of payments aspect. From 1945 until 1980, what stopped the economy from growing was balance of payments difficulties. Stop-go was an illustration of those difficulties. Every now and again they brought to a halt all our expansionist hopes, whichever Government were in power, and, at a stroke, the balance of payments ceased to be the dominant economic factor in 1980.

What has happened since then? We have had the disaster of the high exchange rate. More recently, we have had the boom in the high streets — a retailing windfall. Credit has never been so freely available, and our savings ratio puts us near the bottom of the table of major industrial countries. We now have a consumption-led boom, but we have been through this sort of thing before. We had it in 1955 and again in 1960, and — as the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) pointed out in a speech of great distinction — there are close similarities between now and the period between 1971 and 1973. The right hon. Gentleman could have added to his detailed list of similarities the property boom that is so disfiguring the housing market today.

This consumption-led boom could, of course, have taken place at any time since 1980. It did not have to wait for a year or two ago. The early factor that brought a halt to such policies in the past was the balance of payments. It is North sea oil which, uniquely in the present import

[Mr. Robert Sheldon]

boom, has protected the balance of payments. In past surges of consumer expenditure there was at any rate some intellectual justification for it. Expand demand, the argument went, and our factories would produce more, unit costs would fall and exports would increase. The philosopher's stone for which we have been seeking would be to hand, and we would have export-led growth. But the present consumption-led boom has no hope of being transmuted into export-led growth.

With the internationalisation of trade in manufactured goods, as well as the exchange rate — which, on any likely reckoning, will not discourage such imports — all we shall achieve is more imports and an artificial feeling of well-being. If that happens, the so-called economic miracle, like all previous hopes, will have collapsed. The economic miracle — or, rather, our misuse of North sea oil — will have been shown to be nothing but profligacy, and as such will take its place at the forefront of a long list of missed opportunities.

That, I believe, is the likely outcome of this Budget. Far from its effects being limited, if the Prime Minister were to succeed with her high exchange rate policy, the problems later this year, or early next year, would be magnified.

This is supposed to be the Budget for initiative. It is the umpteenth Budget for that elusive virtue. It is strange that tax reductions for the rich are supposed to stimulate the creators of wealth. I thought that we had tested that theory almost to destruction in our post-war history. The wealth creators were expected to be stimulated by Selwyn Lloyd when he made his large reductions in surtax in 1962. The economic halt, as we know, came two years later. Anthony Barber tried again in 1971, with his unified tax, which was the largest tax concession to the wealthy that had been seen since the war. That, too, collapsed in ignominy two years later.

In view of the economic consequences of stimulating the rich, it might be concluded that disaster would invariably follow. What would certainly be perverse would be to assume that any economic benefits flow from such changes — let alone that the benefits will be remotely comparable to the social consequences of divisiveness, unfairness and a decline in our provision of essential services.

Of course, the benefits of this Budget for the rich do not go just to the creators of wealth; they go also to the inheritors of wealth. With the emasculation of the so-called inheritance tax, great advantages now go to those who are left large fortunes. I have no idea how this is supposed to stir the entrepreneurial instincts of those waiting for their relatives who are well off to pass on.

The difficulty for the Government lies in their inability to provide an intellectual basis for the relief of taxation of the well off. The assumption must be that, despite all the trumpets and fancy speeches, and all the posturing, they are just handing out the prizes. It is in their expenditure that the Government show themselves to be equally unfair. They talk about giving more money to the National Health Service. Many hon. Members know something about the relative price effect. It costs more to keep the National Health Service than increases at the level of inflation can provide.

Tameside general hospital, which is in my local authority area, had 5,800 admissions two years ago and 5,000 last year, but it will come down to 4,000 this year. That sounds bad, but it is even worse when one takes into account the fact that 3,000 of those admissions are emergencies. All that we had were 2,000 above the level for emergencies last year and 1,000 above the level this year. That is the scale of the deterioration of the Health Service of which I have personal experience.

The failure to increase child benefit is also distressing. Just over 10 years ago, in 1977, a compact was reached between Iain Macleod and the Treasury. The deal was that child benefit would not be treated as public expenditure subject to the disciplines of the public expenditure exercise. We were going from tax allowances to child benefit. Tax allowances were always raised. The agreement reached with Iain Macleod was that child benefit would not be included in the public expenditure exercise, but would continue to be dealt with in the way that tax allowances are dealt with. We have seen a quite shameful withdrawal from that agreement that could have continued at least to play an important part in limiting the problems of families on low incomes.

This is an unfair Budget. It is not a Budget that a future Tory party will be able to look at with pride. It will be an embarrassment to the Tories and will shame their successors. Sooner or later the British people will turn to more equitable ways of running the economy, and I hope that they will do that before too long.

6.42 pm

Sir Ian Lloyd (Havant): I begin by congratulating my right hon. Friend the Chancellor on three counts. First, he has produced a splendid Budget, which will be the envy not only of his predecessors but, I suspect, of his successors. To have balanced the Budget, balanced our payments, repaid debt, reduced taxation dramatically, held inflation in check and created the general economic conditions favourable to growth and falling unemployment is a prodigious achievement.

Secondly, he has gone a long way to ensuring that the lessons for our economy, set out in such vivid illustration in Correlli Barnett's powerful book "The Audit of War", are learned and applied. Few would have predicted with any real confidence as recently as five years ago such a remarkable transformation. It has not been without pain or uncertainty and, as always, the faint-hearted would have given up when the going was tough. It is very much to my right hon. Friend's credit that he did not do so.

Thirdly, in a most decisive and convincing manner, my right hon. Friend has broken the mould of a high-tax, low-incentive, low-productivity economy from which successive Governments of all parties tried so hard to escape, sometimes with very much less success than they had hoped. He has done so because he is the Houdini, if I may put it that way, who has mastered the complex art of unlocking each of those massive locks that bound our economy in the iron bands of constraint, despair and interlocking prohibitions. He has broken out of this by seizing on the most promising and important segments of policy, and by defining the fundamentals and sticking to them. I salute him and recognise in him, as Napoleon once recognised in his generals, the truth that good generals are those whose skill is rewarded with luck. I suggest that the Chancellor's skill is quite exceptional this side of the second world war.

My main purpose is to concentrate on one argument, that the Budget has reduced taxation rather than increased

expenditure on the National Health Service. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor has come under considerable attack on this score, not least in today's debate and not only from the Opposition. He is right and his logic is equalled only by his courage. It is most uncongenial to be accused of lacking sympathy or compassion for the sick. As I understand it, the argument is that the National Health Service can demonstrate a shortage of staff, equipment and space. It is that hospital queues are lengthening, that there is a perceived shortage of most skills — especially of the most scarce medical skills—and that decisions are being made not on health but on financial grounds. Therefore, the argument runs that there should be no reduction in tax on anyone until a significant proportion of these needs have been met and the future of the Health Service secured. On the face of it, that is a plausible and in some ways a powerful argument.

I find particularly disturbing the suggestion that has been made over and over again in the past few weeks that this problem is unique to our Health Service and to the United Kingdom. The suggestion is that it reflects a unique lack of generosity on the part of the Government, and that there is a unique indifference to the plight of our hospitals and our medical profession. Those things are attributed by our critics uniquely to the Government. All that is unsustainable because the mass of description and anecdotal evidence, of which we have had a great deal, has failed both in detail and in terms of the general picture that has been conveyed to make a case.

What is the evidence that the problem is not unique? There are three principal organisations which in my experience have concentrated immense effort in recent years on the problem of world health in the developed and the undeveloped world. The first is the World Health Organisation. It has published a series of reports pointing out in the most dramatic terms that by the end of the century all the developed countries of the western world, whatever their present position, are likely to run into massive problems about financing their health services. No one has mentioned that.

Secondly, that superb body, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, has published a series of reports, specifically on health but more generally on social problems. In a moment I shall come to some of the conclusions in one of those reports.

Thirdly, the Office of Technology Assessment, which advises the United States Congress, has produced a series of reports on health that are of immense significance and value. The OTA has looked at a series of major health problems in the United States in relation to the Medicare system of payment and has concluded that there are no easy solutions and that such solutions have not been applied there or anywhere else. The problem of health is immensely complex and has not yet been solved.

All these reports have a series of common conclusions. I have touched on the first one, the immense complexity of the problem. The second is that there is general evidence throughout the western world of failure and concern, and that this applies in countries such as the United States, Sweden and Switzerland which apply the highest percentage of GDP, just as much as it does to countries at the other end of the scale. Thirdly, there is general evidence from the OECD and in the developed world of massive health cost overruns. It is not a problem unique to the United Kingdom or to our National Health Service, nor is it one that the present Government or any other British Government have uniquely failed to solve. It is a general problem and I suggest that we have much to learn by looking at the experience of others and seeing what lessons we can derive from them.

There is no correlation — this is a significant conclusion — between the system of payment and the general success of a health service. The system is obviously one of immense variety, varying from our own, which is virtually a totally publicly funded service, to the United States, which has the highest percentage of GDP spent on health, but, in fact, spends only 4·4 per cent. in the public sector and 6·3 per cent. in the private sector. In France, where the figures are 6·5 in the public sector and 2·6 in the private sector, the OECD analysis again discloses many unsolved problems, particularly in the distribution of health skills throughout metropolitan France.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that there may well be a great body of opinion that simply wants to spend more as a percentage of GDP and that those people are not concerned with his arguments? They simply want the state to spend more, to raise standards and to increase the availability of services. Can the hon. Gentleman absorb that proposition?

Sir Ian Lloyd: There is always a vast body of public opinion which, over almost every segment of the public expenditure spectrum, wishes the state to spend more. I have never yet received large numbers of letters from constituents, especially those employed in the public sector, asking the state to spend less.

That brings me to my next point. There is no exclusive right of a national health service or the health sector in any country to absorb, as of right, increased resources which the growth of the economy is making available. It certainly has every right to put in a claim and to have the claim considered in conjuction with others. However, the argument being deployed here is that under the Health Service there is an absolute right, as soon as a surplus is created elsewhere which matches or exceeds its deficit, for that deficit to be met. That argument cannot be sustained. Health Service expenditure must compete against expenditure on defence, education and the environment, a total of £130 billion in public expenditure.

Health care may often be better achieved through other forms of expenditure. Some calculations have been made by the Office of Technology Assessment, which show that expenditure on safety, as a result of the high medical costs of accidents, could well improve the general efficiency of health services much more directly and effectively than direct expenditure in hospitals on the consequences of accidents. The same applies to expenditure on reducing pollution. Some precise calculations have been made in respect of the effects of reduced pollution on bronchitis and the consequent reduction in bronchitis costs. Those calculations were made in the United States, where the reduction in expenditure was calculated to be about $10 billion. That is a cost-effective way of going about things. I need hardly mention the effect of decreasing expenditure on alcohol and tobacco. The consequences of the consumption of alcohol and tobacco account for about 40 per cent. of all health expenditure in this country. There is no automatic entitlement of the NHS to funds. The NHS must compete. It may be justified in its approach in some cases, but not in others.

I should like to refer to a number of points made by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould). He said that

[Sir Ian Lloyd]

economic judgments were much better if they were not so confused with morality. He appeared to be saying that economic judgments were generally much better made if they were judged in some sort of moral-immoral spectrum. That is a fallacious way of considering such matters. We are considering two essential problems — social acceptability and economic growth. They are certainly interconnected. It is a fine and often difficult judgment as to which policy will optimise the U-curve between the two in a most complex and difficult manner.

However, in my judgment, it is not a question of morality. It can never be a question of morality or immorality. If it were a question of immorality, one must ask oneself, if it is immoral to lower tax rates, at what point does the immorality become acceptable? We can consider that equally from the other side of the political spectrum. At what point does it become immoral to raise tax rates to the draconian levels that have existed in this country and others? We know that those draconian rates have had what could be described as immoral consequences, but I prefer to describe them as poor economic judgments with poor economic consequences. Let us forget about bringing morality and immorality into the issue. There is no ethical criterion, but economic judgments about consequences should be made a proper ground for political disagreement between the parties and a proper ground for debate.

The hon. Member for Dagenham then suggested, in an attempt to elaborate his argument, that the rich are idle. He said that the rich would benefit from the Budget, particularly the idle.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: He did not say that.

Sir Ian Lloyd: I wrote it down at the time. He said that many of those who would benefit from a reduction in tax rates were not merely the rich, but the idle rich.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: That is different.

Sir Ian Lloyd: It may be different, but if the hon. Gentleman considers some of the so-called rich — for example, Ford, Nuffield, Carnegie, Morris, Hammer, Leverhulme, Hanson, Rothschild, Morita, Wolfson and Sainsbury — he will see that not one of them could ever be said to be idle. They may have made great wealth, but they made it by the sweat of their brow and the efficiency of their judgments. Let us forget about the question of benefiting the idle.

The hon. Member for Dagenham then said that inequality is inefficient. That argument may be valid in a limited way in certain circumstances, but, if one is generalising the argument, why has the Soviet Union staged a massive retreat at great political cost from the egalitarian state that it sought to create and implement? The hon. Gentleman should take such judgments into account before he makes statements of that degree of generality.

The hon. Member for Dagenham then referred to Professor Kenneth Galbraith whom I remember being quoted in support of a former Prime Minister, now Lord Rievaulx, and his Government. If one considers that in a limited sense, Professor Galbraith had a point, but, when one widens the analysis and area of judgment, one finds such examples as that which I found two or three years ago. I went to the Rhondda valley with the Select Committee on Energy to look at coal mines. One of the things that impressed me was the relative poverty of the private housing. The area was poverty-stricken and in many ways depressing. Suddenly, we came over the hill and there was a splendid, vast glass structure. I asked, "What's that? Is it some new factory?" I was told that it was the Rhondda council building. There is, therefore, another kind of contrast, that between public affluence and private squalor, but there is not necessarily any argument for or against the Budget from that quarter.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): The hon. Gentleman must have the wrong valley. I can assure him that the Rhondda valley council headquarters are in a building equal in antiquity to that of the majority of houses in the valley — in other words, about 120 years old.

Sir Ian Lloyd: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman if I have the wrong valley. There was certainly a dramatically large and expensive building some 20 miles further up the valley that I visited. I withdraw any aspersions that I may have accidentally cast on the Rhondda.

I wish to deal finally with the question of high interest rates. I was astonished to hear the hon. Member for Dagenham argue that high interest rates encourage consumption. When my overdraft rate goes up, I endeavour to reduce my consumption. When the building society rate on mortgages goes up, the net effect on a fixed income is to reduce the available income and, therefore, to reduce consumption. The hon. Gentleman went on to say that that discourages the type of investment that we most want to see. Again, as most major industrial investments involve elaborate discounted cash flow analyses, in which the rate of interest is a crucial factor, one of the significant effects of high interest rates is to encourage more discriminating investment.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Oh!

Sir Ian Lloyd: If money is cheap and free, anyone can borrow and get hold of it. If money is expensive and scarce, obviously it is much more difficult to borrow and those who do borrow must consider much more carefully their approach and how they will spend that money.

I repeat that I heartily approve of what my right hon. Friend has done and I hope that he will be here next year to do it again.

6.59 pm

Mr. Tom Pendry (Stalybridge and Hyde): I am extremely pleased to follow my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), the previous speaker from the Opposition Benches, because he referred to the damage that the high interest rates policy of earlier years had done to his constituency and to mine. We have not yet recovered from that damage. I wish to concentrate my remarks upon that policy. It is a relatively narrow policy, but it is an important aspect of Government thinking and it is one to which the Chancellor should have addressed himself in the Budget.

I can state categorically that last Tuesday was not "Super Tuesday" for my constituents. At the weekend, the Prime Minister used just that expression a few miles along the road from my constituency and how she had the nerve to do so I will never know. It is just as well for her that security was drawn tight at Buxton. Clearly the hand

picked audience were beneficiaries of the Chancellor's lop-sided, rich man's Budget. She certainly would not have got away with saying such things further along the road in Tameside. The Budget has done nothing for the vast majority of people and it has certainly done little for the people of Tameside.

The much-vaunted inner city policies of the Government have hindered the development of trade and industry in my constituency and that failure is repeated in many similar areas. My local council, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne would testify, is a well-run council. It is doing a great deal in line with what the Prime Minister has urged councils to do in her introduction to that glossy piece of fiction "Action for Cities" which was launched only two weeks ago. The Prime Minister wrote—perhaps it was Bernard Ingham or perhaps they worked together—in that document:

"The Government is resolved, in partnership with the people, to generate that hope and help to create a new, lively environment in which to live, work and prosper . . . the Government has created a climate which supports enterprise and has set about removing obstacles in the way of inner city recovery."

That is nonsense to Tameside, whose situation does not square with the Prime Minister's words. By any yardstick Tameside is recognised as a deprived area. Indeed, its problems are recognised by all the political parties in the borough. I should like to draw special attention—I am sure my right hon. Friend would join me—to the leader of the Conservatives on the council, Councillor Bell. The Conservatives on the council, with one exception—an unsuccessful business man and failed parliamentary candidate—are at one with the majority party and with the business community in pressing the Government for help for the varied problems of the borough.

The three Members of Parliament with constituencies within the boundaries of Tameside have worked hard to bring Ministers to the area and have sent deputations to Ministers in Whitehall to present the problems of Tameside.

The hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier) was the latest Minister to visit the area. The leaders of the majority and minority parties made it clear to him that there was a true partnership scheme—not one of the glossies—in operation. It was a true coming together of the private and public sectors of the borough with the aim of generating the local economy. Those involved in the scheme believe that Tameside has many of the problems of the inner city — decay, dereliction, eyesores, empty factories, crime and run-down housing. The Minister must have been convinced by the determination that exists to tackle and resolve the problems. I am sure that he was especially convinced by the senior representatives of nationally-known companies who told him that they were as united and determined as anyone else to make the partnership work. However, when the Minister returned to Whitehall, he and, therefore, the Government turned their backs.

Tameside does not fall within the boundaries for urban aid that were drawn up a decade ago, so the borough is deprived of the assistance that it needs and it is ignored. Why did the Budget not address the problems faced by Tameside? Why are Tameside and similar areas considered irrelevant to Government philosophy?

Local business men, many of whom the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment met, are baffled about why their ideas for expansion have been stopped by Whitehall's red tape. Projects that are attractive to private investors and that would benefit urban regeneration are coming up against a Government brick wall. The Government are letting the spirit of enterprise flounder. Instead, they are producing glossy brochures and an abundance of new logos.

One glaring example of Whitehall red tape was witnessed by the Under-Secretary. A pharmaceutical factory in my right hon. Friend's constituency straddles the boundary between Tameside and Oldham. It was pointed out to the Minister that, if that company moved its postal address from one building to another — situated on the Oldham side—it would be eligible for inner city status. The company was baffled by that. It asked the Minister about it, but nothing was done. I defy any hon. Member to go round Oldham and Tameside and say that there are any differences in the problems that they face. They are both worthy of Government support. Indeed, Tameside has a worse unemployment record than Oldham. My purpose is not to diminish the claims of Oldham or any other area for Government help but to highlight my council's case.

On the Department of the Environment's own figures for social stress, Tameside scores higher than at least five of the north-west boroughs that enjoy urban area status. In the past four years unemployment in Tameside has increased at a faster rate than in nine boroughs that receive support. Financial resources are also tighter in Tameside because of its low rateable valuation in comparison with neighbouring boroughs and that is a clear reflection of the poor status of the area.

One point that is often overlooked is that Tameside not only has the economic problems of the scale of the city of Manchester, but has them in population terms as well. Tameside contains several overspill estates and, in the main, people have been rehoused there from Manchester's inner city. The estates of Hattersley, Carrbrook and Haughton Green in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) contain a population of about 13,700. Many of those people still work in the city of Manchester and if they lived a mile along the road they would qualify for help.

I want the Government to recognise that my local authority is playing its part on partnership and regeneration. It has done so without Government help. However, that authority needs help if it is to fulfil its wishes and if it is to achieve what the Government claim they want such authorities to achieve.

The authority has provided houses for sale and vigorously tried to improve older housing stock; land has been sold to private developers at subsidised cost; efforts have been made to improve the infrastructure, especially the shopping precincts, and it has introduced many other schemes.

On top of its economic problems, the deprived constituency of Tameside faces further cuts in health care. In the two Black reports Tameside was described as being in the top 10 most deprived areas of the country in terms of health provision. Tameside general hospital — my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne has said somthing of this already—is to cut 90 acute beds and 16 children's orthopaedic beds. A hospital has effectively closed without the Secretary of State's permission to date. Twenty-five general surgical beds are to be kept open for three months only.

[Mr. Tom Pendry]

I accept that I have made a constituency speech, but I do not apologise for that. Tameside is typical of many areas and the Budget has not addressed the problems in those areas. I state candidly to the Minister that he must respond to the points made by me and my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne about our area. Our constituents look to the Government to help them with their difficulties. If this Government will not help, our constituents will look forward to the day when we have a Government who recognise the problems and are prepared to do something about them.

7.10 pm

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I want to be brief and I hope that the House will forgive me if I pick up the points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) at the end of his speech.

I begin by referring to the events on Tuesday when our debate began. I agree with my right hon. Friend that the organised tribal chanting was a disgraceful exhibition. The lack of action from the shadow Leader of the House or the Opposition Chief Whip to restrain those who were responsible for that disgraceful breach of order says much about the ability of those people. Perhaps the House would benefit if they would make way for others. If they will not make way, would they at least please stop obstructing the establishment of the Select Committee on Procedure which could consider these matters which must be examined?

There is an aspect of the disorder in which the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) succeeded in getting himself suspended which preceded the chanting which should not pass without remark. As you were in the Chair at the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you might be interested in the names in the Division list on the motion to suspend the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan. Most of the names will not have caused you surprise, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, the presence of the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South (Mr. Lambie) on the list might have surprised you.

I gave notice to the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South that I intended to raise this point and I am sorry that he is not in the Chamber. I believe that the hon. Member is a member of the Chairmen's Panel. Members of that panel have a duty to support the Chair. It is entirely reprehensible that the hon. Member for Cunninghame, South chose not to support the Chair and he should be brought to account for that. I have no wish to go further into that matter as I have made my point.

I agree with the compliments paid quite rightly to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer for his Budget. I want to focus closely on a point that has been referred to off and on from the beginning of the debate, which is the extent to which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has prudently made provision for what may be expected to happen in the next few years.

Too much of the debate has been harking back. We could hark back a long way if we wanted to. As I listened to the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) and his Front Bench colleagues, I was reminded irresistibly of a colourful card that I was given by a constituent during the 1970 general election campaign. That card dated from the 1920s and was headed "The Socialist Creed". The card read along the lines, "Brothers" — it may have been "Comrades" — "let us combine among us and when I have spent my share we will do that again." The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East presented himself in the typical guise of one of Socialism's big spenders. All his answers to the problems confronting our society were, "Spend, spend, spend."

I do not believe that we can hope to compete in the world if we adopt that philosophy or if we ignore the effects of the years that the locusts have eaten or if we decide to squander in one great round of national self-indulgence the achievements that have been built up since 1979. If we do that—and that appears to be what the Socialists want us to do — we will be in the worst position to face the future.

My next point concerns another matter raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing. I want to consider what happens between now and 1992 and the advent of the single European market. Apart from the Budget, the most important economic event last week was the launch on Friday by my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry of the campaign to familiarise more people in British business with what will happen in 1992. In the covering letter, which I hope has reached all hon. Members, my right hon. and noble Friend states:

> "Over the next five years we shall see the dismantling of the remaining barriers to a single unified market of over 320 million people in Europe. All Member States are committed to achieving this by the end of 1992. I want to ensure that companies throughout the UK are given every chance to make a success of the new opportunities of the Single Market and to meet the challenges it brings — before our competitors beat us to it."

No one interested in the affairs of the European Community can deny that the next four or five years are absolutely crucial to the future of this country and its people. That is why it is so important and such a matter for commendation that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's Budget puts this country's economy in the best possible shape to enter those years and make the most of the advantages before us.

There may be many obstacles and difficulties to overcome. However, we start with some advantages. We have the advantage of a sound economy which is enterprising and efficient in which the world has confidence. Thanks to the fiscal changes introduced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, the best business men and managers in those businesses will continue to be motivated in our economy and have the incentives to produce the goods for us all.

I do not believe that we can have anything less than the highest dedication if we are to beat our competitors. The French and the Germans in particular—our two greatest rivals—suffer from disadvantages that we do not have. We have political certainty, but the French do not and the Germans seem to be in some danger of losing their certainty. The years between now and 1992 must be used for the sake of everyone in this country—for those in work and those out of work and for the sake of those working and those in retirement.

They must be used to maximise our advantages and to acquire business if we cannot export into those markets —to buy businesses in France and Germany—and to use the period between now and 1992 to move forward to be ready to meet and beat our competitors. The best

memory of this Budget for historians in future will be that it was the Budget that prepared to take this country into Europe and to make us the leader in Europe.

7.18 pm

Mr. Denis Howell (Birmingham, Small Heath): I am grateful for the opportunity to speak for a while in this Budget debate. I want to deal with two aspects in which I feel I have a duty to put forward the fight for my constituents in Birmingham, Small Heath. The first aspect relates to the abject poverty that we face in my constituency, about which this Budget says nothing, and the other relates to the serious and continuing decline of manufacturing industry in the west midlands.

Before I deal with those two points, I want to comment on the Health Service and the questions of morality that have been raised today. It is fascinating that the Secretary of State for Employment, who is not in the Chamber at the moment, spent all his extremely short and very unsatisfactory speech deploring the fact that anyone should raise questions of social justice in relation to the Budget.

I do not think Conservative Members can object to considering the Budget from the point of view of morality. I do not like scenes such as those we saw the other day, but if ever we needed an increase of moral indignation it is now, because of the poverty about which the Budget had nothing to say—the Budget that handed out largesse to the richest people in the country. That was bound to create a sense of moral indignation, and it is the job of the Labour party—and other opposition parties—to foster such a sense if we are to have any hope of tackling these problems.

I want to talk about the Health Service. In Birmingham, many of the worst features of the lack of resources for the Health Service have been manifested in the children's hospital and other hospitals at which, at one stage, doctors were being instructed by administrators not to admit or operate on children with hole-in-the-heart conditions, not for medical reasons but for administrative and financial convenience. If ever there was immorality, that was it.

The right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) told us that he hoped the nurses' pay award would be funded in full, and I share that hope. I know that it will be. The Chief Secretary has already told us that the award is expected in mid-April, when an immediate judgment will be made on it and a decision will be announced by the end of April. The local elections take place in the first week of May. In view of the overwhelming case for the nurses, it is disgraceful that no interim award was made to them in the winter months. The funding of the Health Service should have had a place in the Budget. I know all about the extra £1 billion, but allocations now being suggested for district hospitals for the next financial year do not approach meeting the demand on those hospitals. It is important that Opposition Members should say that in the House.

If I may return to the issue of morality in the Budget, there is a biblical parable that applies to it—that of the Good Samaritan. The Chancellor and the Government have passed by on the other side in the face of the atrocious conditions in which some people, particularly in my constituency, live. The Chancellor gave an interview to Brian Redhead the other day. Mr. Redhead asked him what was in the Budget for the poorest of the land. Unfortunately, these days television and radio interviewers ask a question and then fail to follow it up because they have clipboards in front of them and they have to get on to the next question. They do not listen to the answer to one question before asking another. However, the Chancellor answered that everyone would gain from tax relief. If everyone got tax relief that would be true, but the poorest of the poor get none. There was nothing in the Budget for them, so the Chancellor's answer in that respect was wholly dishonest.

The Secretary of State for Employment, who opened the debate, represents Sutton Coldfield in Birmingham, but I represent Birmingham, Small Heath — the city centre—which has the highest rate of infant mortality in Europe. That is why it is my duty to make this speech today and to ask the Government what on earth they are doing when, in Nechells, in my constituency, we have an infant mortality rate of 23 per thousand of the population. That is a scandal that those of us who have been in politics for a long time thought we had eradicated years ago. It is a shocking state of affairs. The reason for it is that my constituency has the highest percentage of single-parent families in the area and the average age of mothers in Nechells who lose their children in the first year is lower than anywhere else. Who can come to the help of these unfortunate children and mothers, when there are no tax reductions for them, no proper increase in child benefit, their rents are to be forced up and their one-off social security payments are to be denied them under the new social security legislation? To whom can they turn for help? They must look to their local authority, but next year that local authority—one of the most responsible in the country — faces a £300,000 cut in its partnership programme, which offers the only relief in our part of the city.

To add to all this, the unemployment rate in my constituency is more than 30 per cent., and more than 60 per cent. or 70 per cent. among young people. Those are disgraceful figures. The effect of all this social deprivation was seen on the streets of my constituency a year or so ago in Handsworth and Lozells. One cannot divorce this abject poverty and social deprivation from the good order that we need. Some of us spend much of our time working for racial harmony in our constituencies, but whatever we do, the effects of the policies that bring about this despair in the lives of thousands of ordinary people are being exacerbated by the Budget.

Sometimes it is necessary to explain to the House the living conditions of people in our industrial communities. I am not against reducing taxation whenever we can, and my party needs to be careful not to be always the party that is against lowering taxation. But anyone with a moral foundation to his being must ensure that, before he benefits the better off, or Members of Parliament or even the industrial classes, he remembers his overwhelming Christian priority to provide for people living in absolute destitution and despair. Birmingham is doing its best, with all-party agreement in large measure. Just this week the city council is calling for a symposium of architects, decision-makers, landowners and others to help to advise us on how to begin the regeneration that the city needs, and how to use our land properly.

I want now to deal with trade and industry in the west midlands. I agree with the right hon. Members for Worthing and for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) about the importance of Europe. I declare a prejudice, or

[Mr. Denis Howell]

an interest—I am chairman of the Labour committee for Europe. I am pleased to tell the House that we in Birmingham, faced with the decline of our manufacturing industry, understand that we have to accept what will happen in 1992. The trade union movement is now coming overwhelmingly to understand the importance of our full involvement in the European Community. My union—the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff—recently passed a resolution proposing that we immediately join the European monetary system. I am glad to say that I proposed the resolution and that it was carried overwhelmingly. I offer that information to the House as one sign of the fact that the trade union movement understands where its future interests lie. I hope that colleagues will note that.

We have lost 30 per cent. of our jobs in the west midlands during the lifetime of the Conservative Government. We have lost 1 million jobs because of the decline in manufacturing industry. The losses continue. The total number of jobs has gone up a bit because we have gained some in service industries, banking and insurance, but the number of jobs in manufacturing is still going down.

I am an old-fashioned Socialist. I believe that all wealth is created by the application of labour to the raw material or the land, but I can see that when banking and insurance attract investment from overseas, they have contributed to the growth of wealth. Nevertheless, Britain's interests must lie with the manufacturing sector and the decline of manufacturing should worry us all.

Productivity in the west midlands is now what it was in 1979. It is quite appalling that we have just got back to where we were when the Conservatives took over. Germany and Japan, however, have moved 25 per cent. ahead of us. I agree that exchange rates are critical, but I do not want to say anything about them except that I am on the side of the Chancellor rather than the Prime Minister.

The worst feature of the Budget is its complete failure—my friends in the Birmingham chamber of commerce, the Engineering Employers Federation, the West Midlands Trades Union Congress and the West Midlands Economic Development Council agree with me—to provide for research and development, training and retraining. The lack of skills in industry is growing upon us because for years Birmingham's industry has not taken on apprentices or trained skilled people. That failure will catch up with us and if we have anything like the improvement in the manufacturing base in Birmingham which the Government see in other sectors of the economy, we shall not be able to deal with it because employers do not have sufficient incentives to provide training, retraining or research and development. Capital allowances have gone and there is nothing for apprenticeships.

There is one other matter which I wish to raise. I am not sure whether my language will be parliamentary, but I am sure that you will be the first to draw my attention to the fact if it is not, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are dominated by the bottom line. I am getting fed up with it. Whenever we discuss anything, we are always told that we must look to the bottom line as though it should determine all our values and needs. I am forming a new society, which I am calling Bugger The Bottom Line. I hope that you are tolerant enough to allow me to say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I think that Mr. Speaker would want me to say that he does not regard that as parliamentary language—indeed, that it is vulgar and coarse.

Mr. Howell: I am sorry, but I fully understand your reproach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I expected. It underlines the point that I wanted to make.

I am advised by industrial friends that when industry in Birmingham wants to expand, it is dominated by insurance companies and pension funds who want to invest but that, to a great extent, the institutions demand such high returns on their investment that the process is self-defeating, so no manufacturing jobs are created.

The worst feature of the appalling unemployment in Birmingham is its effect on individuals who will never have a job. People get a feeling of pride and self-respect when they pick up a wage packet which they have earned, rather than take a handout. Never having that opportunity has an appalling effect on generations of young people.

I spent a lot of time in industry before coming here, and it seems to me that the absence of the discipline of the work place in the lives of so many people is a serious matter for any community. We all know that it is fellow workers who knock the corners and edges off to produce a round person. They impose a discipline which is often not imposed anywhere else. I would create work for its own sake because everyone ought to have a right to a job, but in any civilised society every person should demand that everybody works so that they make a contribution to the community. We thus enhance individual personality.

My greatest criticism of the Budget is that it does not enhance the personality of the individual when there is such severe unemployment in Birmingham and the rest of the industrial west midlands. As a football referee, I can only say that the score on this Budget is: The Greedy 5, The Needy 0.

7.37 pm

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his magnificent display of fiscal pyrotechnics. As always, Opposition Members have tried to dampen them down and ruin the display.

It was intriguing to hear the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) trying to suggest that the tremendous success which my right hon. Friend has pulled off is due entirely to the presence of North sea oil. If we read the Red Book forecast carefully, we see that it is quite clear that oil has been a problem for us this year, and will be next, and not a great opportunity. There has been a dramatic decline in Government revenues from oil to only £3 billion next year and, in the forecast for the balance of payments, an adjustment has been put in which shows that exports will do much better without oil next year than they will with it. That is a perfectly sensible forecast.

The simple fact is that the £3 billion from oil just equals the amount of debt that the Government are repaying, and that the bulk of the revenue to pay for all the public spending quite clearly comes from the success of the economy, rising incomes and rising purchases in shops.

Mr. Robert Sheldon: I did not want to intervene, but it must be said quite clearly that 15 years ago we bought oil, whereas now we sell it. That is the effect on our balance of payments.

Mr. Redwood: The right hon. Gentleman is quite right, but what matters is the change over the years. It will be less helpful next year than in previous years, and it has declined this year. To put the matter in perspective, the contribution to the balance of payments from oil revenues is forecast as £2·5 billion, while the contribution from the service sector—which has been a great success in our economic strategy in recent years—is forecast as £8·5 billion.

The next strange doctrine of the hon. Member for Dagenham was his assertion that interest rates would prevent investment and encourage consumption. Has he not seen the figures for recent years, which show a surge in both commercial and industrial investment at a time of relatively high interest rates? Does he not understand that, for industrialists and those in commerce, what matters is the gap between real interest rates and the return on capital? Again, one of the great successes of our economic strategy has been the surge in the return on capital, which has made investment more worth while and has brought forward new investment projects. For the past 19 months it has also created new jobs, which is exactly what the strategy was designed to deliver. I should have thought that Opposition Members would welcome that.

If we try to divine what the Opposition want, we can only conclude that, first, they want the rich to pay more tax—although they do not tell us how much; secondly, that they want tax to take a larger proportion of our national income—but again they will not tell us how much. *[Interruption.]* I must have misunderstood: they want higher taxes for the rich, but the same amount of overall taxation. Thirdly, they want a substantial increase in public spending across the board, on a variety of programmes, but within that they especially want an increase in the proportion spent on health.

Is it not strange, therefore, that those are the three priorities that the Government have adopted since they took office in 1979? The tax paid by the top 5 per cent. has risen by 5 percentage points in the total tax take. Opposition Members say that that is because they have had large pay rises, but everyone else has also had a pay rise. There has been a large increase in the number of people locating in this country and in the risks that they are prepared to take. That proves my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's point that to lower tax rates at the margin for the better off will generate more wealth and more jobs, and that those then percolate through to help everyone in the community. That is a welcome change.

The proportion of income taken in tax since 1979 has, I regret, actually risen. It is a sign that, at the beginning, the Government put public services and fiscal prudence above making a dramatic cut in the tax rates. I welcome the fact that the Government are now in a strong enough position to cut the overall tax burden, not just the high tax rates on income. As the economy grows, I am sure that that process will increase and strengthen, to the consternation of Opposition Members, but to increasing the strength of the economy.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: When will the burden of taxation imposed by this Conservative Government be reduced to its levels under the previous Labour Administration?

Mr. Redwood: I hope that, as a proportion of gross national product, that will happen before the end of this Parliament. If not, it will certainly happen before the end of the subsequent Conservative Administration, during which the Government will continue their policy of tax reduction to below a 20 per cent. standard rate. A rate of 20 per cent. is a feasible objective for this Parliament.

The Opposition's desire for an increase in spending on health has also been met. As a proportion of total public spending, health spending will rise from 11·9 per cent. in 1979 to a projected 14·1 per cent. in the early 1990s, and the increase already stands at more than 13 per cent. Spending on health has increased as a proportion of a total which, in itself, is rising, thanks to the increase in real expenditure made possible by the large amount of tax revenue generated by our economic success. I hope that Opposition Members welcome those moves.

On the issue of fiscal balance, I greatly welcome my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's decision to run the economy with a £3 billion surplus in the ensuing year. Opposition Members find problems with that, too. I remember debating with some of them, outside the House, what would be an appropriate level of deficit or surplus for the coming year. I have always said that it would be right to run it at about a nil balance—no borrowing—because that would help the economy to grow strongly. Opposition Members and media figures told me that there would be a recession, which had to be taken into account. Indeed, if there were to be a major international recession this year, a borrowing level of about 1 per cent. of GDP would be appropriate. However, I stressed that that would be extremely unlikely and that, instead, we would witness another year of good growth. I very much welcome the fact that Britain will have another year of satisfactory growth, which will be even better than expected, so that we can make a welcome repayment of debt from the public sector and so reduce the crippling interest burden that this Government inherited from the Labour Administration.

I welcome the joint decision of my right hon. Friends the Chancellor and the Prime Minister to allow interest rates to fall. In the circumstances of the past couple of weeks, they rightly decided that the sterling exchange rate had to move upwards. It makes little sense to spend cheap pounds buying dear deutschmarks simply to nurse a loss on the foreign exchanges. It is quite clear that our currency is very much more attractive than many other currencies because of the robust health of the British economy and the level of real interest rates in the United Kingdom compared with Germany and elsewhere. However, it was also right to allow interest rates to be nudged downwards, and they may have to come down further if the flow of hot money into this country continues and puts further pressure on exchange rates. I do not believe that that will result in a major inflation problem, because the money figures have been greatly distorted in recent months by that very intervention itself. Not all of it has been properly funded because it occurred on such a large scale.

If we move towards a policy of little or no intervention in exchange markets, and if we produce a prudent balance between the levels of exchange rates and interest rates, there can be both a low or nil inflation policy and a further attractive reduction in interest rates for house buyers, industry and other investors. That can be accommodated quite easily, because there remains in our economy a substantial surplus capacity—for example, derelict land, the unemployed and other factors of production—all of

[Mr. Redwood]

which can be applied as we spread prosperity ever more widely across the country. We can now bid those factors into use without running many, or even any, inflationary risks.

I very much approve of the moves to deal with some of the tax dodges that have been a feature of recent years, partly due to the high tax structure. It is better to have a simple, two-band system, because that will reduce the number of dodges that the rich can take to protect their wealth and their incomes if they want to keep them in this country. The changes on forestry, covenants and company cars go in the right direction, and are entirely at one with the strategy of lower tax rates, but more tax income because of the enterprise effect.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor is perhaps being unduly cautious in estimating £2 billion as the cost of cuts in the higher tax rates. As people of enterprise, the risk takers, come into this country, the benefits will be so great that the cost of the tax cuts will not amount to anything like £2 billion. I am sure that before the end of this Parliament the rich will be paying yet more as a proportion of the total. I do not understand why Opposition Members are looking so concerned; surely that is exactly what they want. Perhaps it is merely jealousy on their part. They cannot bear to think that more well-off people will come to this country, bringing with them their investments and their incomes to spend on creating jobs in Opposition Members' constituencies. I, for one, would greatly welcome that.

I have only one minor criticism of the Budget, which is that I am a little concerned about mortgage relief for first-time buyers in high-cost housing areas. I understand the need to produce equality of treatment, at least between married and unmarried people, but I am also well aware that in many parts of the south-east house prices are such that it is extremely difficult for people to get started on the home ownership ladder with only a £30,000 mortgage. I hope that there will be second thoughts about that.

It is a splendid Budget. It is a Budget for more jobs, more prosperity, lower tax rates and better public services. I look forward to the conclusions of the health review and the health pay award, because I think that there will be more surprises in store for Opposition Members. I am sure that by the end of the next financial year my right hon. and hon. Friends will have produced a system for health management and improved services of which we can also be proud.

7.50 pm

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I was reading in a satirical magazine over the weekend that the Government have set up groups of WOMBATS — working ministerial breakfast action teams — to justify the Budget in the face of the stinging criticism that it has received.

Being a reasonable person, I begin by complimenting the Chancellor. I believe that it required courage to introduce this Budget and that he needed nerves of steel and extraordinary moral and spiritual resources to do so much for so few in return for so little. The Chancellor has come through his ordeal, pleased and smiling, and worshipped and revered by the gawping, grasping, privileged, avaricious, salivating super-rich. Moaning minnies, puritans, the poor and those whose bootstraps have let them down did not like the Budget, but they must realise that the Chancellor's world has passed them by and that their pathetic cries, "Stop the globe, I want to get off", will no longer be heard.

For the few, the Budget was much more than a spring tonic. For those of us who like to live vicariously, it was one for fantasies and dreams. For all of us, it has presaged a world in which we can get rid of that wretched quality of empathy — the idea that it is possible for a human being to put himself in the position of another. After this Budget, other people simply do not count.

In the real world of the City — next door to the forgotten wastes of Hackney — they like the Budget, and why not? I ask my hon. Friends to stop cavilling about it. All right, there may be a balance of payments crisis and the forecast deficit of £4 billion may turn out to be £8 billion, but let us look on the bright side.

Yes, when the Prime Minister stood at the Dispatch Box and said that Britain was becoming a filthy, squalid and rundown country with a crumbling infrastructure because of lack of investment, that might have been true, but we should have a sense of proportion. In a super-binge society the comforts of the day are bound to be far more important than the problems of tomorrow. I dare say that my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Small Heath (Mr. Howell) was right when he said that a few babies may die because of want of treatment in the National Health Service as a result of the Budget.

However, I am bound to ask my hon. Friends to attempt to comprehend the sheer exquisite delight that the Budget has given to a few very important people. For them, I agree that the Budget has been messianic. It will change people's lives. I give my hon. Friends three examples——

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Sir Ralph.

Mr. Sedgemore: Well, I shall come to Sir Ralph in a moment.

At 6 o'clock on 14 March, just after the Chancellor had sat down, having delivered his Budget speech, a helicopter took off from docklands. A few minutes later it landed on an airstrip at Northolt. Two men in flak jackets were transferring £5 million in used notes into a light aircraft, which was destined for one of the great financial centres of the world — Liechtenstein. Just as the light aircraft was about to take off, air traffic control received a cryptic message over the teleprinter from the City godfather who had organised the mission. It stated,

"Abort mission. Just heard the Budget. £5 million now to go into property via the Business Expansion Scheme. Rachmanism legalised at last. God bless Nigel. Stuff Liechtenstein."

Meanwhile, over at Cazenove, the stockbrokers to the Queen, they were taking a little bit of time off from their worries about the fraud squad investigation into Guinness as it closed in on them. Of course, as we would expect, their celebration in favour of the Budget was quite dignified. They were drinking bubbly from cut crystal glasses, poured from bottles matured in the finest wine cellars in all Europe. The toast was, of course, "vivat, vivat cancellarius" — may the Chancellor live for ever and ever.

More extraordinary than that, yesterday I went to a celebration party for the Budget at the Dorchester in Mayfair. It was organised by a merchant bank for the hundred richest people in England. Everyone who was

anyone was there. I felt privileged to be a fly on the wall. Of course, I shall tell hon. Members who was there, what they thought of the Budget, and how they will spend the lorryloads of money that the Chancellor has given them.

I shall talk first about the atmosphere, which told one more about the way in which this Budget has been appreciated than anything else. It was straight out of "The Great Gatsby" except that I knew that it was a celebration party for Budget-88 by the beautiful LaCroix dresses that the more fashionable women were wearing. It really was a spectacular scene:

"Men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings, and the champagne and the stars . . .

At 7 o'clock, the orchestra arrived. This was no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes, trombones, saxophones, violas, cornets, piccolos, and low and high drums."

The bar was in full swing. Floating rounds of cocktails were picked out by the glittering diamonds in the chandeliers. Laughter — at first light, then raucous — spilled with prodigality.

At first, the attention was concentrated on somebody called Sir Ralph. I did not catch his surname, but I understand that he is a man like Mr. Speaker — a bespoke tailor who runs a chain of shops. He was telling the assembled multitude that he earned £1,300,000 per year, and that he stood to gain £750 per day by the Budget. My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) keeps telling me that it is £750 per night, but I am blessed if I know what he is talking about. Sir Ralph was telling the assembled multitude that he was going to buy a lavender-coloured Rolls-Royce with the first month's tranche from the Chancellor—£20,000—and that he was going to use his lavender-coloured Rolls-Royce as an omnibus to ferry around those starlets, without which I understand that Burton cannot carry out a business deal these days.

Then the cameras and the attention homed in on a big man. He was gross and ugly. No, I am not talking about the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames)—they kept referring to him—*[Interruption.]*—yes, my hon. Friends have got it—as Cap'n Bob. He said that he would make so much money out of the Budget that he would be able to buy out all 49 bookshops owned by Blackwell's which were selling unflattering biographies about him, and that he would still have money over to put in a bid for each and every one of the 22 first division clubs in the Football League, which he would rename the "Maxwell championship". Yes, it is a good Budget, isn't it?

Then there was that super-league butcher, who owns £1 billion — a man called Vestey. He has spent a lifetime writing in books that he has never paid any tax. So naturally he was highly miffed because, not paying any tax, he did not get any benefits from the Budget. He was telling his friends that as an act of revenge he was going to put together a consortium to buy out the Treasury when the Chancellor says that he will privatise it.

The first supper of the evening for the magnificent Budget was a sumptuous affair—with oysters, black and red caviar, smoked salmon, escargots and lobster. At one table was a Stanley from Dixons, who earned £659,000 per year. He was commiserating with Maurice from Saatchis, a much poorer man, who takes home only £500,000 per year. Everyone felt sorry for Maurice.

At the next table were one or two people who had had a bit too much to drink — the rich are apt to do that. One of them was saying to the other, "What kind of idiot of a Chancellor thinks my pretty little wife can fill in her own tax return? Who is this Lawson fellow anyway? Some kind of damned Socialist, I suppose?" The other replied, "It's not the wife, but the mistresses I worry about. Surely it's time they were made deductible. That's the only tax break I want to give me an incentive."

Then came the final supper at midnight — the most fabulous that I have ever witnessed. It had hardly begun when "He" appeared. As he appeared there was a wave of sentiment, as if a war had been won and a new civilisation was about to dawn. This was not Blake's Agony and Ecstasy, but ecstasy and more and more and more. As the guests waved, cheered, clapped, jumped on the tables and wept for joy, he stood there like an icon — the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the United Kingdom, the right hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Lawson). He did not make a speech. Upright, magnificent and imperious, a surreptitious leer on his face, his eyes alighted on one of the servants who had just dropped a tray of oysters. Suddenly the guests understood and took their cue from the Chancellor. In no time they were all leaping up and down and in a sweaty frenzy looked at the servant and screamed, "Shame, shame, shame". Then they gave a Churchillian V-sign and shouted "Up yours, up yours."

Some of the guests then passed out, others were sick into their bibs and a few made it home, their thingumajigs unable to rise to the occasion. Who was left but the Chancellor of the Exchequer standing alone. He knew that his Budget had not been in vain and that as an outsider he had arrived. Yet, in his moment of triumph, even he felt uneasy and sick. I knew how he felt because I wanted to vomit when I first heard this Budget. The Chancellor said to himself, "Could anything in this whole world be worth this?" Suddenly he realised a Budget too far had been followed by a party too far and that the decline and fall of Thatcherism had begun.

8.1 pm

Mr. Leon Brittan (Richmond, Yorks): I do not know whether the contrived salivation of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) and the imaginary antics of the rich at this fictitious party shed much light on the Budget, its effect and implications, but I cannot help thinking that they do not. However, so long as the hon. Gentleman has enjoyed himself burning the midnight oil to that effect, I dare say some purpose is served.

I warmly welcome the Budget proposals. They have been made possible only by the success of the Government's economic policy generally over the past nine years. Its proposals amount to a fiscal watershed and will undoubtedly contribute to ensuring further economic progress over the coming period. What is particularly important, especially in view of the anxieties and reservations expressed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen), is that the apparent largesse of the Chancellor has not been achieved by borrowing more money. The fiscal stance has been rightly tight. To have a negative PSBR of £3 billion this year, and to repeat a substantive negative PSBR for next year, is, by any standards, the clearest sign of the Government's commitment to the battle against inflation, which the market would ignore at its peril. Those who do not take the message are likely to get their fingers badly burnt.

[Mr. Leon Brittan]

I was sorry to learn from the press, if it be true, that the Chancellor considers that the process of reforming personal taxation is now at an end. I am afraid that I cannot agree with him. The principles underlying the Budget have a long way to go before they are fully implemented. The central principle is the abandonment of penal taxation at the upper level in return for the abandonment of myriad perks and tax concessions. The history of the past few years on both sides of the Atlantic shows that if one does that the Treasury will not be any the poorer and the economy will be much richer. The Budget goes a long way to give effect to these principles, but there is still a long way further to go.

Whatever one's view of the economic effect of mortgage interest tax relief, it is embedded in the personal financial arrangements of millions of people and it would be impossible to remove it. What would be possible would be to limit mortgage relief to the basic rate of income tax. That would be entirely in accordance with the general philosophy that I have just described. Those who pay the new higher rate of 40 per cent. do not now need any further incentives to encourage any house purchase of the sort reflected in the continuation of mortgage interest relief at the higher rate. The same applies to tax relief at the higher rate on pension contributions.

There is also clearly unfinished business on national insurance contributions. I can understand why my right hon. Friend did not simply remove the upper earnings limit this year. That would have placed an extra burden on 2 million middle-income taxpayers, but it remains an extraordinary quirk of our tax system that if income tax and national insurance contributions are taken together the percentage paid at a certain point falls when the upper earnings limit is reached, and rises again when the higher rate of income tax becomes payable. The Government will have to return to that, particularly if they contemplate, as I hope they will, moving to a system of financing the NHS from national insurance contributions. If they do that, it will almost certainly be desirable to extend the base of national insurance contributions.

That leads me on to the one statement in the Budget speech about which I have considerable reservations, and that is the express aspiration to reduce the basic rate further to 20 per cent. It is only an aspiration, and not a commitment, but I hope that its fulfilment will be deferred indefinitely. At 25 per cent. no one could possibly say that the basic rate is unacceptably high. Indeed, it has been a triumph of the Government and taken nine years to get to that figure. If any further money is available for the reduction of taxes, the top priority should surely now be to help people at the lowest end of the income scale, preferably by taking them out of the tax net altogether, and at last by reducing the tax burden on them.

The Budget has gone some way towards doing that. Allowances have been increased by twice the rate of inflation, and that has had the effect of taking 750,000 people out of tax altogether, but substantially further progress in that direction is immensely desirable for two reasons. First, taxation is obviously a real burden on the lower end to a greater extent than on the upper end. Secondly, by removing the tax burden, it increases the attractions of working rather then staying on the dole. Indeed, for some people it makes it worth working when previously it was not. Therefore, it makes it possible to take more people on at pay rates which employers can afford. That would be the biggest single contribution that the Government could make towards reducing unemployment. That is why the Government should not set a fresh target for reducing the basic rate further, but should set a target of the number of people to be taken out of paying income tax altogether who at present pay it.

I know that the target has a tendency to move as people earn more and come into the tax bracket again. None the less, a clear target concentrates the mind wonderfully. If it had not been espoused in 1979, that 25 per cent. target would not have been reached today. Therefore, the time has come to set an imaginative but realistic target for taking people at the lower end out of tax altogether and thereby making the biggest contribution that the Government could make towards solving the problem of unemployment. Let it be our aim that, by end of this Parliament, 3 million fewer people will pay tax. That target is attainable. Of course, to achieve it means forgoing a great deal of revenue. It is expensive to increase allowances and thresholds, as the Red Book so clearly shows, but we should clearly establish that priority, and the sooner we do so the better.

If we are to make international comparisons to justify the cut in higher rates, we must be prepared to look at comparisons at the other end, too. As Irwin Stelzer clearly pointed out in yesterday's edition of the *Sunday Times*, a married couple paying tax at 25 per cent. when their income is just over £4,000 represents the highest rate applied at that level of income by almost any country today. In addition to using any money available in future to cut taxes to take people out of paying tax altogether, serious consideration should be given to having a reduced rate band of, say, 15 per cent., as in the United States, for those earning just about the level of the allowance.

Incentives are just as important for poor people as they are for rich people, and the introduction of a reduced rate band would have a powerful incentive effect. The cost of introducing such a rate would be much reduced if, as happened in the United States, it applies only to the first tranche of income, in the case of low earners, and tapers out as one goes up the income scale. Whether we take people out of tax or reduce the rate at the lower end, or both, the objective is the same. It is to make the maximum contribution that the Government can to reduce unemployment. Unemployment is the greatest remaining economic and social ill in many parts of the country, and it should be our top priority to take fiscal and other action further to reduce it. That proposition cannot seriously be denied. In the Budget, some progress has been made towards achieving it.

Apart from general ideological objections to reducing top rates, the main criticism that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has faced—I have been referring to future aspirations and not to the Budget—is that the Budget should have been used to put more money into the National Health Service. On that point, I agree totally with my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins). Those who make that criticism must look at public expenditure and taxation decisions as a whole. Such decisions are taken at different times, but they come into effect for the same year, that is, 1988-89. It is perfectly natural for public expenditure decisions to be taken earlier. Those who must plan their expenditure through the year need to know what the figure is to be well in advance, while taxation can be reduced or increased much

more quickly. Therefore, it is entirely fair to point out that, in the same year as taxes are coming down, spending on the National Health Service is going up by £1,100 million.

What is more, that is not the end of the story. We know perfectly well that it is highly likely that the review body will shortly recommend a substantial increase in nurses' pay. No Government can unequivocably tie themselves down in advance to saying how that will be handled, when they do not know precisely what will be involved. I am totally convinced that the Government will fully implement whatever is recommended. If the cost of doing so exceeds what they are currently allowing in the National Health Service provision for the Department of Health and Social Security, that extra sum will be met out of the substantial public expenditure reserve. The Government will be absolutely right to handle the issue in that way, and I am sure that they will do so. If that happens, the net effect for 1988-89 will be a major total increase in National Health Service provision — the £1,100 million and whatever extra is needed to meet the review body's recommendations That will be totally justified, but, until the current review of the pattern of health care is concluded — I hope that it comes to some radical conclusions—it would be quite wrong to go any further with the injection of extra sums of public money.

The Chancellor's speech and the Red Book are lapidary and opaque. Instead, the Chancellor tells us to look at actions rather than words. Last week we saw a cut in interest rates. It is not quite satisfactory to leave it at that. There are decided advantages in exchange rate stability and in not having too high a rate for the pound against the deutschmark. But stability does not mean that the rate never changes. It certainly does within the EMS exchange rate mechanism. Indeed, many people think that a re-alignment is likely soon.

There may be occasions on which upward pressures on a currency are too great to be resisted by any feasible amount of intervention, and on which inflationary pressures are too great for it to be desirable to reduce interest rates. In some circumstances, an upward movement in the exchange rate may be fully justified. It makes perfect sense to have a policy of stable exchange rates with, at least, an implied right to revise them if circumstances materially alter. Anything further than that would be an unrealistic straitjacket, which never existed in the past, and would not be required by membership of the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS. If that is the policy, it would be highly desirable for it to be clearly stated.

Monetary aggregates are not robust enough to provide a credible monetary policy. Our only lodestar is the exchange rate, and interest rates are the major instrument. Whether we are inside or outside the EMS, there is no reason why the current broad target for the pound should not be publicly stated. If, for anti-inflationary reasons, it must be set a shade higher than some in industry would like, so be it. With an explicit exchange rate target range we will give industry and markets the inestimable advantage of that degree of certainty and credibility in monetary policy which, over the years, has proved to be beneficial in fiscal policy. I hope that that, too, can soon be achieved.

8.17 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): The speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) was like the parson's egg: it was good in parts. Among the parts that I welcomed were his statements to the effect that the emphasis should fall on lower-rate taxpayers or people on low incomes and, particularly, his comment about the value of introducing a reduced band. I disagree with his general judgment that the essential principle of the Budget is the abandonment of penal taxation. It is far more just to describe it as the abandonment of progressive taxation. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor believe that they have achieved that.

The right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) made an important point. He pointed out to the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Employment that, in spite of the rather startling reduction in this year's Budget, taxation accounts for a much higher percentage of gross domestic product in 1988 that it did in 1970. It is about 37·5 per cent. now, compared with 32 per cent. in 1970. How do we explain the difference? Why do the Government need to levy so much more taxation in 1988 than they did in 1970? The answer lies in the sphere of responsibility of the Secretary of State for Employment. The real difference —the reason for the great increase in the burden of taxation between 1970, when we had unemployment of some 600,000 and 1988, when we have unemployment of some 2·6 million —is the cost to the country of the enormous sums both in direct payments in benefits through the social security system and, even more, indirectly in the forgone income in the form of income tax contributed, national insurance raised, and the rest.

That brings me to the first point that I want to make to the Secretary of State for Employment. He rightly pointed out that during the past year there has been a welcome fall in the rate of unemployment, but he will know that the fall has taken place only during the past year. That is to say, it happened during a year in which gross domestic product has grown by about 4·5 per cent. In earlier years—the right hon. Gentleman emphasised this point—when GDP grew at the rate of 2·75 or 3 per cent., there was no fall in the overall rate of unemployment.

What worries me, and must worry other hon. Members when we look at the growth rate predicted for this year, is that after the first few months we shall not see a continued fall in the rate of unemployment. It will bottom out and we shall be left with about 2·3 million or 2·4 million unemployed. That is on the assumption that the rate of growth does not exceed 3 per cent. Our increase in productive potential is precisely 3 per cent., so if we do not do better in terms of growth achievement we shall not get the fall in the level of unemployment that all serious and sensible people want.

Two themes have dominated the Budget debate, and they are the two criteria against which the Budget should be judged. They are how it affects the distribution of wealth and its relevance to the problems of the real economy. There is no room for doubt about the central objective of this Budget. It is to make Britain a more unequal society. It is a Budget not for one nation but for three — the rich, who are to be enriched beyond their wildest expectations, the poor, who have been excluded, and those in the middle-class, middle-income group, who are to be modestly rewarded.

This is a historic Budget. On no occasion since the 1930s has a Chancellor of the Exchequer openly and consciously sought to make Britain a more unequal society. Over the past 50 years, Britain has seen a gradual movement towards greater equality of post-tax income

[Mr. Peter Shore]

and in that movement fiscal policy has played a major part. During the past eight years, that process has been slowed down and virtually halted. Now it is to be sharply reversed. On what basis did the Chancellor decide on this radical shift of policy? It was on the old, unproven assertion — as my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) made plain in his excellent speech — that the creation of wealth is directly linked to the extent of inequality. The Chancellor believes that the greater the inequality of rewards, the faster will be the growth of national wealth. He believes that man is economic man in the old classical economic sense and can be galvanised into extra effort only by the prospect of greater rewards.

Most of the evidence that we have does not sustain that contention. Japan, the most successful post-war economy, has a top rate of tax of over 70 per cent. and Germany and France, which have done much better than we have, have respective top tax rates of 56 and 58 per cent. Consider Britain's growth rate. In the 20 years or so before Lloyd George's Budget of 1910, progressive taxation barely existed, but Britain's industry and economy declined year by year. By far the fastest rate of growth that we have enjoyed over any substantial period of years occurred in the 30-year period from 1945 to 1974, when progressive taxation was at its highest rate. The case for inequality is, on the evidence, quite unconvincing.

No doubt, that accounts for the subsidiary argument which, I am sure, has surprised other hon. Members as much as it has surprised me. It is the Prime Minister's claim that Britain's top talent no longer flows abroad. I should like to see the evidence for that. Only last year, we were warned that the brain drain among Britain's top scientists and academics was steadily increasing, and that this was primarily due not to the poor level of reward in the United Kingdom but to the lack of opportunity to pursue research and development in Britain's underfunded universities.

Then we have the astounding claim that the lower the rate of taxation on the rich, the greater the yield of that tax will be. According to this myth — we have heard it repeated in the House today — the top 5 per cent. of taxpayers paid 24 per cent. of total income tax in 1978-79. Following the reduction of the top rate to 60 per cent. that category paid some 29 per cent. of total income tax in the year 1987-88. That assertion simply ignores the fact that in the past eight years there has been an explosion in pre-tax top incomes. The rich are paying more tax not because they have abandoned tax relief and avoidance devices, but because the incomes on which they are taxed are so much bigger. The growth in top salaries will no doubt continue, but the Budget's arithmetic allows for a loss of tax revenue in 1989-90 of £2,000 million as a result of the Chancellor's abolition of the higher tax rate.

The Chancellor and the Government do not seem to understand the importance of income redistribution. The latest available figures — I am afraid that they are for 1985 and I have taken them from the latest issue of *Social Trends* — show that the bottom 20 per cent. of households in Britain had only 0·3 per cent. of total pre-tax income, compared with the no less than 49·2 per cent. of total national income that went to the top 20 per cent. As a result of tax redistribution, the share of the bottom 20 per cent. grew from 0·3 to 6·5 per cent., while the share of the top 20 per cent. fell from 49·2 per cent. to 40·2 per cent. Without tax redistribution of income, at least 20 per cent. of Britain's households will be living far below the poverty line. In his Budget, the Chancellor is saying that redistribution from the most prosperous to the least prosperous has to be brought to an end. If the poorest are to maintain, let alone increase, their standard of living, it is not the rich but the middle-income earners who must bear the brunt of the tax burden.

Against the background of the 1988 Budget, we can see more clearly why the poll tax — the community charge — excites such enthusiasm from Government spokesmen. Basically, it is their ideal tax, because it has no redistributive function whatsoever.

The Budget is not designed to meet needs, whether they are personal or community needs. Nor is it designed to assist the real economy. An end to the fall in unemployment and the slow-down in the rate of economic growth will be very evident before the end of this financial year. Moreover, it is difficult to see what additional stimulus the Chancellor will then be able to give to the British economy. As the Chancellor admits, imports will grow much faster than exports this year and a balance of payments deficit of some £4,000 million is anticipated. This is all part of the continuing and destructive trend in our balance of visible trade which will steadily diminish prospects for growth in the economy.

Looking back over the past four years, it is depressingly clear that the only engine of growth in the British economy has been the upsurge in consumer expenditure. Between 1984 and 1987, it has increased in constant prices by £23 billion. For the same period, the savings ratio has fallen dramatically from more than 10 per cent. to 5 per cent. and consumer credit has grown from £11·5 billion to £21·9 billion. Consumer expenditure will continue to grow this year, as will indebtedness and our import bill.

The argument between the Chancellor and the Prime Minister which enlivened our pre-Budget discussions is about the priority to be given to growth and counter-inflation. The Chancellor knows that our balance of trade needs an exchange rate that will enable Britain's exporters to compete successfully against their continental competitors. The Prime Minister, who puts the conquest of inflation before all other considerations, is ready to accept the diminished growth and higher unemployment that would result from a further appreciation of the exchange rate. But both are wrong. We need a continuation of national growth, but both deny the role of public expenditure in achieving it. The Chancellor can increase growth only by making the balance of payments worse. The Prime Minister can conquer inflation only by increasing unemployment and decreasing growth. Both are too doctrinaire even to consider the imposition of restraints on credit creation and consumer expenditure.

The Chancellor has claimed that this is a balanced Budget — the first since 1970. That is true. But a balanced Budget is beneficial only when we have a balanced economy, and that goal will recede even further as a result of the Budget. We have a growing imbalance between public and private expenditure, a growing imbalance between north and south and growing inequality between rich and poor.

The greatest mistake that the Chancellor and the Government have made is to misread majority opinion. There remains a strong sense of social justice. British people are committed ideologically neither to egalitarian

policies nor to inequality, but they have a strong sense of fair play, and that sense has been outraged by the Budget, as was reflected in the two national polls that were published yesterday.

In her Buxton speech, the Prime Minister said that the Budget would be the epitaph of Socialism. She is wrong. It will be the epitaph of this Chancellor and this Government.

8.32 pm

Sir Peter Hordern (Horsham): The right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and other Labour Members have called this a socially divisive Budget, but they have misinterpreted the thrust of the Budget. If the effect of lower taxation is to increase the gross national product and the volume of public expenditure, their objections cannot be valid.

We should reflect upon the fact that when the Labour Government were in power and there was high personal taxation, public expenditure was cut—not least on the National Health Service. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) will remember that capital expenditure on hospital building was cut by about 30 per cent. But I go along with the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney in this respect: the test will be whether growth will be stimulated by the tax cuts and whether, as a result, an increase in public expenditure will allow further expenditure on the NHS.

The House will be familiar with the public expenditure programme and the fact that in each of the next three years more than £1 billion will be spent on the Health Service. But I draw hon. Members' attention to something else in the public expenditure White Paper that is not immediatelly obvious: the size of the contingency allowance. This year, it will be £3·5 billion, next year it will be £7 billion and the year after it will be £10·5 billion. Of course, all the Departments will be competing for that contingency allowance, but there will be considerable scope for increased public spending on programmes which commend themselves to hon. Members on both sides of the House.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, first, on his plan to have balanced Budgets in the future. For a long time, the idea has prevailed that demand management matters most, that the Chancellor of the day should set his course for the coming year according to the way in which the economy should grow, and that the public sector borrowing requirement should be made the handmaiden of Budget judgment. I have always thought that that was wrong. I have always thought that it would be right to have a balanced Budget and for there to be no public sector borrowing requirement. It is most significant that my right hon. Friend has achieved that and intends to continue it in the coming years.

Not only will there be certainty in such matters—or as much certainty as can be achieved—but the fact that there will be almost no borrowing will create a definition and a sharpness in the operations of the gilt-edged market which would otherwise not have existed. In the long term, provided that there are no shenanigans in supporting the exchange rate at the wrong price — that is a big condition—the certainty that will result will mean that the private sector can enjoy lower interest rates.

A great deal of fuss has been made about the reductions in personal tax rates, but we should consider the increased revenue that has been raised during the past two or three years, especially from corporation tax. The Red Book shows that the revenue from corporation tax has increased by £4,200 million. I remind the House that that follows a reduction in corporation tax from 52 per cent. to 35 per cent., although we must not forget the removal of allowances. That is the right course. In exchange for a reduction in personal taxation, those loopholes should be closed, and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor should make more efforts in that direction in subsequent Budgets.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) said that the standard rate of 25 per cent. was all right and that the Government should concentrate on increasing personal allowances. The Chancellor has increased personal allowances—indeed, he has doubled them. I have some sympathy with my right hon. and learned Friend's suggestion that there should be an intermediate rate between the two, but if it is valid to reduce the top rate of tax to 40 per cent. as a tax incentive, it is just as valid to do it for lower wage earners. I am glad to hear that my right hon. and learned Friend wants to work towards a target of 20 per cent. Even that is too high, certainly when compared with the American rate. The days of tax-cutting have not yet ended, and I look forward to more progress at the lower end of the scale, where incentives are just as relevant as they are at the top.

The Budget is not just about creating wealth. It is about curbing inflation, and in that connection we must consider the exchange rate controversy and the importance of interest rates and exchange rates in the economy. The evidence about the economy is confusing—at least to me. It looks as though lending to the private sector is at record levels, although recently there has been a small decline. Bank lending to the private sector was as much in the first three quarters of last year as it was in the whole of the previous year. I have also noticed that the savings ratio has come down to below 6 per cent. Historically, that figure is very low indeed. It suggests not only that consumer spending is buoyant, but that earnings are expected to increase to allow for that consumer expenditure to continue. I do not think that the reduction in tax rates will do anything to discourage such personal consumption in the future. Interest and exchange rates are very important points for us to consider.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks said, the exchange rate provides the Government's objective, and the interest rate is the only weapon available to the Chancellor. It is important to distinguish if possible between the thoughts of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and those of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. Both of them cannot be right, although it would be very convenient for someone such as me to be able to argue that they were.

Obviously, there are occasions when the pressure on the exchange rate is too much for it, and it is unwise to try to keep it fixed, especially at a level at which it cannot be sustained. It is impossible to conduct a proper monetary policy otherwise. The difficulty about the present dispute is that it has prevented my right hon. Friend the Chancellor from providing the advantages that seem to result from keeping sterling in line with the deutschmark. Of course, it is necessary to choose the right level at which to pitch sterling to the deutschmark, but I feel that this is about the right level. I am sorry that such a controversy has taken place, because there is much to be said for keeping sterling aligned with the deutschmark, as for all

[Sir Peter Hordern]

practical purposes we have abandoned monetary policies by the old monetary targets—much to my regret, I may add.

It is by no means easy to adopt a monetary policy nowadays by monetary targets, because of the inflow of foreign funds and the easy extension of credit. West Germany is an example that I should have thought we could follow. Subject to that, I see nothing wrong in subcontracting our monetary policy to West Germany—which, in effect, is what we do if we align sterling to the deutschmark.

People think that that may be rather a soft option, and that we can go on printing money and allow the consumption boom to continue. I do not agree. If we align our currency closely with the deutschmark, as my right hon. Friend the Chancellor would like to do, we must recognise that, in West Germany, earnings are rising by 3 per cent., there is virtually no price inflation, and the public sector borrowing requirement scarcely exists—as, indeed, is the case in this country. It would be wise to spell out that message, and I am sorry that my right hon. Friend may have been inhibited from doing so.

If there is one thing that is annoying at the moment, it is that business and industry do not know where they are: they do not know the Government's policy. If they knew for certain that the Chancellor's and the Government's policy was to keep sterling aligned with the deutschmark, they could plan their production and their future much more easily.

I was very put out last Thursday when I learned that my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North (Mr. Biffen) had said that he would vote against the Budget. Reading his speech, I discovered that the reason was that he felt that too much consumption was going on, and that therefore inflation might be stoked up. My right hon. Friend, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, Lord Bruce-Gardyne and I were the principal opponents of the economic policy of my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath). I do not like being outflanked.

I must look very closely at these matters. I am uncertain of the answer. I shall merely observe to my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour), who drew our attention to certain similarities between the present circumstances and what happened in the 1970s, that the difference is that there was then a very large public sector borrowing requirement. In 1974, it had risen to £6·4 billion out of a gross domestic product of £73 billion, about 8 per cent. compared with the present rate of nil. Furthermore, there was a cheap money policy. The minimum lending rate was 5 per cent. in 1971, 6 per cent. in 1972 and 7·5 per cent. in 1973. No one will find that our minimum lending rate has ever gone below 8·5 per cent. since the present Government came to power, and it has even been as high as 14·5 per cent.

On this occasion, I shall not go into the Lobby with my right hon. Friend the Member for Shropshire, North, but I shall certainly watch the indicators as closely as he does.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) talked about the importance of working towards 1992 and the single European market. That is another reason to stress the importance of aligning sterling with the deutschmark. Let us compare our country's economic performance with that of West Germany. Enormous possibilities are open to us, if we can seize them. I mean by that the opportunities demonstrated in an article that appeared in the Dresdener Bank Review, which mentioned that in mid-1987 — taking 100 as the index — hourly labour costs are 100 in West Germany, and 54 in the United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom, the value added per working hour was only 54, the lowest in any of the countries in the European Community.

West Germany is now going through a rather stagnant period, while we are experiencing rapid economic growth. If we can possibly improve our productivity, labour relations and value added, there is significant scope for further advance. That is why I think it important that we should align our exchange rate to the deutschmark, and I am sorry that my right hon. Friend may feel inhibited from pointing out the prospects that are available.

Whether those prospects may be seized is another matter. If we have many more cases like that of Dundee, foreign investment may well be discouraged. But if we can have more instances of what encouraged Nissan to invest in this country—single union agreements—and if we can do away with the restrictive practices that have bedevilled business and industry for so many years, there may be a prospect of bright times ahead.

8.47 pm

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): Earlier in the debate the leader of the Liberal party, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), spoke of the Budget reflecting a warped society. That is very much my feeling as well. It was interesting to read in *The Times* this morning of a leading industrialist referring to the cut in the top rate of income tax from 60 to 40 per cent. as obscene. That is a comment that comes to mind now.

That is not to say that the Budget does not contain a number of detailed changes that most hon. Members welcome. We certainly welcome the change in the marriage allowance—as far as it goes—the leaded petrol change, the change in company car perks, the forestry changes, and, indeed, the increase in tax thresholds over and above what is necessary to deal with inflation. Those changes, however, although important in themselves, are relatively trivial in comparison with the strategic error which I believe has been made in the Budget and the social insensitivity that it reflects.

The Secretary of State for Employment tonight made what must have been one of his shortest speeches at the Dispatch Box, even allowing for interventions. I well understand that, given that the references to employment in the Budget were so sparse. Indeed, I could point to only two such references in the whole of the Chancellor's speech. It is from that viewpoint that I want to make my contribution to the debate, because, more than any other, that is the viewpoint from Wales.

We suffer continuing high unemployment. The official figure is now 140,000 compared to about 90,000 when the Government took office in 1979. That is in spite of changed definitions and the effect of part-time work and all the other things. Pwllheli, which has one of the two employment exchange areas in my constituency, has an unemployment rate of 24 per cent. That is what we have to live with, and we looked to the Budget for a solution to the problem, but we sought in vain.

The Chancellor said that the reduction in unemployment as a result of the Budget would be at a reduced rate

compared with what had been happening to unemployment figures in the past year. That hardly gives us confidence, faced as we are with such a level of unemployment. In spite of the pleasant perspective from which the Budget is viewed in Tory constituencies in south-east England, it is looked at quite differently in areas such as Gwynedd and in the old industrial valleys of south Wales.

That brings me to the heart of the Budget strategy. The Chancellor mentioned unemployment only twice, and clearly the Budget has nothing to do with jobs. It seems to be geared to the top 5 per cent. of earners. It is revealing to look at what the Chancellor said about the public sector borrowing requirement when introducing his 1987 Budget:

"We have now reached what I judge to be its appropriate destination—a PSBR of 1 per cent. of GDP. My aim will be to keep it there over the years ahead. This will maintain a degree of fiscal prudence that, until this year, had been achieved on only two occasions since 1950.

Accordingly, I have decided to provide for a PSBR in 1987-88 of £4 billion."—[*Official Report*, 17 March 1987; Vol. 112, c. 818.]

If that strategy to have a £4 billion PSBR was right 12 months ago, by what token is it now not appropriate? If it was a valid, stable and sustainable position 12 months ago, why has it now been abandoned? Why have the Government carried out a considerable U-turn on this matter? The Chancellor is deliberately going down a path which he describes as one of prudence and caution, and is going for a Budget surplus of £3 billion compared with a £4 billion PSBR last year. That is a difference in strategy of £7 billion.

The Budget surplus gave the Government a choice between attacking unemployment and lining the pockets of rich people. If the Chancellor had stuck to last year's strategy of a deficit Budget of about £4 billion, instead of aiming at a surplus of £3 billion, he could have triggered a public investment capital programme of about £7 billion. That would have been worth at least about £350 million to Wales in the form of hospitals, schools, roads and housing investment. It would have created at least 10,000 to 15,000 new jobs in each of the counties of Wales and brought an end to our jobless nightmare. Instead, he has given the money away in tax relief to his richer cronies at the expense of deprived people, not only in Wales, but in other places where the standard of living is low and unemployment is high.

That sort of investment programme could have been achieved within the parameters of the 1987 Budget review and economic assessment. If it is too risky in 1988 to go down that sort of road, he could have forgone some of the tax relief given to those on top incomes. If the money had been used for capital investment, that would have avoided sucking in imports in the way that that is likely to happen because of the tax cuts. It could have been the basis of a direct investment regional policy, but a regional policy appears to have been abandoned by the Government.

If the cost of capital had been brought down by interest rate cuts of a more substantial and significant nature than we have seen, that would have triggered industrial investment and induced ventures which at the moment are regarded as marginal to go ahead. If lower interest rates were to lead to a lower rate for the pound, that would be of benefit to exporters and would lead to increased demands from manufacturers. What I have suggested would create a coherent whole and could have been an alternative strategy for the Chancellor. All logic points to interest rates that are lower than those that currently exist.

From the point of view of my area, a third element in the Budget is open to criticism. It is the priority given to indirect taxation policy. The increase in petrol prices will be a further blow to rural areas in Wales, Scotland and England. The increase in petrol duty contrasts with the policy of retaining the current level of duty on spirits. The balance struck by the Chancellor is not acceptable.

Another major problem in Wales, which also exists in some other older industrial areas, is substandard housing. The Budget does nothing to help there. Indeed, it takes away the possibility of some tax relief for modernisation. It still allows tax relief to those on the top rate, because at the top rate of income tax a mortgage of £30,000 can qualify for relief. This year of all years, and bearing in mind the giveaway to those on top rates, there is surely a case for restricting mortgage tax relief to those on standard rate, because the resources thereby made available could be used for other purposes, such as spending on those who have greater housing needs.

I have spoken about my constituency problems and about unemployment in Wales, but we also have a major Health Service crisis. In Gwynedd, five cottage hospitals are lined up for closure because the Government have not made available to the health authority adequate resources to keep them open. Towns such as Portmadoc, in my constituency, will not have a hospital at all as a result of the Government's policies. The money being given away by the reduction of the top rate of income tax from 60 to 40 per cent.—about £2,000 million when indexed—is almost exactly what the NHS needs but is not getting. It is immoral of the Government to give away such amounts of money to top earners when people who need vital services cannot get them.

Those who benefit from the reduction in their income tax should remember that the cut has been delivered at the expense of their neighbour's hospital bed. The price of their handout may be that a friend fails to get kidney dialysis. It may mean that when the son or daughter of one of these high earners has an accident no ambulance will be available. There is no such thing as a free handout, and the handouts in the Chancellor's Budget will be paid for by a reduced Health Service and, sadly, human lives. That epitaph on the period of office of the Chancellor is at one with the Thatcherite priority of private greed over public need.

We have to wait to see what will happen to the Health Service, whether additional resources will be made available next month and the month after. It is totally unfair for the Health Service, which has to run a coherent budget, to have to wait until the new financial year opens before it knows where it stands. Budget day was loudly advertised as NHS day, and rightly so. The issue of the Health Service was rightly the centre of focus. The National Health Service does not need one day of attention, but ought to be given priority all year.

If this battle is to go on, as it should, in what way can the Government have the message brought home to them that their policy is not acceptable? The running down and closure of hospitals was not part of their election manifesto, nor was the reduction of the top rate of income tax to 40 per cent. The Government have no mandate for such priorities, and it is up to the Opposition parties to make life so intolerable for the Government that they

[Mr. Dafydd Wigley]

cannot and will not go ahead with such policies. That is a challenge to all Opposition parties. On this issue our message to the Leader of the Opposition is, "For goodness sake, do not go gentle".

This is a Budget for the south-east of England, or at least for some parts of the south-east, because there are pockets there which suffer from deprivation. The Budget does little for those facing unemployment or for those whose homes are not in good repair, but for those who have no unemployment problems, who have good quality housing and can afford private health care, and whose income levels are twice those in Wales, it is a good Budget. Few people in rural Wales or the industrial valleys of Wales receive £0·25 million a year and will be £800 a week better off at a time when we cannot afford to increase and index child benefit.

This Budget takes a massive double backward step towards a second Victorian era. A rich elite is growing fatter, while poor people are getting poorer. The richer regions will prosper, while the depressed regions will decay and disintegrate. This is the most class-based Budget of a generation and must surely trigger a political reaction among all decent-minded people.

8.59 pm

Mr. Keith Raffan (Delyn): In the few remaining minutes, I cannot follow the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) by putting the Budget in a Welsh context. No doubt we shall have an opportunity to do that shortly in the Welsh Grand Committee.

The measure of the Chancellor's success, of his ingenuity and of the radical nature of his tax reform is the near unanimity of Members on the Government side in applauding his Budget. Any reservations must be of a minor nature. The key to a strong economy must be to increase incentive and to encourage enterprise. A low-tax economy is a high-incentive economy.

I welcome my right hon. Friend's decision to introduce independent taxation of husband and wife, to give married women a fair tax deal. Raising the tax thresholds by double the rate of inflation and reducing the basic rate will help the lower paid and will be of particular value to the self-employed. The abolition of all the higher tax rates above 40 per cent. will also improve incentives, just as a reduction from 83 per cent. to 60 per cent. did. Lower tax rates can yield greater tax revenues, not less.

Ten years ago, Labour's top rate of tax on investment income was a punitive 98 per cent. Its top rate on earned income was 83 per cent. Since the top rate for both was reduced to 60 per cent., the yield from higher tax rates has more than doubled in real terms. It is equally true that surtax and higher tax revenues fell steadily throughout the 40 years when the top rates exceeded 90 per cent. Tax cuts can raise revenues. When rates are higher, as everybody knows, people avoid taxes or choose to be rewarded by perks rather than by cash. At worst, they move abroad.

As Hamish McRae said in *The Guardian*,

"No one likes paying tax but there comes a level at which it really is not worth the bother of avoiding it."

That is the level which we have now reached. When rates come down, people start paying the tax. Even *The Guardian* accepts that a persuasive case can be made

"for tax revenues having increased as a result of tax rates having been cut."

It is those increased tax revenues which have allowed us to go ahead with the biggest ever increase in National Health Service spending in 1988-89—£1·1 billion in the United Kingdom as a whole and £78 million in Wales.

In a debate on the NHS, the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said:

"This year the Chancellor of the Exchequer has the money to ensure that we get a National Health Service that can deliver to its patients." — [*Official Report*, 19 July 1987; Vol. 125, c. 833.]

When could he have said that about a Labour Chancellor? Labour Members were never in a position to say to their last Chancellor of the Exchequer, "We want you to spend more on the Health Service," because he was too busy paying off the Labour Government's loan from the International Monetary Fund.

Yes, the Government face pressures on the NHS, but they are the pressures of an expanding service which is building new hospitals and undertaking operations unheard of 20 years ago. Those pressures are very different from those that we inherited from Labour — pressures arising from slashing the capital programme by 30 per cent. and from allowing nurses' pay to fall in real terms by 21 per cent.

Under Labour, spending on the NHS fell from 5 per cent. to 4·7 per cent. of GDP. If it had remained at that percentage, we would now be spending £2·9 billion less on the NHS in England and Wales.

Luckily, the Government changed, and spending on the NHS increased from 4·7 to 5·4 per cent. of GDP. Labour want more to be spent on the NHS, more than the increases already provided and more than those promised for the future, yet what Labour Members ask of us they singularly failed to deliver when in office.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), in characteristic form — perhaps because he was a reporter and is one of the few Opposition Members who still has a leaning towards the truth—got it right in the latest edition of *The Political Quarterly*, which concentrated on the future of the Left—a rather thin issue. He wrote:

"The first and most indispensable requirement of the better society is growth. It is also Labour's, our greatest failure."

Labour's greatest failure is the Government's greatest success, a success which has brought us unprecedented economic strength, a strength which has enabled us to increase spending substantially in priority areas, such as health and education.

9.3 pm

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): As my right hon. and hon. Friends have said during this debate, indeed as many Conservative Members have said, the final effect of the Budget will be to transfer £2,000 million to the 5 per cent. at the top who are already extremely rich. It will award £200 million more in inheritance tax reliefs to the 35,000 people who pay that tax. It will provide an additional £40 million for the small number who benefit from the business expansion scheme. It will offer £290 million more to those institutions and individuals who benefit from relief from capital gains tax liabilities. Yet 95 per cent. of the population will make no cash gain from the changes.

It is common ground that the tax cuts are taking place against the background of social security changes and the introduction, next month, of the social fund. Today, 5

million people claim supplementary benefit and from April they will be on income support—8 million people depend on those benefits. There are 16 million low-income families in this country, including 4 million children. In April, child benefit for 7 million mothers and 12 million children will be frozen, 1 million men and women will lose housing benefit and 4 million of our poorest households will have to pay rates at 20 per cent. for the first time, no matter how poor they are. The result will be that, in my constituency and in the constituencies of most hon. Members, low-paid workers and their families on earnings of less than £80 per week will lose between £1 and £2, even with the introduction of family credit and given the tax cuts in the Budget. Unemployed families with two children with an income of less than £80 per week will lose between £2 and £3 because of the withdrawal of single payments as a result of the introduction of the social fund. Those pensioners on income support who will receive £44·05 will automatically see whatever cash gain they make from the uprating of social security wiped out instantly as a result of the price rises in electricity, gas and other household necessities.

I estimate that 9 million people will be worse off as a combined result of the tax and social security changes over which the Chancellor and his Ministers have presided. The only conclusion that we can draw is that the tax cuts that have gone to the few at the very top are to be paid for by the withdrawal of benefits and the misery that that will cause to the poorest of our country.

Our argument is that the Budget will do nothing for justice, fairness and the social cohesion of this country. We also believe that the Budget will make absolutely no contribution to the efficiency and competitiveness of our economy. Conservative Members may argue that tax cuts, the ideology of incentives and social inequality are essential for the running of the modern economy and prerequisites for economic efficiency. However, if we are to be capable of achieving long-term, sustained economic and industrial success, the policies that would do most for social justice are investment in training and education, investment to effect the use of the resources of our regions and inner cities, investment in personal security and investment in the Health Service. Such policies are the most likely to help bring about a long-term, sustainable, secure growth in living standards and an improvement in the quality of life.

The first question that Conservative Members should have asked themselves about the Budget was, why is it, with all the tax cuts that have been achieved at the top since 1979, with all the supply-side incentives that have been available, with all the much-vaunted new opportunities from investment that have come from the £13,000 million of tax cuts at the top and even with the projected increases in the private sector capital investment in the Red Book this year, that Britain will still be investing less as a share of national income in the oil-rich 1980s than it did in the 1960s and 1970s?

Why will we still be investing less of a share of our national income on ourselves than any other industralised country with the exception of Belgium? Even after the Budget's tax cuts and after taking into account the Chancellor's predictions for rising private sector investment, why is Britain—the country that the Chancellor claims has the fastest growth rate in Europe—also the country in which investment as a share of national income is lower than in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey?

With regard to our productive industries and especially our manufacturing industry, why, even after all the tax cuts since 1979 is the level of investment in our manufacturing industry 10 per cent. below what it was when the Government came to power? Why has no other country in Europe had such a low level of manufacturing investment or seen such a fall in investment since 1979?

The least that might have been expected from the tax cuts at the top end in 1979, was that they would have increased the level of manufacturing investment in our economy. In 1988, with manufacturing investment still 10 per cent. below what it was in 1979, the best that can be said for a new round of supply side tax cuts at the very top is that they might just return our investment levels in manufacturing to the 1979 level.

Is it not the case that those countries with higher tax rates than ours, such as Japan, have been investing more and that those countries with lower tax rates than ours —at least until last week—such as America, have been investing the same as us?

As tax cuts at the top end have not produced the level of investment that we need in our economy, why did the Chancellor not use the Budget to bridge the investment gap to make up the investment shortfall? There should be investment in training and education, where we are now falling behind not just Germany and Japan, but Korea and Taiwan. There should be investment in research and development on which we spend half as much as Germany and Japan. There should be investment in our regions and cities, where manufacturing investment levels in real terms in the north, Yorkshire, the north-west, Scotland and Wales are still 20 per cent. and in some cases 35 per cent. below the 1979 level. It makes absolutely no sense to have high and persistent unemployment, forced emigration, depopulation from the north, Scotland and Wales when at the same time, as Conservative Members have noticed, there is over-heating, congestion, skill shortages, pressure on the green belt and escalating house prices in so many parts of the south-east.

Is it not therefore perverse for the Chancellor to announce that he has balanced his Budget while at the same time he states in the Red Book that public sector capital investment actually fell last year—and this in a year in which he claimed that he had 5 per cent. growth?

The only investment that the Chancellor has apparently stimulated as a result of his Budget measures last Tuesday is investment in the business expansion scheme for property development. With subsidies for purchase, subsidies as a result of rent de-control and release from capital gains tax when properties are sold, the housing problems of the many are becoming the tax havens for the few. Small wonder that one firm of accountants said last week:

> "Rachman, one suspects, would not have been slow to take advantage of the scheme had it been around in the sixties."

The problem is that under the proposals Rachman will not only be alive and well, but he and his colleagues will be subsidised to the tune of £40 million by the state.

What about the Chancellor's aims for a balanced Budget? In 1980 the test of success was to be M3; in 1982 it was the aggregate levels of monetary targets; in 1984 it was the total level of public expenditure; in 1986 the Budget was to have been judged by PSBR as a proportion of GDP. The Chancellor might have liked to have come to the House last Tuesday to claim that the proper criterion by which the Budget should be judged was the

[Mr. Gordon Brown]

exchange rate stability that he had achieved, but he was prevented from doing that by the Prime Minister. Instead he told us that we must judge the Budget and its success because he has balanced his books. I looked at what the Chancellor said last Tuesday:

"At one time, it was regarded as the hallmark of good government to maintain a balanced budget; to ensure that, in time of peace, Government spending was fully financed by revenues from taxation, with no need for Government borrowing."—[*Official Report*, 15 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. 997.]

So, on the Chancellor's own definition, current taxation revenues should exceed current spending. His problem is that, even on his own definition—that is that current taxation revenues without privatisation receipts should exceed current expenditure — he did not balance the Budget last year or this year, and, he will not balance it in years to come. It would have been better if he had come to the House with modesty, and, rather than triumphantly proclaiming that he had balanced the Budget, referred us to an article some years ago, when he——

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): When was it written?

Mr. Brown: I shall come to that. In the article, he attacked what he called that

"school of economic commentators, who see mystical significance in an overall budget balance since this is a muddled amalgam of Gladstone and Keynes without the logical consistency of either".

The Chancellor rightly asked me when he wrote the article. I am happy to concede that he wrote it in 1962. I would not have mentioned it but for the fact that he has repeated the same views in the years since then. Did he say to the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee in 1984 that his objective was a balanced Budget or that it was the crucial test of the health of the economy?

"There is no particular magic about a balanced budget. It may trip off the tongue rather well"—

indeed, it did, four or five times last Tuesday—

"but I do not think it necessary to have a balanced budget in order to achieve the objective of stable prices."

Our objection to the Chancellor's statement is that, although he may claim to have balanced the Budget, just about everything else in the economy and society was left unbalanced. There is an imbalance between investment and consumption, between the regions and the centre, between the rich and the poor and between private affluence and public squalor.

At the heart of the unbalanced Budget was the balance of payments problem, to which the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) referred. The balance of payments is bad and worsening, and it will be accentuated by the tax cuts, which will fuel imports. The problem will be made even more serious by the Prime Minister's determination to run high interest and exchange rates. The current account deficit is £1·5 billion this year and will be £4 billion next year. The manufacturing deficit is £6·5 billion this year and next year will be the worst in our 200-year history as an industrial nation — £8·5 billion. The Chancellor may think——

Mr. Redwood: Will the hon. Gentleman explain why we should believe his forecasts now when, in October 1986, he was reported in *The Guardian* as saying that Government policies had no chance of bringing down unemployment? If everything is so awful, why is unemployment falling more quickly here than anywhere else in western Europe, and why do we have the fastest growth rate?

Mr. Brown: If the hon. Gentleman would read my articles and repeat them accurately, I might be prepared to answer. The Chancellor said that a balance of payments deficit — a manufacturing deficit — of £6·5 billion was perfectly manageable, and that a manufacturing deficit of £8·5 billion, which is what it would be, would be neither here nor there.

Does the Prime Minister agree with him about this? I know that the Prime Minister and the Chancellor do not see eye to eye on everything, except for the fact that this might be the Chancellor's last Budget, but do they see eye to eye on the manufacturing trade deficit? I must ask the Chancellor, who thinks that the manufacturing trade deficit is neither here nor there, to consider the words of the Prime Minister. When she was aspiring to become Prime Minister, the right hon. Lady said:

"It is often said we must export or die. I would add: we must manufacture or die even more quickly."

That was not a Tory wet, a Labour Back Bencher or a member of a Select Committee in another place, but the then Leader of the Opposition. Does she and the Chancellor now say, with 30 per cent. of our manufacturing jobs lost, 50 per cent. of our cars, 50 per cent. of our washing machines, 50 per cent. of our fridges, 60 per cent. of many items of our furniture, 90 per cent. of our videos and 100 per cent. of our radios imported, with trade deficits in new industries far bigger than trade deficits ever were in the old ones, that we must manufacture or die even more quickly? Never, until this Government came to power, did we import more manufactured goods than we exported and never did we send more money abroad than we invested in manufacturing in many of our regions. Never before have we had whole areas of the country where people are without regular work because they are unemployed, in part-time work or in training schemes and who outnumber those employed in manufacturing industry, whether new or old.

Mr. Steel: Will the hon. Member support the Amalgamated Engineering Union to get 1,000 jobs for Scotland?

Mr. Brown: The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well our determination to get those jobs for Scotland. *[Interruption.]* If Conservative Members would stop trying to make party political points out of this issue and started to fight for the contract for Britain, we would be far better off.

The Budget is not just a missed opportunity for investment in our future, exports and jobs. It gave to the very few what could have provided a lifeline for the National Health Service. The British Medical Association report, which was published only a few days ago, said that 31 per cent. of consultants have had to cancel operations because of financial restrictions, that 3,000 hospital beds have been lost this year, and that the problems next year will be worse than the problems this year. What was the Government's response? Ruthlessly to exclude from expenditure in the Budget the one item on which the vast majority of the people agreed, and then to tell us that the Budget was about taxation and nothing to do with expenditure.

If that was the case, why did the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1982 announce an extra £100 million for housing as a direct response to public pressure? Why did the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1983 have to announce an extra £100 million to £200 million for industrial innovation? Why in 1985 did this Chancellor have to tell the House that an extra £75 million would have to be spent on the community programme, saying that it was not an unprecedented gesture that would never be repeated but that the prospects for expenditure revenue and borrowing are reviewed annually in the Budget?

If that could be done when there was less money to be spent, why could it not be done when the right hon. Gentleman had £4 billion to spend? The truth is not that the Government cannot spend on the Health Service but that they will not spend on the Health Service. Each health authority and each patient who is waiting for an operation should know that the money given to one top earner as a tax bonus—£500,000—would have paid for almost 1,000 operations.

The money given to the top 100 taxpayers could have paid for the cardiologists needed in our hospitals to treat heart diseases. The money given to the top 20,000 taxpayers, most of them millionaires, could have entirely eliminated the waiting lists for tonsils and hernia operations, and most of the list for hip joint operations. That is the scale of the redistribution in the Budget. The £2 billion given to the top 5 per cent. could have returned the National Health Service to the stability and security for which doctors and nurses have been calling. Why did the Chancellor opt for the unproven, unprovable, untested and untestable calls for tax cuts for the few, when that money could have been invested in the NHS to provide a lifeline for the benefit of all? This Budget cannot unite the nation because the one area for which the majority of people have been demanding help has been denied any money. It cannot unite the nation because, through his decision to opt for tax cuts, the right hon. Gentleman has chosen unfairness where he could have chosen to be fair.

The new state social fund will come into operation next month. I ask the Chancellor whether there is anything in need, in merit, in contribution to the community or in his insensate ideology that could ever justify someone on £50,000 a year receiving an additional £75 a week, someone on £70,000 receiving £150, and someone on £100,000 receiving £268, while the Government implement a policy of withdrawal of help from pensioners for their heating, from the disabled for laundry, clothing and baths, and from families for basic housing and household necessities?

A number of rulings by adjudication officers have already been made in advance of the social fund, and they will dominate its operation. While tax handouts go to the rich, what will happen to the destitute family looking for beds and bedding who were refused help, not because there was not sufficient money in any social fund but, as the Government adjudication officer told them, because the lack of bedding could be overcome by the family sleeping in their clothes? That happened in 1988, in advance of the social fund.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: Who said so?

Mr. Brown: The adjudication officer.

What about the family with school-age children, who——

Mr. Hamilton: Will the hon. Gentleman give a reference for his remarks?

Mr. Brown: The reference is the decisions of adjudication officers, which were reported in *Hansard* in a debate on 24 January.

While the rich become richer, a family with school-age children were told that, for people in good health, there was no medical necessity for cooked food. The adjudication officer turned down their request for a cooker on the ground that there was no necessity for cooked food. Parents who had applied for help to buy shoes for their young child were told that the child could get by with three pairs of socks. That is happening in 1988, in a civilised, decent society. Families must go without cookers because the Government say that they can get by without cooked food, and children must go to school without shoes because the Government say that socks are sufficient.

The £2 billion that the Government have given to the very rich could have provided a safety net for the maintenance of single payments. The £200 million lost in tax relief on inheritance tax could have provided for a rise in child benefit or prevented the cut in heating payments to the elderly. The £2 billion that will go the very rich could have rescued the NHS.

One considerable statistic should be left in the minds of Conservative Members. The top 100,000 people in this country—a small fraction of people—get far more in the tax cuts than has been given by the Chancellor to the majority of families, to 15 million people throughout the country. When we understand that fact, we understand clearly that this Budget was born out of greed, founded on indifference to the poor, built on selectivity towards the rich, skewed unashamedly towards the top 5 per cent. and dressed up in hypocrisy about tax cuts and the incentive effect that they will have. It is now revealed in its true colours—not as an epitaph for socialism in this country but, as long as this Government are in power, as an epitaph for social justice and an obituary for the fairness and decency that should lie at the centre of our social arrangements.

The motto of this Government is not, as they say, "God helps those who help themselves"; it is "God helps those whom He has already helped" and they do not worry about the rest of the people in this country.

The Government claim that they are the party of the family. Is there anything more harmful to family life than this Budget's failure to provide for decent hospitals, a decent Health Service, decent homes, decent schools a decent level of child benefit, and a decent opportunity for people to work?

No Budget this century has given so much to so few people. No Budget this century has seen such a huge redistribution of wealth from poor to rich. No Budget this century has so offended the decent instincts of the majority of people who are far more altruistic and far less selfish than the faction that now rules over us. This Budget——

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke) *rose*——

Mr. Brown: This Budget—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Bennett: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is it a point of order, or is it just because the hon. Gentleman did not get in?

Mr. Bennett: The point of order, Mr. Speaker, is that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) quoted a statement from 24 January. We have checked, and that was a Sunday.

Mr. Speaker: Order. That does not seem to me to be a point of order.

Mr. Brown: We now know who the rowdy elements in this House are — a rowdy element in defence not of fairness, but of injustice, unfairness and inequality throughout the country.

No Budget has so offended the decent instincts of the majority of British people. The Budget cannot unite the people of this country because it deliberately set out to divide the people of this country.

This is the Government who, even when they have the cash, even when they know the need, and even when they made promises about what they would do for the Health Service, cannot bring themselves to afford the poor, the sick, the disabled and the unemployed in our society. The truth is that this country can no longer afford the price that it is paying for this Government.

9.33 pm

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson): I shall just say this about what the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) has been saying. It is an impertinence for him to say that the Government are doing nothing for the poor, the sick, the disabled and the needy, when public expenditure on social security is already running at far higher levels under this Government than it ever did under that of the Labour party, and the increase—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lawson: The increase in social security spending that is planned for this coming year, despite falling unemployment, is £2,000 million.

The hon. Gentleman also talked about the rowdy element in the House. During the debate there has been a considerable amount of disquiet, expressed notably by my right hon. Friends the Members for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) and for Woking (Mr. Onslow), about the appalling and unprecedented scenes which we witnessed in the Chamber during the Budget debate. During one of those interruptions I recalled the motto uttered on one memorable and turbulent occasion in the House of Commons by our former colleague, Admiral Morgan-Giles, for many years the Member of Parliament for Winchester. He drew himself to his full height and said:

"Pro bono publico: no bloody panico."

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will the Chancellor give way?

Mr. Lawson: I have only just started. That is the principle on which I have based economic policy throughout my time as Chancellor of the Exchequer and it has served this country fairly well.

The House of Commons will deliver its verdict on the Budget in the Division Lobbies tonight. But the Budget has already attracted unprecedented comment from around the world, where it has been seen as reinforcing the high standing which Britain, under the leadership of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, now has in the Western world. It is a far cry indeed from the tones of sorrow and pity which we received from the rest of the world during the period of the Labour Government's desperate attempts to shore up a declining economy.

In Japan, for example, one of the main papers gives prominence to what it calls "the Thatcher miracle", and another to,

"a Budget too bold for the Japanese Government",

while the Japanese equivalent to the *Financial Times* refers to the changing image of Britain as now being a country of individual enterprise.

Mr. Morgan *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: In the United States, *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial observed that

"Britain has returned to the lead in the global swing towards free economies and pro-growth policies based on individual initiative."

In France, *Liberation* called the Budget

"the most fundamental and most daring Budget since Margaret Thatcher came to power",

set against the background of

"the exceptional dynamism of the British economy."

In Germany, *Handelsblatt* declared that

"the once sick man of Europe has become the most dynamic economic nation in Europe."

So much for the view expressed by the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) about the economy and the Budget alike.

Mr. Morgan: Will the Chancellor tell the House whether the Japanese newspaper went on to explain whether it was proposing that the Japanese Government follow his lead of reducing top tax rates from 60 per cent. to 40 per cent., when Japan has a top tax rate of 78 per cent. and a higher growth rate than the United Kingdom?

Mr. Lawson: Not only do the Japanese plan to reduce the top tax rate, but all the Japanese newspapers stated that in forming their tax reform proposals the Japanese Government would do well to study carefully what has been done in this Budget in Britain.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): I am grateful to the Chancellor, because I realise that he is generous to give way. Did any of those newspaper comments refer to the fact that the wealth that the Chancellor is boasting about has been gained at the expense of an expectant mother from Reading who was hawked round 25 hospitals before she was finally admitted and that one of the children to whom she gave birth died? Did any of the newspapers mention that fact?

Mr. Lawson: I clearly should not have given way to the hon. Gentleman. He knows perfectly well that the increase that I announced in November for spending on the Health Service was the biggest increase that has ever been announced in any year.

But important though this Budget is, it is even more important that it is not seen in isolation. For this Budget represents a continuation of the policies which we have pursued consistently for nearly nine years, and which we will continue to pursue—a continuation of the steps that we have taken in nine previous Budgets, and of the major reforms that we have introduced in other fields, too, all of them designed to encourage and reward enterprise and so to liberate the energies of the British people.

The tax changes in this Budget consolidate Britain's move from a high-tax country to a low-tax country, at all levels. Since 1979, the top rate of income tax has been cut from 83 per cent. to 40 per cent. The basic rate has been

cut from 33 per cent. to 25 per cent. The corporation tax rate has been cut from 52 per cent. to 35 per cent. The small companies' rate has been cut from 42 per cent. to 25 per cent., and the 15 per cent. additional tax on savings income has been abolished altogether.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Will there be any change in the share of GDP that is taken in taxation?

Mr. Lawson: Yes, I hope that over a period of years we shall indeed get it down.

But these dramatic changes in taxation need to be seen not as a reward, but as a challenge—a challenge to British businessmen. The reductions in tax rates, coupled with the reform of trade union law, provide an unparalleled opportunity for British firms to compete with the best in the world, and to succeed.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross) *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: The nation now looks to them not merely to do better than they have ever done before, but to outpace those overseas, for there is still a great deal to be done to make good the ground lost in the 1960s and the 1970s.

Mr. Fairbairn *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. If the Chancellor does not give way, the hon. and learned Member must not persist.

Mr. Lawson: And the British people look to them, too, to play their full part in the social field—in the inner cities and in other areas where they can often be far more effective than bureaucratic agencies. I am confident that British business will live up to this challenge. I am confident that, just as it responded so well to the challenge of adversity during a world recession, so it will respond to the challenge of opportunity. For it is already clear that the policies that we have been pursuing have brought about a profound cultural change in this country. That, indeed, is what it is all about. For that cultural change is the only route to the economic success that we all wish to see, and which is no longer promise but reality.

No longer do people accept that economic policy should be about regulating everyone's lives and imposing penal tax rates, in the illusion that that will benefit those on lower incomes. Instead, it is now widely recognised except on the Opposition Benches that one cannot make the poor rich by making the rich poor and that there are enormous benefits in getting the state off people's backs, in transferring decision-making from the state to the people. And it is now abundantly clear that giving greater freedom and greater incentives has removed the shackles that have held back Britain for so many years and has liberated a great surge in enterprise.

Mr. Eric S. Heffer (Liverpool, Walton): The right hon. Gentleman says that the tax cuts will lead to his friends in the City and industrialists investing more and thereby helping to make the economy better and to bring unemployment down. Supposing it does not lead to the investment and they use that money for more holidays abroad and so on. What will the Chancellor do then?

Mr. Lawson: The policy that we have been pursuing has already brought economic success. This country is now experiencing an economic miracle, comparable in significance to that previously enjoyed by West Germany and still enjoyed by Japan. As for Japan, which the hon. Member for Dagenham mentioned, the Socialist party has been in uninterrupted opposition there for the past 33 years—arguably the most important single ingredient of economic success.

Mr. Fairbairn: Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that the miracle of which he speaks and the prosperity and freedom that we have has been destroyed in Scotland by the bigotry of the Labour party and the unions that they support which has denied to Dundee, to Perthshire and the rest of Scotland the Ford development of the future?

Mr. Lawson: I agree entirely with what my hon. and learned Friend says about the criminal shortsightedness of the Transport and General Workers Union in Dundee. We are still waiting for the Leader of the Opposition to make his position clear, but he is not prepared to say anything.

Mr. Campbell-Savours *rose*——

Mr. Lawson: No, I shall give way only to the Leader of the Opposition.

In his speech last Wednesday, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) was reduced to referring disparagingly to a "short-term boom". The Leader of the Opposition, in an article in *The Sun*, called it a "boomlet". Seven years of steady growth at an average of 3 per cent. a year and it is called a "boomlet". The Labour Government did not achieve 3 per cent. growth in a single year—not once.

Mr. Neil Kinnock (Islwyn): Would the Chancellor of the Exchequer be good enough to explain, first, why it is that in the years of Conservative rule the amount of domestic debt has gone up from £80 billion to £280 billion and whether he thinks that that might have had something to do with what he describes as a recovery? Secondly, when does he expect to get the tax burden down by the £16 billion necessary to get it back to the level that the Conservative Government inherited in 1979? Thirdly, on the basis of present policies, when does he expect to turn the £8 billion balance of trade deficit into the £5 billion surplus that they inherited in 1979?

Mr. Lawson: I gave way to the right hon. Gentleman so that he could make his position about the scandal of Dundee absolutely plain. He totally failed to answer that point.

As for inflation, which the Labour party never mentions, while we are determined to get inflation down further, what we are now talking about is getting it down from something between 3 and 4 per cent. That can be contrasted with a Labour Government under whom the lowest rate of inflation ever achieved was more than 8 per cent., with an average of more than 15. When Labour Members claim that this Budget is unfair, I say this to them. They can argue till the cows come home about whether it is fair to take 60, 50, or 40 per cent. of a man's salary away from him in taxation. But what is beyond dispute is the crowning unfairness of 15 per cent. inflation to every person in the land.

The benefits of sound and consistent policies are now being felt throughout the economy—in every region, in every country and in every industry. Unemployment has fallen by half a million over the last year, faster than in any other major country, and our unemployment rate is now lower than that in any other major European country, with the exception of Germany.

[Mr. Lawson]

This success has been achieved by rejecting the idea that the state is the engine of growth, and that the only way to stimulate the economy is by running ever-larger fiscal deficits. We saw what that led to in the 1970s. It led to inflation spiralling out of control and to the currency crashing, until there was no choice but to slam the engines into reverse, with deep cuts in public expenditure and savage tax increases. What we have done is to adopt a policy of steadily reducing Government borrowing, and we have now reached the logical conclusion of a balanced Budget.

Our legacy to future generations will not be an increasing burden of debt interest, but one which falls as a proportion of national income. This is already allowing us to spend more on priority services—including health — while keeping to our overall objective of reducing public expenditure as a share of national income.

What has brought us to this position is the virtuous circle of lower borrowing and lower tax rates. Lower borrowing gets the state out of the way while lower tax rates give every incentive for the private sector to expand. That in turn generates the higher revenues which have again allowed us to achieve the hat-trick of lower tax rates, higher public spending and lower borrowing — indeed, the elimination of borrowing altogether.

It is nonsense for the Labour party to make fanciful suggestions about what it would have done with the revenues if it had been in government. For the plain fact is that had it been in government the revenues would never have been there in the first place. They were not in the 1960s, they were not in the 1970s, and they would not be now, either.

A crucial part of achieving this virtuous circle is the pursuit of tax reforms that reward and encourage enterprise, something which is completely alien to Labour's philosophy. We do not have to theorise about the benefits of tax reform. They are vividly illustrated by the reforms to corporation tax which I introduced in 1984. The principles of lowering tax rates and of reducing or abolishing unwarranted tax breaks have been applied consistently since 1979. They have served the economy well.

On capital gains tax, the system that we inherited bit harshly on inflationary gains made in the 1970s. My predecessor was able to make a start on rectifying this in his Budget in 1982. I extended the indexation provisions in 1985, and in this year's Budget I was able to announce the logical conclusion that gains made before 1982 should be exempt from tax altogether. This will benefit the economy by unlocking assets bought before 1982, which people have been sitting on simply to avoid a penal tax charge on purely paper gains. But at the same time the alignment of the rates of tax on income and capital gains, which was made possible by the simplification of the income tax rates, reduces both the distortion of investment decisions and the scope for higher rate tax payers in particular to convert income into gains to minimise their tax liability.

In this Budget, it was right to concentrate on personal taxation — and on income tax in particular. We had made some substantial progress in previous Budgets, but it was clear that this was an area ripe for reform.

I believe that the whole House, and indeed the whole country, has welcomed the reform that I announced in the tax treatment of married women. The existing system, with the wife's income treated for tax purposes as belonging to her husband, had lasted for 180 years. It had become wholly indefensible. I decided that the time had come to act. My proposals will for the first time ensure complete privacy and independence for married women in their tax affairs. Of those married women who will gain financially from the introduction of independent taxation — the majority of whom, incidentally, will be elderly—nearly three quarters have incomes of less than £5,000 a year.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): How does the Chancellor reconcile his division of man and wife here with the provision in the poll tax legislation for husband and wife to be jointly and severally responsible for the payment of that tax?

Mr. Lawson: It is still independent taxation in that context, too.

At the same time, it was clearly right to eliminate the so-called tax penalties on marriage and that I have also done.

It is, I must say, the height of effrontery for Opposition spokesmen to complain that those below the tax threshold cannot benefit from a Budget that reduces income tax. Are they arguing that we should have reduced thresholds in real terms, instead of raising them? That is what they did when they were in office, when the single person's tax threshold was reduced by 20 per cent. in real terms.

We have now done something which has never been done before: we have cut income tax in seven successive Budgets—which, under this Government, means seven successive years. Compare Budget day now with the sense of apprehension and dread with which, under the last Government, the British people waited to find out what fate would befall them in March, and again in July and again in November.

This year, we were able to achieve our declared goal of reducing the basic rate to 25 per cent.—from a third under the last Labour Government to a quarter now—and I have pledged that we will reduce it further to 20 per cent. as soon as it is prudent and sensible to do so.

The cut in the basic rate, together with the double indexation of personal allowances, accounted for three quarters of the cost of the income tax package in the Budget in the coming year. So much for the claim that 95 per cent. of the population would not benefit from the Budget. That is poppycock.

It was clearly right—I know that the Opposition are concerned about this—to reduce the higher rates, too. All the experience, in this country and overseas, has demonstrated the futility of levying high tax rates in some misguided search for social justice. It is clear that all that does is encourage distortions and discourage enterprise.

With high tax rates, far too much wasted effort is put into finding ever more complicated ways of avoiding tax and, indeed, into emigration. No one benefits except tax accountants and tax lawyers. It is far better both to cut higher rates of tax and to sweep away as many as possible of the shelters and tax breaks which were an inescapable part of a high tax regime. And that it what I have done in this Budget. The changes in the tax regime for forestry, for covenants, for company cars, for golden handshakes, and indeed for capital gains, all sweep away tax breaks which have no place when tax rates are lower.

Our experience since 1979 clearly demonstrates the results. In 1978-79, the top 5 per cent. of taxpayers

contributed 24 per cent. of income tax revenues. This year, the top 5 per cent. will contribute 29 per cent. of income tax revenues.

All around the world, top tax rates are coming down. Even the Labour Governments in Australia and New Zealand have embarked on that road, particularly New Zealand—let me tell the hon. Member for Dagenham—where they have already brought the top rate down from 60 per cent. to 48 per cent., and now plan to bring it down to 33 per cent. this October. Only the Labour party here claims that high tax rates are a good thing. Labour completely fail to understand the basic points. They said in their election manifesto that they would reverse the tax cuts for the top 5 per cent. to help pay for their programme. They do not realise that the top 5 per cent. are paying more, not less. In real terms they are paying £3 billion more. That is how the programmes are being paid for.

All that motivates the Opposition is envy and spite. They still cannot say where they would set the top rate. Reducing income tax gives people more freedom and more effective choice.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham) *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

Question, That the Question be now put, *put and agreed to.*

Question put accordingly and agreed to

1. AMENDMENT OF THE LAW

Resolved,

That it is expedient to amend the law with respect to the National Debt and the public revenue and to make further provision in connection with finance; but this Resolution does not extend to the making of any amendment with respect to value added tax so as to provide—

(a) for zero-rating or exempting any supply;

(b) for refunding any amount of tax;

(c) for varying the rate of that tax otherwise than in relation to all supplies and importations; or

(d) for relief other than relief applying to goods of whatever description or services of whatever description.

Mr. Speaker: I am now required under Standing Order No. 50(3) to put successively, without further debate, the Question on each of the Ways and Means motions Nos. 2 to 49 and on the Motions for procedure and the Finance (No. 2) Bill [Money], on all of which the Bill is to be brought in. Instead of reading out each motion, I propose to follow the procedure used in recent years, that is to say, I shall read first the title of the motion and then simply put the Question that the motion be agreed to.

2. BEER

Resolved,

That, as from 6 o'clock in the evening of 15th March 1988, the rates of duty specified in section 36 of the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979 shall be increased—

(a) from £25·80 for each hectolitre to £27·00 for each hectolitre; and

(b) from £0·86 for each additional degree of original gravity exceeding 1030 degrees to £0·90 for each such additional degree.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

3. WINE AND MADE-WINE

Resolved,

That as from 6 o'clock in the evening of 15th March 1988, the rates of duty under sections 54 and 55 of the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979 shall be as follows—

Description of wine or made-wine	Rates of duty per hectolitre
	£
(1) Wine or made-wine of a strength not exceeding 15 per cent. and not being sparkling	102·40
(2) Sparkling wine or sparkling made-wine of a strength not exceeding 15 per cent.	169·10
(3) Wine or made-wine of a strength exceeding 15 per cent. but not exceeding 18 per cent.	176·60
(4) Wine or made-wine of a strength exceeding 18 per cent. but not exceeding 22 per cent.	203·70
(5) Wine or made-wine of a strength exceeding 22 per cent.	203·70 plus £15·77 for every 1 per cent. or part of 1 per cent. in excess of 22 per cent.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968. —*[Mr. Lawson.]*

4. CIDER

Resolved,

That, as from 6 o'clock in the evening of 15th March 1988, the rates of duty specified in section 62(1) of the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979 shall be increased from £15·80 per hectolitre to £17·33 per hectolitre.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

5. TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Resolved,

That, as from 18th March 1988, the rates of duty on cigarettes, cigars and hand-rolling tobacco specified in Schedule 1 to the Tobacco Products Duty Act 1979 shall be increased—

(a) in the case of cigarettes, to an amount equal to 21 per cent. of the retail price plus £31·74 per thousand cigarettes;

(b) in the case of cigars, to £48·79 per kilogram; and

(c) in the case of hand-rolling tobacco, to £51·48 per kilogram.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

6. HYDROCARBON OIL

Question put,

That, as from 6 o'clock in the evening of 15th March 1988—

(1) The rates of duty specified in section 6(1) of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979 shall be increased—

(a) in the case of light oil, from £0·1938 to £0·2044 a litre; and

(b) in the case of heavy oil, from £0·1639 to £0·1729 a litre.

(2) The rate of rebate of duty specified in section 13A of that Act (rebate on unleaded petrol) shall be increased from £0·0096 to £0·0202 a litre.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 339, Noes 33.

Division No. 217] **[10 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigg-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pte'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'th)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset S)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cartwright, John
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher

Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stam'd & Speld'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hat'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Henley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'caster)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Allen, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Fearn, Ronald
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Gordon, Mildred
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Killedder, James
Kirkwood, Archy
Livsey, Richard
McGrady, Eddie
Maginnis, Ken
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Nellist, Dave
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat

Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*

Mr. Dafydd Wigley and Mrs. Margaret Ewing.

Tellers for the Noes:

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: May I have the leave of the House to put motions 7 to 10 together? There does not appear to be any objection to that being done.

7. VEHICLES EXCISE DUTY

Resolved.

That the Vehicles (Excise) Act 1971 ("the 1971 Act") and the Vehicles (Excise) Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 ("the 1972 Act") shall have effect, in relation to licences taken out after 15th March 1988, with the amendments set out below.

But this Resolution shall not authorise the making of amendments which would result in different provisions being in force in different parts of Great Britain.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.

(1) In Part I of Schedule 1 to each Act (annual rate of duty on motor bicycles etc.), in paragraph 2 (concession for certain bicycles first licensed before 1933, or, in Northern Ireland, 1935)—

(a) in sub-paragraph (a), for the words "for which a licence was taken out before the beginning of the year" there shall be substituted the words "constructed before"; and

(b) in sub-paragraph (b), for the words "224 pounds" there shall be substituted the words "101.6 kilograms".

(2) In Part II of Schedule 4 to the 1971 Act (annual rates of duty on goods vehicles), for Tables A, A(1) and A(2) (rates for rigid goods vehicles having plated gross weight exceeding 12 tonnes) there shall be substituted the Tables set out below:

TABLE A

RATES OF DUTY ON RIGID GOODS VEHICLES EXCEEDING 12 TONNES PLATED GROSS WEIGHT
GENERAL RATES

Plated gross weight of vehicle		Rate of duty		
1. Exceeding	2. Not exceeding	3. Two axle vehicle	4. Three axle vehicle	5. Four or more axle vehicle
tonnes	tonnes	£	£	£
12	13	410	320	320
13	14	570	340	340
14	15	740	340	340
15	17	1,130	340	340
17	19	—	540	340
19	21	—	730	340
21	23	—	1,000	490
23	25	—	1,780	690
25	27	—	—	1,110
27	29	—	—	1,630
29	30.49	—	—	2,680

TABLE A(1)

RATES OF DUTY ON RIGID GOODS VEHICLES EXCEEDING 12 TONNES PLATED GROSS WEIGHT
RATES FOR FARMERS' GOODS VEHICLES

Plated gross weight of vehicle		Rate of duty		
1. Exceeding	2. Not exceeding	3. Two axle vehicle	4. Three axle vehicle	5. Four or more axle vehicle
tonnes	tonnes	£	£	£
12	13	245	190	190
13	14	340	205	205
14	15	445	205	205
15	17	680	205	205
17	19	—	325	205
19	21	—	440	205
21	23	—	600	295
23	25	—	1,070	415
25	27	—	—	665
27	29	—	—	980
29	30.49	—	—	1,610

TABLE A(2)

RATES OF DUTY ON RIGID GOODS VEHICLES EXCEEDING 12 TONNES PLATED GROSS WEIGHT
RATES FOR SHOWMEN'S GOODS VEHICLES

Plated gross weight of vehicle		Rate of duty		
1. Exceeding	2. Not exceeding	3. Two axle vehicle	4. Three axle vehicle	5. Four or more axle vehicle
tonnes	tonnes	£	£	£
12	13	105	90	90
13	14	145	90	90
14	15	185	90	90
15	17	285	90	90
17	19	—	135	90
19	21	—	185	90
21	23	—	250	125
23	25	—	445	175
25	27	—	—	280
27	29	—	—	410
29	30.49	—	—	670

(3) The Tables set out above shall also be substituted for Tables A, A(1) and A(2) in Part II of Schedule 4 to the 1972 Act, but modified for that purpose by the substitution for any reference to a plated gross weight of a reference to a relevant maximum weight.

(4) In Part II of Schedule 5 to each Act (annual rates of duty on motor cars etc.), in column 1, for paragraph 1 (vehicles first registered before 1947) there shall be substituted.—

"1. Vehicles constructed before 1947."—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

8. VEHICLES EXCISE DUTY (EXCEPTIONAL LOADS, ETC.)

Resolved,

That the Vehicles (Excise) Act 1971 ("the 1971 Act") and the Vehicles (Excise) Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 ("the 1972 Act") shall have effect, as from 1st June 1988, with the amendments set out below.

But this Resolution shall not authorise the making of amendments which would result in different provisions being in force in different parts of Great Britain.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.

(1) In section 1(2) of each Act (charge of duty), for the words "the first five Schedules" there shall be substituted the words "Schedules 1 to 5".

(2) In Part I of Schedule 3 to each Act (annual rates of duty on tractors etc.), in paragraph 6 (definition of "haulage vehicle"), after the words "other than one" there shall be inserted the words "to which Schedule 4A to this Act applies or which is".

(3) In Part I of Schedule 4 to each Act (annual rates of duty on goods vehicles), in paragraph 15—

(a) in sub-paragraph (1), in the definition of "goods vehicle", after the word "means" there shall be inserted the words "subject to sub-paragraph (1A) below"; and

(b) after that sub-paragraph there shall be inserted—

"(1A) In this Schedule 'goods vehicle' does not include a vehicle to which Schedule 4A to this Act applies."

(4) After Schedule 4 to the 1971 Act there shall be inserted—

"SCHEDULE 4A
ANNUAL RATES OF DUTY ON VEHICLES USED FOR CARRYING OR DRAWING EXCEPTIONAL LOADS

1. This Schedule applies to a vehicle—

(a) which is a heavy motor car used for the carriage of exceptional loads; or

(b) which is a heavy locomotive, light locomotive or motor tractor used to draw trailers carrying such loads,

and which, when so used, is authorised for use on roads by virtue of an order under section 42 of the Road Traffic Act 1972.

2. The annual rate of duty applicable to a vehicle to which this Schedule applies shall be £1,600.

3. Where a vehicle—

(a) to which this Schedule applies; and

(b) which would, but for paragraphs 5 and 15(1A) of Schedule 4 to this Act, be a goods vehicle of a description to which a higher rate of duty is applicable under this Act,

is at any time used on roads otherwise than as mentioned in paragraph 1 above, section 18 of this Act shall apply as if that vehicle were then being used in a manner or for a purpose which brings it within that description of vehicle.

4. In this Schedule—

'exceptional load' means a load which—

(a) by reason of its dimensions, cannot be carried by a heavy motor car or trailer, or a combination of a heavy motor car and trailer, which (in either case) complies in all respects with requirements of regulations under section 40 of the Road Traffic Act 1972; or

(b) by reason of its weight, cannot be carried by a heavy motor car or trailer, or a combination of a heavy motor car and trailer, which (in either case) has a total laden weight of not more than the specified amount and complies in all respects with such requirements;

'specified amount' means—

(a) in relation to any time before 1st October 1989, 32,520 kilograms;

(b) in relation to any time on or after that date, 38,000 kilograms;

and other expressions which are also used in the Road Traffic Act 1972 have the same meanings as in that Act."

(5) The provisions set out in paragraph (4) above shall also be inserted after Schedule 4 to the 1972 Act, but modified for that purpose by the substitution for any reference to the Road Traffic Act 1972, or to section 40 or 42 of that Act, of a reference to the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, or to Article 28 or 29(3) of that Order.

(6) Section 2(1)(c) of the 1971 Act and section 2(1)(c) and (d) of the 1972 Act (seven day licences) shall cease to have effect.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

9. VEHICLES EXCISE DUTY (RECOVERY VEHICLES)

Resolved,

That provision may be made amending paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 3 to each of the Vehicles (Excise) Act 1971 and the Vehicles (Excise) Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

10. VALUE ADDED TAX (REGISTRATION)

Resolved,

That provision may be made as to registration and the cancellation of registrations under the Value Added Tax Act 1983.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

11. INCOME TAX (CHARGE AND RATES FOR 1988-89)

Question put,

That—

(1) Income tax shall be charged for the year 1988-89—

(a) at the basic rate of 25 per cent, and

(b) in respect of so much of an individual's total income as exceeds £19,300, at the rate of 40 per cent.

(2) The additional rate income tax for the year 1988-89 shall be 10 per cent.

(3) Section 1(4) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (indexation) shall not apply for the year 1988-89.

(4) This Resolution shall not require any change to be made in the amounts deductible or repayable under section 203 of the Act (pay as you earn) before 15th June 1988.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 335, Noes 223.

Division No. 218] **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*

Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*

Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ray Powell and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

12. INCOME TAX (PERSONAL RELIEFS)

Resolved,

That—

(1) In section 257 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (personal reliefs)—

(a) in subsection (1)(a) (married allowance) for "£3,795" there shall be substituted "£4,095";

(b) in subsections (1)(b) (single allowance) and (6) (wife's earned income relief) for "£2,425" there shall be substituted "£2,605";

(c) in subsection (2)(a) (married allowance: age 65 to 79), for "£4,675" there shall be substituted "£5,035";

(d) in subsection (2)(b) (single allowance: age 65 to 79), for "£2,960" there shall be substituted "£3,180";

(e) in subsection (3)(a) (married allowance: age 80 and over), for "£4,845" there shall be substituted "£5,205";

(f) in subsection (3)(b) (single allowance: age 80 and over), for "£3,070" there shall be substituted "£3,310";

(g) in subsection (5) (income limit for age allowance), for "£9,800" there shall be substituted "£10,600".

(2) Section 257(9) of that Act (indexation) shall not apply for the year 1988-89.

(3) This Resolution shall not require any change to be made in the amounts deductible or repayable under section 203 of that Act (pay as you earn) before 15th June 1988.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

13. CORPORATION TAX (CHARGE AND RATE FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 1988)

Resolved,

That corporation tax shall be charged for the financial year 1988 at the rate of 35 per cent.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

14. CORPORATION TAX (SMALL COMPANIES)

Resolved,

That—

(a) the small companies rate for the financial year 1988 shall be 25 per cent.; and

(b) the fraction mentioned in section 13(2) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, and in section 95(2) of the Finance Act 1972, shall be one fortieth.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

15. INCOME TAX (MINOR PERSONAL ALLOWANCES)

Question put,

That—

(1) Sections 258, 263 and 264 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (housekeeper allowance, dependent relative allowance and son's or daughter's allowance) shall not have effect for the year 1988-89 or any subsequent year of assessment.

(2) This Resolution shall not require any change to be made in the amounts deductible or repayable under section 203 of that Act (pay as you earn) before 15th June 1988.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 334, Noes 228.

Division No. 219] **[10.30 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles

Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey

McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Maginnis, Ken
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ray Powell and
Mr. Frank Haynes.

Question accordingly agreed to.

16. COVENANTS AND MAINTENANCE, ETC.

Resolved,

That—

(1) The following sections shall be inserted at the beginning of Part IX of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988—

"*General rule*

347A.—(1) A payment to which this section applies shall not be a charge on the income of the person liable to make it, and accordingly—

(a) his income shall be computed without any deduction being made on account of the payment, and

(b) the payment shall not form part of the income of the person to whom it is made or of any other person.

(2) This section applies to any annual payment made by an individual which would otherwise be within the charge to tax under Case III of Schedule D except—

(a) a payment of interest;

(b) a covenanted payment to charity (within the meaning given by section 660(3));

(c) a payment made for bona fide commercial reasons in connection with the individual's trade, profession or vocation; and

(d) a payment to which section 125(1) applies.

(3) This section applies to a payment made by personal representatives (within the meaning given in section 701(4)) where—

(a) the deceased would have been liable to make the payment if he had not died, and

(b) this section would have applied to the payment if he had made it.

(4) A maintenance payment arising outside the United Kingdom shall not be within the charge to tax under Case V of Schedule D if, because of this section, it would not have been within the charge to tax under Case III if it had arisen in the United Kingdom; and for this purpose "maintenance payment" means a periodical payment (not being an instalment of a lump sum) which satisfies the conditions set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 347B(5).

(5) No deduction shall be made under section 65(1)(b) on account of an annuity or other annual payment which would not have been within the charge to tax under Case III of Schedule D if it had arisen in the United Kingdom.

Qualifying maintenance payments

347B.—(1) In this section "qualifying maintenance payment" means a periodical payment which—

(a) is made under an order by a court in the United Kingdom, or under a written agreement the proper law of which is the law of a part of the United Kingdom,

(b) is made by one of the parties to a marriage (including a marriage which has been dissolved or annulled) either—

(i) to or for the benefit of the other party and for the maintenance of the other party, or

(ii) to the other party for the maintenance by the other party of any child of the family,

(c) is due at a time when—

(i) the two parties are not a married couple living together, and

(ii) the party to whom or for whose benefit the payment is made has not remarried, and

(d) is not a payment in respect of which relief from tax is available to the person making the payment under any provision of the Income Tax Acts other than this section.

(2) Notwithstanding section 347A(1)(a) but subject to subsections (3) and (4) below, a person making a claim for the purpose shall be entitled, in computing his total income for a year of assessment, to deduct an amount equal to the aggregate amount of any qualifying maintenance payments made by him which fall due in that year.

(3) The amount which may be deducted under this section by a person in computing his total income for a year of assessment shall not exceed the amount of the difference between the higher (married person's) relief and the lower (single person's) relief under subsection (1) of section 257 as it applies for the year to a person not falling within subsection (2) or (3) of that section.

(4) Where qualifying maintenance payments falling due in a year of assessment are made by a person who also makes other maintenance payments attracting relief for that year, subsection (3) above shall apply as if the limit imposed by it were reduced by an amount equal to the aggregate amount of those other payments.

(5) The reference in subsection (4) above to other maintenance payments attracting relief for a year is a reference to periodical payments which—

(a) are made under an order made by a court (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) or under a written or oral agreement, and

(b) are made by a person—

(i) as one of the parties to a marriage (including a marriage which has been dissolved or annulled) to or for the benefit of the other party to the marriage and for the maintenance of the other party, or

(ii) to any person under 21 years of age for his own benefit, maintenance or education, or

(iii) to any person for the benefit, maintenance or education of a person under 21 years of age,

[Mr. Speaker]

and in respect of which the person making them is entitled otherwise than under this section to make a deduction in computing his income for the year.

(6) The reference in subsection (1) above to a married couple living together shall be construed in accordance with section 282(1), but section 282(2) shall not apply for the purposes of this section.

(7) In this section—

(a) "child of the family", in relation to the parties to a marriage, means a person under 21 years of age—

(i) who is a child of both those parties, or

(ii) who (not being a person who has been boarded out with them by a public authority or voluntary organisation) has been treated by both of them as a child of their family; and

(b) "periodical payment" does not include an instalment of a lump sum."

(2) The following sections shall be inserted at the beginning of Part II of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970—

"General rule.

51(A). — (1) A payment to which this section applies shall not be a charge on the income of the person liable to make it, and accordingly—

(a) his income shall be computed without any deduction being made on account of the payment, and

(b) the payment shall not form part of the income of the person to whom it is made or of any other person.

(2) This section applies to any annual payment made by an individual which would otherwise be within the charge to tax under Case III of Schedule D except—

(a) a payment of interest;

(b) a covenanted payment to charity (within the meaning given by section 434(2) below);

(c) a payment made for bona fide commercial reasons in connection with the individual's trade, profession or vocation; and

(d) a payment to which section 48(1) of the Finance Act 1977 applies.

(3) This section applies to a payment made by personal representatives (within the meaning given in section 432(4) below) where—

(a) the deceased would have been liable to make the payment if he had not died, and

(b) this section would have applied to the payment if he had made it.

(4) A maintenance payment arising outside the United Kingdom shall not be within the charge to tax under Case V of Schedule D if, because of this section, it would not have been within the charge to tax under Case III if it had arisen in the United Kingdom; and for this purpose "maintenance payment" means a periodical payment (not being an instalment of a lump sum) which satisfies the conditions set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 51B(5) below.

(5) No deduction shall be made under section 122(1)(b) below on account of an annuity or other annual payment which would not have been within the charge to tax under Case III of Schedule D if it had arisen in the United Kingdom.

Qualifying maintenance payments

51B. — (1) In this section "qualifying maintenance payment" means a periodical payment which—

(a) is made under an order made by a court in the United Kingdom, or under a written agreement the proper law of which is the law of a part of the United Kingdom,

(b) is made by one of the parties to a marriage (including a marriage which has been dissolved or annulled) either—

(i) to or for the benefit of the other party and for the maintenance of the other party, or

(ii) to the other party for the maintenance by the other party of any child of the family,

(c) is due at at time when—

(i) the two parties are not a married couple living together, and

(ii) the party to whom or for whose benefit the payment is made has not remarried, and

(d) is not a payment in respect of which relief from tax is available to the person making the payment under any provision of the Income Tax Acts other than this section.

(2) Notwithstanding section 51A(1)(a) above but subject to subsections (3) and (4) below, a person making a claim for the purpose shall be entitled, in computing his total income for the year 1987-88, to deduct an amount equal to the aggregate amount of any qualifying maintenance payments made by him which fall due in that year.

(3) The amount which may be deducted under this section by a person in computing his total income for the year 1987-88 shall not exceed £1,370.

(4) Where qualifying maintenance payments falling due in the year 1987-88 are made by a person who also makes other maintenance payments attracting relief for that year, subsection (3) above shall apply as if the limit imposed by it were reduced by an amount equal to the aggregate amount of those other payments.

(5) The reference in subsection (4) above to other maintenance payments attracting relief for the year 1987-88 is a reference to periodical payments which—

(a) are made under an order made by a court (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) or under a written or oral agreement, and

(b) are made by a person—

(i) as one of the parties to a marriage (including a marriage which has been disolved or annulled) to or for the benefit of the other party to the marriage and for the maintenance of the other party, or

(ii) to any person under 21 years of age for his own benefit, maintenance or education, or

(iii) to any person for the benefit, maintenance or education of a person under 21 years of age,

and in respect of which the person making them is entitled otherwise than under this section to make a deduction in computing his income for the year.

(6) The reference in subsection (1) above to a married couple living together shall be construed in accordance with section 42(1) above, but section 42(2) above shall not apply for the purposes of this section.

(7) In this section—

(a) "child of the family", in relation to the parties to a marriage, means a person under 21 years of age—

(i) who is a child of both those parties, or

(ii) who (not being a person who has been boarded out with them by a public authority or voluntary organisation) has been treated by both of them as a child of their family, and

(b) "periodical payment" does not include an instalment of a lump sum."

(3) This Resolution shall have effect in relation to any payment falling due on or after 15th March 1988 unless it is made in pursuance of an existing obligation.

(4) In paragraph (3) above "existing obligation" means a binding obligation—

(a) under an order made by a court (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) before 15th March 1988, or before the end of June 1988 on an application made on or before 15th March 1988;

(b) under a deed executed or written agreement made before 15th March 1988 and received by an inspector before the end of June 1988;

(c) under an oral agreement made before 15th March 1988, written particulars of which have been received by an inspector before the end of June 1988; or

(d) under an order made by a court (whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere) on or after 15th March 1988, or under a written agreement made on or after that date, where the order or agreement replaces, varies or supplements an order or agreement within this subsection;

but subject to paragraph (5) below.

(5) An obligation within paragraph (4)(d) above is an existing obligation only if—

(a) it is an obligation to make periodical payments (not being instalments of a lump sum) which are made by a person—

(i) as one of the parties to a marriage (including a marriage which has been dissolved or annulled) to or for the benefit of the other party to the marriage and for the maintenance of the other party, or

(ii) to any person under 21 years of age for his own benefit, maintenance or education, or

(iii) to any person for the benefit, maintenance or education of a person under 21 years of age, and

(b) the order or agreement replaced, varied or supplemented provided for such payments to be made for the benefit, maintenance or, as the case may be, education of the same person.

(6) Section 351 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and section 65 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970 shall not apply to any payment in relation to which this Resolution has effect.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

17. RELIEF FOR INTEREST (LIMIT FOR 1988-89)

Resolved,

That, for the year 1988-89, the qualifying maximum referred to in sections 357 and 365(3) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (limit on relief for interest on certain loans) shall be £30,000.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1986.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

18. RELIEF FOR INTEREST (HOME LOANS)

Resolved,

That provision may be made about relief for interest paid in relation to any land, caravan or house-boat used or to be used as an only or main residence.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

19. RELIEF FOR INTEREST (HOME IMPROVEMENTS)

Question put,

That—

(1) In relation to payments of interest made on or after 6th April 1988 section 355 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (limitations on relief for loans for purchase or improvement of land etc.) shall have effect with the insertion of the following subsections after subsection (2)—

"(2A) Section 354 shall not apply by virtue of subsection (1)(a) above where the interest is paid on a home improvement loan unless the loan was made before 6th April 1988.

(2B) In subsection (2A) above "home improvement loan" means—

(a) a loan to defray money applied in improving or developing land or buildings on land, otherwise than by the erection of a new building (which is not part of an existing residence) on land which immediately before the improvement or development began had no building on it, or

(b) a loan replacing (whether directly or indirectly) a loan within paragraph (a) above.

(2C) Where it is proved by written evidence that a loan made on or after 6th April 1988 was made in pursuance of an offer made by the lender before that date and that the offer either was in writing or was evidenced by a note or memorandum made by the lender before that date, the loan shall be deemed for the purposes of subsection (2A) above to have been made before that date."

(2) In relation to payments of interest made on or after 6th April 1988 section 356 of that Act (job-related accommodation) shall have effect with the insertion of the following subsection after subsection (1)—

"(1A) Subsection (1) above shall not apply where the interest is paid on a home improvement loan (as defined in section 355 (2B)) unless the loan was made before 6th April 1988; and section 355 (2C) shall have effect for the purposes of this subsection as for those of section 355 (2A)."

(3) Interest paid by a housing association on a home improvement loan made on or after 6th April 1988 shall not be relevant loan interest for the purposes of Part IX of that Act; and for the purposes of this paragraph—

(a) "housing association" means a housing association for the time being approved for the purposes of section 488 of that Act or a self-build society for the time being approved for the purposes of section 489,

(b) "home improvement loan" has the same meaning as in subsection (2B) of section 355 of that Act, and

(c) subsection (2C) of that section shall have effect as it does for the purposes of subsection (2A) of that section.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 335, Noes 218.

Division No. 220] **[10.42 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard

Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Ha[illegible] NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom

Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Warsing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Ray Michie and
Mr. Ronnie Fearn.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: May I have the leave of the House to put motions 20, 21 and 22 together? There does not appear to be any objection to that being done.

20. RELIEF FOR INTEREST (DEPENDENT RELATIVE'S RESIDENCE)

Resolved,

That—

(1) In sections 355(1)(a) and 357(2)(a) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the words "or of a dependent relative or former or separated spouse of his," shall not have effect in relation to payments of interest made on or after 6th April 1988.

(2) Paragraph (1) above shall not apply where the interest is paid on a loan made before 6th April 1988 if interest paid on it at a relevant time was eligible for relief under section 353 of that Act only because the land, caravan or house-boat concerned was used as the only or main residence of the same dependent relative or former or separated spouse.

(3) In paragraph (2) above "relevant time" means—

(a) the last time when interest was paid on the loan before 6th April 1988, or

(b) if no interest was paid on it before that date, any time within the period of 12 months (or any longer period substituted in relation to the case under section 355(2) of that Act) after the date on which the loan was made;

but sub-paragraph (b) above shall not apply if at any time after the date on which the loan was made and before the date on which the land, caravan or house-boat was first used as mentioned in paragraph (2) above, the land, caravan or house-boat was used for any other purpose.

(4) In section 358(4)(a) of that Act (relief where borrower deceased) the words "or of any dependent relative of the deceased" shall not have effect in relation to payments of interest made on or after 6th April 1988 unless—

(a) the deceased died before that date, and

(b) the land, caravan or house-boat was used as the only or main residence of the dependent relative before that date.

(5) Where it is proved by written evidence that a loan made on or after 6th April 1988 was made in pursuance of an offer made by the lender before that date and that the offer either was in writing or was evidenced by a note or memorandum made by the lender before that date, the loan shall be deemed for the purposes of this Resolution to have been made before that date.

(6) Interest paid by a housing association shall not be relevant loan interest for the purposes of Part IX of that Act where by virtue of this Resolution it would not be relevant loan interest if paid by a member of the association; and in this paragraph "housing association" means a housing association for the time being approved for the purposes of section 488 of that Act or a self-build society for the time being approved for the purposes of section 489.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

21. BENEFITS IN KIND (CARS)

Resolved,

That—

(1) For the year 1988-89 and subsequent years of assessment, Schedule 6 to the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (taxation of directors and others in respect of cars) shall have effect with the substitution for Part I (tables of flat rate cash equivalents) of the following—

PART I
TABLES OF FLAT RATE CASH EQUIVALENTS
TABLE A
Cars with an original market value up to £19,250 and having a cylinder capacity

Cylinder capacity of car in cubic centimetres	Age of car at end of relevant year of assessment	
	Under 4 years	4 years or more
1400 or less	£1,050	£700
More than 1400 but not more than 2000	£1,400	£940
More than 2000	£2,200	£1,450

TABLE B
Cars with an original market value up to £19,250 and not having a cylinder capacity

Original market value of car	Age of car at end of relevant year of assessment	
	Under 4 years	4 years or more
Less than £6,000	£1,050	£700
£6,000 or more but less than £8,500	£1,400	£940
£8,500 or more but not more than £19,250	£2,200	£1,450

TABLE C
Cars with an original market value of more than £19,250

Original market value of car	Age of car at end of relevant year of assessment	
	Under 4 years	4 years or more
More than £19,250 but not more than £29,000	£2,900	£1,940
More than £29,000	£4,600	£3,060

(2) This Resolution shall not require any change to be made in the amounts deductible or repayable under section 203 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (pay as you earn) before 15th June 1988.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

22. WOODLANDS

Resolved,

That provision may be made about the commercial occupation of woodlands.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

23. BUSINESS EXPANSION SCHEME

Question put,

That provision may be made amending Chapter III of Part VII of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and the corresponding enactments repealed by that Act. — *[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 335, Noes 218.

Division No. 221] **[10.54 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Bigge-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'th)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger

Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'hem N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'ln'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George

Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lester, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allan *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Warsing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put together motions Nos. 24 to 34.

24. PAYMENTS ON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT, ETC.

Resolved,

That provision may be made abolishing relief under paragraphs 4 to 7 of Schedule 11 to the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

25. OIL LICENCES

Resolved,

That provision may be made with respect to the application of—

(a) the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 and any enactment which falls to be construed as one with that Act,

(b) certain provisions of the Capital Allowances Act 1968, and

(c) section 55 of and Schedules 13 and 14 to the Finance Act 1986 (capital allowances in respect of mineral extraction),

in relation to certain disposals (including part disposals) of licences under the Petroleum (Production) Act 1934 and the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964, being disposals occurring before as well as after the passing of this Resolution.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

26. COMPANY RESIDENCE AND MIGRATION

Resolved,

That charges to corporation tax may be imposed by provisions for determining whether or not a company is to be regarded as resident in the United Kingdom, and provisions relating to companies ceasing to be resident there.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

27. CHARITIES

Resolved,

That, for the year 1988-89 and subsequent years of assessment, section 202(7) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (which limits to £120 the deductions attracting relief) shall have effect with the substitution of "£240" for "£120".

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act 1968.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

28. ENTERTAINMENT EXPENSES

Resolved,

That provision may be made repealing section 577(2) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

29. PREMIUMS FOR LEASES, ETC.

Resolved,

That provision may be made abolishing relief under Schedule 2 to the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

30. UNDERWRITERS

Resolved,

That provision (including provision for the years of assessment 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88) may be made about underwriters.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

31. FOREIGN PUBLIC REVENUE DIVIDENDS

Resolved,

That provision may be made about dividends payable out of any public revenue, within the meaning of Part III of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988, other than the public revenue of the United Kingdom.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

32. EMPLOYEE SHARE ACQUISITIONS

Resolved,

That provision (including provision having retrospective effect) may be made about the acquisition of shares or interests in shares by directors or employees (or prospective or former directors or employees).—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

33. CAPITAL ALLOWANCES

Resolved,

That provision may be made with respect to allowances under the Capital Allowances Act 1968 or Chapter I of Part III of the Finance Act 1971.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

34. CAPITAL GAINS TAX (RATES)

Resolved,

That provision may be made about the rates at which capital gains tax is chargeable and for related purposes.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

35. CAPITAL GAINS (ASSETS HELD ON 31ST MARCH 1982)

Question put,

That provision may be made as to the taxation of capital gains and losses on the disposal of assets acquired on or before 31st March 1982, and as to related matters.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

The House divided: Ayes 358, Noes 191.

Division No. 222] **[11.06 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fearn, Ronald
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Kirkwood, Archy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Maginnis, Ken
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil

Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, William *(Londonderry E)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. Peter Lloyd.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ron
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I shall put motions 36 to 49 together.

36. CAPITAL GAINS (MARRIED COUPLES)

Resolved,

That provision may be made about chargeable gains of husbands and wives.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

37. CAPITAL GAINS (ANNUAL EXEMPT AMOUNT)

Resolved,

That provision may be made as to the operation of section 5 of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 for the year 1988-89. —*[Mr. Lawson.]*

38. CAPITAL GAINS (DEPENDENT RELATIVE'S RESIDENCE)

Resolved,

That provision may be made removing the relief given by section 105 of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979. — *[Mr. Lawson.]*

39. CAPITAL GAINS (INDEXATION)

Resolved,

That provision (including provision having retrospective effect) may be made removing indexation allowance in the case of shares in building societies and industrial and provident societies and of certain disposals by companies of shares or debts.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

40. TRANSFERS WITHIN A GROUP

Resolved,

That provision may be made excluding certain cases from the operation of section 273 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

41. PERSONAL EQUITY PLANS

Resolved,

That provision may be made enabling regulations under section 149D of the Capital Gains Tax Act 1979 to secure, in relation to disposals on or after 18th January 1988, that losses are in certain circumstances disregarded for the purposes of capital gains tax.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

42. INVESTMENT TRUSTS

Resolved,

That provision may be made amending the definition of "investment trust" in the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 and treating section 93(6) of the Finance Act 1972 as not having been repealed.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

43. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Resolved,

That provision may be made about assessments relating to income arising in the year for which the assessments are made. —*[Mr. Lawson.]*

44. OIL ALLOWANCE

Resolved,

That provision may be made reducing the oil allowance under section 8 of the Oil Taxation Act 1975 in respect of certain oil fields.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

45. STAMP DUTY (ABOLITION OF CAPITAL DUTY)

Resolved,

That the following provisions shall have effect for the period beginning with 22nd March 1988 and ending 31 days after the earliest of the dates mentioned in section 50(2) of the Finance Act 1973—

(1) The stamp duties chargeable by virtue of section 47 of the Finance Act 1973 and Article 8 of the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 (stamp duties on documents relating to chargeable transactions of capital companies) are abolished; and accordingly—

(a) that section, section 48 of that Act and Schedule 19 to that Act; and

(b) that Article, Article 9 of that Order and Schedule 2 to that Order,

shall cease to have effect.

(2) Paragraph (1) above shall have effect in relation to—

(a) any transaction occurring on or after 22nd March 1988;

(b) any transaction occurring on or after 16th March 1988 in respect of which the relevant document is not stamped before 22nd March 1988;

(c) any exempt transaction occurring before 22nd March 1988 in respect of which a relevant event occurs on or after 22nd March 1988; and

(d) any exempt transaction occurring before 16th March 1988 in respect of which a relevant event occurs on or after 16th March 1988 and the relevant duty is not paid before 22nd March 1988.

(3) For the purposes of section 14(4) of the Stamp Act 1891 (instruments not to be given in evidence etc. unless stamped in accordance with the law in force at the time of execution), the law in force—

(a) in a case falling within paragraph (2)(b) above, at the time of execution of the relevant document; or

(b) in a case falling within paragraph (2)(d) above, on the date on which the relevant event occurs,

shall be deemed to be that as varied in accordance with this Resolution.

(4) In this Resolution—

"exempt transaction" means a transaction which is exempt by virtue of paragraph 10(1) of Schedule 19 to the Finance Act 1973.

"relevant document" has the meaning given by section 47 of that Act;

"relevant duty" means the duty payable under paragraph 10(4) of Schedule 19 to that Act;

"relevant event" means such an event as is mentioned in paragraph 10(3)(a) or (b) of Schedule 19 to that Act;

and any reference in this paragraph to section 47 of or Schedule 19 to that Act includes a reference to Article 8 of or Schedule 2 to the Finance (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1973.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of section 50 of the Finance Act 1973. —*[Mr. Lawson.]*

46. STAMP DUTY (ABOLITION OF UNIT TRUST INSTRUMENT DUTY)

Resolved,

That the following provisions shall have effect for the period beginning with 22nd March 1988 and ending 31 days after the earliest of the dates mentioned in section 50(2) of the Finance Act 1973—

(1) The stamp duty chargeable by virtue of the heading in Schedule 1 to the Stamp Act 1891 "Unit Trust Instrument" is abolished; and accordingly that heading and the following enactments, namely—

(a) section 53 of the Finance Act 1946;

(b) section 24 of the Finance (No. 2) Act (Northern Ireland) 1946;

(c) section 30 of the Finance Act 1962; and

(d) section 3 of the Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 1962,

shall cease to have effect.

(2) Paragraph (1) above shall have effect in relation to—

(a) any trust instrument executed on or after 22nd March 1988;

(b) any trust instrument executed on or after 16th March 1988 which is not stamped before 22nd March 1988;

(c) any property becoming trust property on or after 22nd March 1988; and

(d) any property becoming trust property on or after 16th March 1988 in respect of which the trust instrument is not stamped before 22nd March 1988.

(3) For the purposes of section 14(4) of the Stamp Act 1891 (instruments not to be given in evidence etc. unless stamped in accordance with the law in force at the time of execution), the law in force—

(a) at the time of execution of a trust instrument falling within paragraph (2)(b) above; or

(b) on the day on which property falling within paragraph (2)(d) above becomes trust property,

shall be deemed to be that as varied in accordance with this Resolution.

(4) In this Resolution "trust instrument" and "trust property" have the meanings given by section 57 of the Finance Act 1946 or section 28 of the Finance (No. 2) Act (Northern Ireland) 1946.

And it is hereby declared that it is expedient in the public interest that this Resolution should have statutory effect under the provisions of section 50 of the Finance Act 1973. —*[Mr. Lawson.]*

47. Stamp Duty (Paired Shares)

Resolved,

That provision (including provision having retrospective effect) may be made with respect to stamp duty in cases where shares in a company incorporated in the United Kingdom and shares in a company not so incorporated may not be transferred except in units each comprising one share in each company.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

48. Stamp Duty Reserve Tax

Resolved,

That charges to stamp duty reserve tax may be imposed by provisions (including provisions having retrospective effect) relating to that tax.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

49. Relief from Tax (Incidental and Consequential Charges

Resolved,

That it is expedient to authorise any incidental or consequential charges to any duty or tax (including charges having retrospective effect) which may arise from provisions designed in general to afford relief from tax. — *[Mr. Lawson.]*

Procedure (Further Taxation)

Resolved,

That, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the practice of the House relating to matters which may be included in Finance Bills, any Finance Bill of the present Session may contain the following provisions taking effect in a future year—

(a) provisions about the taxation of persons who are or have been married,

(b) provisions about the application of Chapter I of Part VII of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 to individuals not resident in the United Kingdom,

(c) provisions about relief under section 259 of that Act,

(d) provisions reducing the percentages specified in sections 266(5)(a) and 274(3)(a) of, and paragraph 3(3)(a) of Schedule 14 to, that Act, and

(e) provisions amending the Taxes Management Act 1970.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

Finance (No. 2) Bill [Money]:

Queen's Recommendation having been signified—

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Finance (No. 2) Bill, it is expedient to authorise the making out of money provided by Parliament of payments to General Commissioners acting for divisions in Northern Ireland and payments to or in respect of clerks and assistant clerks to such Commissioners.—*[Mr. Lawson.]*

Ordered,

That a Bill be brought in upon the foregoing resolutions: And that the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Secretary Fowler, Mr. Secretary Ridley, Mr. Kenneth Clarke, Mr. John MacGregor, Mr. Secretary Channon, Mr. Secretary Parkinson, Mr. John Major, Mr. Norman Lamont, Mr. Peter Brooke and Mr. Peter Lilley do prepare and bring it in.

Finance (No. 2) Bill

Mr. Norman Lamont accordingly presented a Bill to grant certain duties, to alter other duties, and to amend the law relating to the national debt and the public revenue, and to make further provision in connection with finance: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 127.]

11.20 pm

Mr. Harry Ewing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You may not have noticed that just before you called the 10 o'clock Division there was without a shadow of a doubt physical violence inflicted by the Patronage Secretary and the Leader of the House on the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have not seen such violence in the House since the night on which the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) ran about with the Mace, threatening to batter everyone over the head. Surely you have some obligation to control these Tory hooligans — *[Interruption.]*—once and for all.

Mr. Speaker: I have sympathy with the Patronage Secretary for what he had to do.

Education Reform [Money] (No. 3)

Queen's Recommendation have been signified—

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Education Reform Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any sums required by the Secretary of State for making grants to promote learning or research or in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred for educational purposes.—*[Mrs. Rumbold.]*

11.21 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): That was a very strange way to move an important money resolution. The Minister only just managed to get to the Dispatch Box.

The House is owed some explanation of why the money resolution is before us. This is the third money resolution for the Education Reform Bill. We had one in December to coincide with the Bill's Second Reading. We had another when the Government decided to abolish the Inner London education authority, and we have a third today. None of the resolutions has bought one additional penny to be spent on the education service. There seems to be an inverse relationship—more money resolutions, less money to be spent by the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

One gets the impression that the Bill grows and grows and it is probably appropriate that we should have a third money resolution simply because of that. When the Bill was read a Second time, it contained 147 clauses. There are an additional 39 clauses with the promise of further Government new clauses on Report over the next few days.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins (High Peak): I know that the hon. Gentleman is very diligent. Has he looked at the notices of amendments tabled for tomorrow? I am sure that he has. He will have noted that the Government new clause 41 is in the name of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. New clause 42 is in the name of Mr. Stanley Baker. Is it in order for dead film stars to table Government new clauses?

Mr. Fatchett: I cannot say whether that is valid. However, I fear that we may well have a dead Education Secretary if all the recent divisions between Downing street and Elizabeth house are anything to go by.

One gains the impression that the Secretary of State is trying to ensure that even if he does not produce the most significant education Bill of all time, he at least produces the longest. He is also trying to ensure that he gets everything down on paper before he moves on to some other office or out of office altogether.

It would have been appropriate for the Minister of State to give us some explanation of the money resolution.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): Because the hon. Gentleman's speech would have been easier.

Mr. Fatchett: Certainly, but clearly the Government have abrogated all responsibility in these matters. It is a mistake to pretend that this is a clever tactic. The Minister had a full and attentive House, waiting to find out the reason for the resolution.

There are two possible explanations. The first, I suspect, was in the Minister's brief, as we would have heard if she had had the audacity to present it to the House. The second reason, I suggest, was the real agenda behind the resolution. The first possible explanation is that new clauses 44 to 47, tabled for tomorrow, involve grants and expenditure. They would not be anything other than ultra vires if the money resolution had not been agreed tonight. So the official explanation is that the new clauses needed the resolution to be passed.

The wording of the resolution offers another explanation. It is a catch-all resolution. Having failed to get it right on two previous occasions, the Government have decided that an open resolution will not involve their returning later with yet another failed attempt to get it right. The Minister could not give us that explanation, so she will probably talk about new clauses 44 to 47.

Perhaps the Minister will have the courtesy to reply to one or two questions. New clause 44 increases to 100 per cent. the amount of grant to go to local authorities to cover student awards. What is the reason for that change? Some of my hon. Friends say that this is a paving measure to enable the Government to move to student loans some time in the next 12 or 18 months—if the Secretary of State ever finds more time for legislation. What is the purpose behind new clause 44?

New clause 44 is typical of the Bill and of the way in which the Secretary of State has managed it through its parliamentary proceedings. Yet again, the resolution involves no financial costings and does not give detailed figures of what the Bill will cost. It does not explain how it will be implemented, what it will mean for teachers, or how the national curriculum will be delivered.

Why are there no costings for the national curriculum? Why has the Secretary of State given no figures? In reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) last Tuesday, the Secretary of State said that it would be later this year, and possibly up to 12 months, before there would be any signs of the cost and delivery of the national curriculum. What a state for the Government to be in, 12 months after they told the country that they had a national curriculum ready to be delivered to our children and schools. In the election, the Secretary of State sold a false prospectus, and has still given us no sign of how he will deliver the national curriculum.

We also know of certain local difficulties between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State over testing. The Secretary of State believes we should have the differentiated diagnostic approach set out in the Black committee report, whereas the Prime Minister believes in simple pass-fail tests. She is also concerned that the Black report will be costly to implement. I do not know how she comes to that conclusion, because the Secretary of State —in character—has never provided any figures of how much he expects assessment to cost.

If we are to be able to make a judgment between the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister, it might be useful—it might have happened in the resolution—if the Secretary of State could provide some figures showing the cost of assessment. We are keen to support the Secretary of State as, or his issue, we believe that he is right in his support for the Black report.

It would be helpful to us if the Secretary of State could tell us how much he will make available for assessment and testing in the manner advocated by the Black report. How can he find friends if he does not provide that information? I know that he is desperately seeking friends, but if he wants to win the argument and show the Conservative party and the electorate that he has the courage to stand up to the Prime Minister, he should give us the figures so

that we can base our arguments and support on some concrete evidence. All we can do at the moment is recognise that the Secretary of State's intuition, the learning of the Black report and all good education practice point in one direction and that the Prime Minister, yet again, points in another.

City technology colleges may also be covered by this catch-all resolution. Two years ago, the Secretary of State told the Conservative party conference that there would be a network of CTCs by the autumn of 1989. Each of the new model Baker schools—all 20 of them—were to be supported by private money. Private enterprise would put up a substantial part of the capital. That was the policy. It was to be a new partnership between British industry and the Secretary of State.

There are rumours that the Secretary of State has gone from firm to firm looking for sponsors, but all he has found is the door, because every industrialist has said that the state education system is preferable to the Baker model schools. With great desperation, he is now going around trying to tempt more and more industrialists, but with less and less success. It is yet another scheme from the man who brought the poll tax to the country. He has failed with CTCs but, in desperation, he is changing their nature. They were to be private enterprise schools. They were supported and cheered at the Conservative party conference because of it. They were a breakthrough. No longer are they private enterprise or even privatised schools. They are now nationalised schools. They are to be a new type of Secretary of State-controlled school, with the money coming from the Treasury.

In Nottingham, 80 per cent, of the capital cost is being met by the Treasury. That figure, on account of the money resolution, could increase to 100 per cent., because there is no control over how much will be spent or how it will be spent. The Government have failed with CTCs and are now looking for a way in which to introduce their nationalised schools.

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): Conservative Members appear to have been struck dumb in defence of the resolution. Although 80 per cent. of the capital cost was apparently to be provided for CTCs, in Nottingham, where a CTC is being imposed, the Government are prepared to put three times as much money into one CTC as into the capital programme for 556 schools in the whole of Nottinghamshire. That sum has proved not to be enough. Does my hon. Friend agree that 85 per cent. of the capital cost will be met by the Treasury? Does he expect that figure to go even higher because private interest in CTCs is even less than the Secretary of State projected?

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend makes a valid point. He was right to say that the Government are prepared to spend much more capital on the CTCs than on the whole of the Nottinghamshire education system. He was also right to say that the Government are desperately looking for sponsors to get the CTCs off the ground.

This is a catch-all money resolution which will allow the Government to spend as they wish, although they do not know how they will spend because they have failed to do their homework on the Bill. The House is owed an explanation of the money resolution from the Minister of State. She has treated the House with contempt by not offering one.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): She has chickened out.

Mr. Fatchett: Yes, and I shall come to that point in a moment.

It is without precedent to have three money resolutions for one Bill. It must also be without precedent for the Minister, on the third occasion, not to have the courtesy to explain why the Government have had to bring to the House another money resolution. There were times in Committee when the Minister's performance was an embarrassment to the Secretary of State, but it is taking that too far for the Secretary of State to silence her tonight. She owes us the courtesy of replying to the points raised——

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): My hon. Friend may recall that in Committee I said that the assisted places scheme was running wild. One school with 1,200 pupils has 459 with grants of at least £2,000 each. That school is receiving almost £1 million of public money for private education. With 126 more schools joining the gravy train, the figures involved are enormous. The Government have not fully understood the money that they will have to pay out on that and other schemes. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Fatchett: The Under-Secretary makes his usual sedentary comments, to which we became accustomed in Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) made a valid point about the assisted places scheme. It was only last Tuesday, during Question Time, that I said that £4,000 per year would be paid for some places on the scheme, yet just over £2,000 a year is considered to be overspending on our children who are educated in ILEA schools. That sort of double standard and hypocrisy is typical of this Government.

To conclude——

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Good.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman makes all sorts of noises. I am trying to explain to him what the Minister has singularly failed to explain. I should be sorely disappointed if I allowed the usually vacuous head of the hon. Gentleman to remain such on this occasion. I have attempted to provide him with some information, and I hope that the Minister will reinforce what I have said.

We shall divide the House on the money resolution because it gives the Government absolute power with no accountability and no responsibility, and because there has been no preparation for how the money will be spent.

11.39 pm

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): I shall be brief at this late hour, but I cannot begin my speech without first rejecting absolutely the remarks made by the Opposition Front-Bench spokesman when he tried to say that the Secretary of State has sold the country a false prospectus. That is most unfair and wrong and, what is more, it will be seen as a typical statement from the Opposition, when they do not understand how much the Bill will be welcomed by parents and by those who want to see the level of education raised in this country.

Secondly, it is worth pointing out that this money resolution, about which the Opposition are making so much fuss, has been introduced because they wanted it. It is to meet what they had requested.

[Sir Peter Emery]

My hon. Friend the Minister of State will see that the money resolution authorises the payment of sums

"for making grants to promote learning or research".

I am concerned that the amount of space research that has been taking place at an academic level has declined, is declining and must be reversed. As a great deal more research into space is carried out in Europe, will my hon. Friend ensure that her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, in dealing with money under this resolution, will look again at the areas in which research can be dealt with, in the hope that we might be able to reverse the loss of money into research that we have seen from the Department of Trade and Industry, and that we might be able to have further increases from the academic side? Will she request her right hon. Friend to consider that matter when the Bill has passed into an Act?

11.42 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) told us that the Bill was popular. I wish that he would allow his prejudice to be embellished by a few facts. All the evidence that is available to us, both in the latest opinion polls and in individual soundings of parents up and down the country, shows quite the contrary. Indeed, as the Secretary of State has gone on to explain his Bill in more detail, the weight of opinion against it has increased and strengthened. The latest opinion polls, which I read over the past weekend, showed that a mere 29 per cent. of the people of Britain would now be inclined to vote Conservative because of the Bill, rather than 45 per cent. who would be less inclined——

Sir Peter Emery: It is 46 per cent.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): It is 46 per cent.

Mr. Ashdown: —rather than the 46 per cent. who would be less inclined to vote for the Conservative party because of the Bill. Under those circumstances it is absolute nonsense for the hon. Member for Honiton to decide that that means that the public support the Bill.

Sir Peter Emery: Would the hon. Gentleman like me to reply?

Mr. Ashdown: If the hon. Gentleman wishes to on this point.

Sir Peter Emery: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way. The recent public opinion polls show complete support for the Government. There is no decline in support for the Government. The only decline seems to be for some Opposition party which seems to have the support of only 6 per cent. of the public at the moment.

Mr. Ashdown: Time will tell—*[Interruption.]*—just as it has told on the Government, as their proposals have become more broadly known. As there has been more discussion, public opinion in support of the so-called Education Reform Bill has got less and less.

If one opposes a Bill as strenously as we oppose this, there are always very good reasons for opposing the money resolution also. If one opposes the ends, one must oppose the means. So it is not surprising that we oppose the money resolution.

But there are stronger reasons than for the average case. This resolution is not only bad, but dangerous in two areas. First as the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said, it gives the Secretary of State a blank cheque. Having come twice to the House previously with amendments to this ill-thought-out, hastily constructed Bill, asking for approval to spend more money, on this third occasion the Government come, not with a specific proposal, but seeking an open-ended commitment that will allow them to raise more money for whatever changes they may have to make. Once again, the Secretary of State's powers have been increased in general and in particular.

The Government have not thought the Bill out. Certainly, those of us who have sat through the Committee proceedings from beginning to end realise that time and again, even the Secretary of State has not been aware of the detailed implications of individual provisions, let alone thought them through, so powerful is the rule of dogma over practicalities.

Secondly, we understand the special circumstances in which the Secretary of State finds himself. Not only must he change the Bill today and, as the resolution shows, in future, because he has not thought it through, but, under the resolution, he will be forced to make changes because of pressures from the Prime Minister and the Conservative Right wing. That has happened in the past and the request for this blank cheque is a clear sign that that is what the Secretary of State expects to happen in future.

I oppose the wording of the resolution because it gives that power to the Secretary of State and points up his inefficiency in sorting out the details of the Bill. It is a sign that he will have to give in to the lobbying forces which are already working on him.

There is an even more worrying reason to oppose the money resolution. I suspect that the Government want to introduce a resolution now because of new clause 47. Today I rang the Department and others to discover why that new clause was being introduced. It alters section 100 of the Education Act 1944. It allows the Secretary of State to grant

"persons other than local education authorities . . . grants in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred for the purposes of educational services provided by them."

It subtly but importantly changes that wording so that the Secretary of State may provide grants under new clause 47 on the basis of this money resolution, not just in respect of educational services which are provided by non-LEA authorities, but "for the purposes of" or "in connection with" that service. Those new words are added.

The reason is undoubtedly that with those grants the Government are seeking to fund not just the bodies providing education, but those providing research, monitoring or other services to education providers—in other words, the bodies which the Prime Minister has told us she would like to see established to advise opting-out schools; anybody whom the Secretary of State may wish to provide a public grant for; anybody to monitor the operation of those providing education services; or anybody to advise and provide research. New clause 47 provides the Secretary of State with the mechanism to fund the Government's friends to do what the Government want. For instance, under the provision, there is no reason why it should not be possible to grant-aid to Mr. Stewart Sexton's nursery school for technology.

I caution the Government. Conservative Members should seriously consider whether this is the way in which they would like to go. The provisions in new clause 47, which will be enabled by the money resolution, will allow

a future Government or the present Government to do right across the country what the GLC has done for London schools. The GLC has funded racial monitoring organisations. New clause 47 will allow a future Labour Government to do that not only for a confined area but right across Britain.

Once again, the Secretary of State is taking an extension of powers that he says that he will not use in such a way. But the House should be under no misunderstanding. Such powers will exist and will be used in that fashion in future. That cannot be a wise extension of the Secretary of State's powers. That cannot be a sensible way in which to legislate. That cannot be a reasonable way to provide money for the Government to distort and damage our future education system. Those two reasons are related to handing to the Secretary of State power that he should not have, that a Labour Secretary of State should not have, and, indeed, that a Democrat Secretary of State should not have. They are unconstitutional and undemocratic powers. For that reason, we shall vote against them.

11.51 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): It is interesting that the hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), having exhausted the possibility of obtaining money from the Manpower Services Commission for diving, now appears to be examining the powers of the public purse in space. At least it is part of the enterprise culture.

It was extraordinary that the Minister did not deign to give the House any explanation. That is typical of the elective and arrogant dictatorship that the Government have become. Ministers negligently relax on the Government Front Bench and hardly open their mouths to give the House an explanation of a resolution that, as has been pointed out on several occasions, gives sweeping powers to the Secretary of State. The House of Commons is owed an explanation. The House of Commons is supposed to be the body that conducts an examination of expenditure. It is supposed to be the body to which the Government are accountable. But the Under-Secretary of State can hardly stifle his yawns at the thought of some sort of democratic accountability. That is why we are here today.

The Opposition, having looked at it, know what the money resolution is about. That is the Opposition's duty. I expect that Conservative Members are a little alarmed that the Secretary of State is taking such wide powers to grant money for virtually any purpose that has even a vague connection with education.

For example, will it be possible for the Secretary of State to use the resolution to provide money for the urgent purpose of extending the Queensbury middle school in my constituency? There is not enough playground area. The local authority is supposed to provide 400 places in a school that is designed for 200 children. There are about four temporary classrooms.

Is that the sort of standard that the Education Secretary wants to maintain? Will he use some of the money that is authorised by the resolution for the relief of that sort of thing, or will he squander it on the foolish notions that he has encompassed in the Education Reform Bill? As he knows, the Bill will increase divisions in our society and, time after time, lead to a repetition of the Dewsbury situation, when money will be lavished on an opting-out scheme.

Will the right hon. Gentleman do something sensible, such as spend money on schools in Bradford? As he knows, unlike schools in most major cities, Bradford schools are in a predicament because there is expanding school roll. Many schools are hardly wind and watertight. The local education authority is hard-pressed to spend sufficient money to keep them wind and watertight.

In Wibsey, in my constituency, there is another school in which most of the playing areas are taken up by temporary classroom accommodation. When I, as the Member of Parliament, have raised this matter, I have been told by the local education authority that it does not have the money to build the new wing that is so much needed. Is this resolution to be used to provide money for such purposes, or is it to be squandered on this GERBIL?

Because the resolution is so widely cast, I would like to ask the Minister a few questions. She no doubt has a copy of the booklet produced by the Department of Employment and the MSC on the Settle-to-Carlisle corridor. The railway is an important asset that many of us want to see retained and developed, and the booklet covers recreational, environmental, heritage, arts and crafts purposes.

All those could be considered as educational purposes. This may sound strange, but the resolution is so widely cast that it could be argued that it could empower the Secretary of State to spend money on the Settle to Carlisle railway. I want to see money spent on the railway, but it should come from the Department of Transport or from the Department of Employment. The terms of the resolution are so wide that there is no impediment to the Secretary of State for Education spending money on this.

The House of Commons should express a severe criticism of a resolution that is cast in such wide terms. I understand that a number of amendments have been tabled in Committee, but this is not a Committee of the whole House. The Bill is being examined in a Committee upstairs, so the Minister has a duty to give an explanation to the whole House.

The members of the Committee may understand why the Secretary of State has been so ham-fisted. He is fighting his way through to being a hard Right-winger, when he had so many years as a Heathite, and he used to criticise the Prime Minister, saying that the Tory party was like a bird—it had a Right wing and a Left wing, but the intelligence was in the centre. For many years, people thought that he was not going to make it to a Tory Cabinet, but he is in there now, and he is having to confront his conscience in carrying out all these Right-wing, extremist measures. He may be a bit confused, and, as a result of his confusion in Committee, he has to keep on producing money resolutions. The GERBIL is being changed week after week because from the start it has been carried out in a ham-fisted way.

We are owed an explanation. The debate can go on for another 10 minutes, and in that time, the Minister should give us an explanation of what all this is about. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I frequently talk about money resolutions, so it is pleasing that the Secretary of State seems to be getting into a habit——

Mr. Dickens: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Cryer: No, I will not. I want to give the Minister time to give the explanation that should have been given at the beginning, and which, had it been given, would have short-circuited the debate.

11.58 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I am sorry that so many hon. Gentlemen seem to have read so many interesting books over the weekend, because they have managed to interpret in a strange way these four new clauses, which provide my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State with grant-making powers, to be amended where necessary to take account of changed circumstances and need.

There is no great sinister motive in this. The resolution is required to enable these four helpful clauses to carry funding with them. I hope that when I go on to explain the meaning of each of these clauses, hon. Gentlemen will want the funding to go with them. We would have regarded it as a great shame if the money resolution had not been moved. Such is the excitement that has been engendered by this proposal that I was nervous that I might not be able to rise to explain it.

I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery), whose remarks were the most sensible that we heard this evening, for what he said. The research grants, which total about £30 million of Government money, are used for the purposes of which he spoke. When I deal with the point about grant-making for educational purposes, he will understand that his suggestion would not lie happily in the new clauses.

Mr. Fatchett: It might be helpful if the Minister would explain to us, alongside the four new clauses, why the money resolution includes the words,

"expenditure incurred or to be incurred for educational purposes."

That goes way beyond the four new clauses.

Mrs. Rumbold: If I am allowed to speak, I shall try to explain exactly what it is about.

New clause 44 deals with grants for local education authorities to cover the costs of mandatory grants and awards. Local education authorities in England and Wales have a duty under section 1(1) of the Education Act 1962 to provide awards to students on designated courses of higher education. Awards are paid under regulations which prescribe the detailed arrangements, including eligibility for awards and award rates. Authorities have very limited discretion. That has always been recognised in the reimbursement of 90 per cent. of their expenditure on awards through a grant from central Government. In addition, 10 per cent. of expenditure met by authorities is recognised in the assessment of their needs for rate support grant.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) will be aware that a new system of local government finance will be introduced from 1990. The 90 per cent. grant on awards expenditure and allowance in the needs assessment for the residue will be equivalent to a 100 per cent. rate of grant on mandatory awards. We propose to simplify the arrangements by increasing the rate of grant on mandatory awards to 100 per cent., with a corresponding reduction in Exchequer support to authorities through general grant. The intention is that the change should come into effect on 1 April 1990, and I commend that to the House.

New clause 45 deals with the problem of grants for the education of travellers and displaced persons. It empowers my right hon. Friend to make regulations providing for grant to be paid to local education authorities to help to meet the costs of educating travellers and refugees. Considerable effort is needed on the part of a local education authority to provide education for traveller and refugee children and to secure their regular attendance at school. The costs cannot adequately be reflected in block grant arrangements, and at present they are met through a pooling system among local authorities.

However, pooling will not be appropriate in the new system of local government finance set out in the Local Government Finance Bill. It is necessary to provide a specific grant. Detailed arrangements for the grant will be prescribed in the regulations. The costs falling on the Exchequer under the new arrangements are expected to be substantially the same as now, and again I commend this to the House.

Mr. Ian Gow (Eastbourne): Before my hon. Friend leaves the subject of travellers, can she tell the House whether she has received from my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) a message of support for this money resolution?

Mrs. Rumbold: I am indebted to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), but, sadly, I must say that I have received no such message. No doubt it awaits us.

New clause 46 deals with aided or special agreement schools. It will enable my right hon. Friend to pay grant to the governors of an existing voluntary aided school, or to the promoters of a new one, in respect of their expenditure on preliminary planning and design work on building projects. Building work at aided schools is eligible for 85 per cent. grant from the Department, but the resources available to my right hon. Friend for such expenditure, as for capital work generally, are limited. It is often the case that the proposals put to him for such work are based on inadequate estimates of cost, and at present he has no power to pay grant in respect of design work.

The idea of this grant is to enable the governing bodies of such schools to have better and more informed decisions to put to my right hon. Friend. Therefore, he proposes to provide grants for design work so that those plans will not prove abortive in the future.

Clause 47 redefines and clarifies the powers of the Secretary of State to pay grants to persons and bodies other than local education authorities whose activities or objects are in the fields of education, learning or research. As the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) rightly said, the clause amends and adds to the existing provision in section 100(1)(b) of the Education Act 1944. That provision is restricted to the payment of grants for expenditure for the purposes of educational services provided by the body receiving grant, or on its behalf, or under its management.

There are two elements in the new clause. Subsections (1) and (2) enable the Secretary of State to pay grant to bodies whose main purpose is the promotion of learning or research. That applies to bodies such as the British Academy and the Royal Society, and clarifies the Secretary of State's power to pay grant towards their general running expenses as well as their more specifically educational activities.

Subsection (3) redefines the group of bodies other than local education authorities that can be grant-aided and the activities for which grants can be paid——

It being three quarters of an hour after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted Business).*

The House divided: Ayes 296, Noes 158.

Division No. 223] **[12.06 am**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Coombs, Simon *(Swindon)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Paice, James
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashton, Joe
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fearn, Ronald
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foster, Derek
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McGrady, Eddie
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernie *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Education Reform Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any sums required by the Secretary of State for making grants to promote learning or research or in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred for educational purposes.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)

MERCHANT SHIPPING (PASSENGER BOARDING CARDS)

That the draft Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) (Application to non-United Kingdom Ships) Regulations 1988 be approved.

MERCHANT SHIPPING (SUPERSTRUCTURES AND BULKHEADS)

That the draft Merchant Shipping (Closing of Openings in Enclosed Superstructures and in Bulkheads above the Bulkhead Deck) (Application to Non-United Kingdom Ships) Regulations 1988 be approved.

SOCIAL SECURITY (PAYMENTS)

That the draft Social Security (Payments on Account, Overpayments and Recovery) Regulations 1988 be approved.

SOCIAL SECURITY (PREMIUMS)

That the draft State Scheme Premiums (Acturial Tables) Amendment Regulations 1988 be approved.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

Question agreed to.

Acute Beds (Fife)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

12.17 am

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): It is an sign of how important my colleagues and I believe this issue to be that all Fife Members of Parliament are present, including my hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg), the Opposition Front Bench spokesman on health. We certainly outnumber the Scottish Conservative Members present.

The issue of acute bed provision in Fife, and the way in which the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland has behaved towards the people of Fife and the members of the Fife health board, illustrates the Government's scant regard for the opinions of people outside the House which differ from their own. It is a matter of common knowledge. I wish to quote from a letter to the Minister dated 4 March, from a large group practice in Dunfermline. Perhaps the Minister will give us some indication tonight of how he will reply to the letter, which stated:

"For twenty years and more, the integration of hospital medical services serving West Fife has been debated and in the meantime our patients have had to put up with a service, which, because of its lack of inter-specialty co-ordination, has left a lot to be desired."

The health board's current attempt—I use that word advisedly—to solve the problem goes back to at least 1983, when the board embarked upon a course of action that should have led to a relatively speedy decision by the Scottish Home and Health Department as to the best direction to be followed in Fife.

To obtain an approval in principle to its scheme or schemes the health board was obliged to conduct what has become known as an option appraisal exercise or study. It was the first such study to be undertaken in Scotland and was carried out by the health economics research unit of the university of Aberdeen. It was completed in May 1984.

I shall briefly enlighten the House on the concept of option appraisal. The first report of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs 1986-87 on hospital provision states in paragraph 24:

"The Board is required to undertake an Option Appraisal . . . examining the alternative ways of meeting the identified need in order to find the best solution."

The present so-called Minister for Health in Scotland was a member of that Committee and indeed was a signatory to that report. The Government reply to the Select Committee on 13 May, states in paragraph 11:

"The systematic approach of option appraisal should reduce, rather than increase, the time taken in the planning stage."

There can be no argument that, in the case of the Fife health board, the need was not clearly defined and that the option appraisal exercise was not completed in a highly professional manner.

I shall not detain the House by going over all the health options that were put before the health board at that time. Realistically, those options came down to two that have become known as option C and option D. In shorthand terms, option C was based on the "equal" distribution of facilities and option D was based on what one might loosely call the "balance" of population in Fife. Suffice to say that, in June 1984, the Fife health board decided to proceed with option C.

I shall not weary the House with all the details of the meetings that have taken place between colleagues, myself and the various Tory so-called Ministers of Health. The House should be aware that the issue that we are discussing in the early hours of Tuesday morning was debated on 30 October 1986. In a letter to colleagues and myself on 3 December 1986, Lord Glenarthur, then Minister of State, Scottish Office, with responsibility for health, said:

"I can confirm that it now very much up to the Board to decide whether they wish to proceed with Option C or Option D. They are not obliged to follow any recommendation made by the Buildings Division, and I assure you that neither I nor the Scottish Home and Health Department are seeking to influence the Board one way or other." Given that the board thought that the Minister was a man of his word it is not surprising that it confirmed its decision for option C in February 1987 and again in October 1987. In view of what has transpired since the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) became Minister one would have thought that he has been faced with a politically hostile Fife health board.

I estimate that in 1979, out of 19 members of the Fife health board, 10 were Labour party members, or sympathetic to the aims of the Labour party. In 1988, only four of the 21 members can be considered to be either Labour party members or to have broad sympathy with the aims of the Labour party, despite the fact that there is not one Tory Member in the whole of Fife. That is really manipulating. I claim that the Minister and his predecessors tried to manipulate the membership of the Fife health board along their own political lines. So much for playing by the rules of the game. It is to the credit of the board members that they have maintained and sustained their views.

I now want to consider the crucial period during which the Minister has had the approval in principle scheme before him. I have been told that the Scottish Home and Health Department had placed the approval in principle on the Minister's desk in early December 1987 and that the Minister was to give his decision in January 1988.

The Minister wrote to Fife health board on 24 February 1988 stating:

"I have considered carefully the Board's submission and have decided Option D is preferable to Option C."

The House should know that at no time was the Fife health board or its officials aware that the Minister had misgivings. At no time was a hint given that the Fife health board's preferred option was to be cast aside.

When he was wearing his education hat this morning, the Minister had the temerity to quote from a teacher who wrote in the *Glasgow Herald*. I want to quote again from the group practice to which I have already referred and from which the Minister has received a letter. That letter puts the point to the Minister. In fact, if he would pay attention, he may understand. The letter is dated 4 March —*[Interruption.]* The Minister has not received the letter. Still, I will quote from it. It states:

"It seems to us that it would have saved a lot of time and money, if you"—

that refers to the Minister, not you, Mr. Deputy Speaker

"had simply considered the different options yourself without asking for the Health Board's recommendations, which you appear to have totally disregarded. The purpose of this letter is purely to record our disquiet and disgust at a decision which we believe is totally wrong. It would be naive of us to think that any opinions of ours would even be considered by a representative of a Government which has a reputation, growing by the minute, of paying no heed to local and informed ideas and carrying out its policies by diktat."

[Mr. Dick Douglas]

The Minister may snigger at that, but that is the view of politically active people. I have a copy of the letter and I am willing to give it to him. It is from the Netherton surgery in Dunfermline and is signed by everyone in the practice — Dr. Yellerly, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Orris, Dr. Alexander and Dr. White. To the best of my knowledge, they are not members of the Labour party. However, that is an expression of local opinion.

Regardless of the merits of the decision, the concern lies in the method of approach adopted by the Government. What is the effect of Government by diktat on the people of Fife? First there will be more delays and suffering. It will take another three or four months to prepare a new submission. Even if things go smoothly, phase 2 in Dunfermline will not be completed until at best 1994.

Secondly, I do not wish to pronounce judgment on Kirkcaldy, but given that little or nothing can be done there until Dunfermline phase 2 is completed, we shall be into the 21st century before anything is achieved. I am willing to give way to the Minister if he disagrees with that.

The Fife health board stated:

"In view of the delay, the Board will have to commit capital resources to maintaining the existing facilities in Kirkcaldy. Already it has been identified that major work will have to be carried out in upgrading operating theatres and replacing the boiler-plant. Attention is now being given to these matters. The re-location of existing beds throughout Fife in view of changing medical practice and technology is also an ongoing exercise."

The board is saying that Dunfermline phase 2 will take nearly six years — until 1994 — and the Minister is on record as saying that he will not consider approval in principle for Kirkcaldy until Dunfermline is completed. I am willing to listen to differences of view on this.

Thirdly, we are not even agreed on the number of beds we are talking about. The Fife health board says:

"In his letter of 23 February, the Minister used for the first time a total of 855 existing acute beds and this figure was reached by including the 62 acute mixed beds in Adamson Hospital, Cupar, and St. Andrew's Memorial Hospital. The Minister said that the additional 59 acute beds in Dunfermline when added to the existing 855 beds will bring the total number of beds in Fife very close to the planning target of 918. From the time the acute bed option appraisal was started in 1982 the number of existing acute beds in Fife was calculated as 793 by both the Board and the Department. This number is reached by adding up all the acute beds in D. & W.F., Milesmark, Victoria, Cameron, and Randolph Wemyss Hospitals. The number did not include the 62 acute mixed beds in Adamson Hospital, Cupar, and St. Andrew's Memorial Hospital."

Let us have some clarification of this, if possible. One of the Minister's opinions is that it would be difficult for a health board to anticipate carrying on two capital projects of this nature simultaneously. A few of my colleagues went the other week to Faslane and Coulport. Those two schemes amount to roughly £500 million. So when the Goverment want something done, it can be done. The necessary sources can be deployed. However, I warn my colleagues that, given the Minister's known views, if there is no change in the Government of Scotland there will be little hope of a solution to the problem of acute beds in Fife within the private sector. The Minister is looking for a delay that will force people in Fife to adopt the private sector option.

Having listened to the Minister today, first in his guise as a Minister with responsibility for education and then for health, I might be forgiven for using the term "Pooh Bah" to describe him. He is a Lord High Everything. He does not quantify his approach. He gave an interview to the Dunfermline press in which not a single financial figure was mentioned. Behind that lies penny-pinching by the Treasury and the Government. If the Government wanted to alleviate the suffering for lack of acute beds in Fife that has gone on for a long time, the money could be supplied.

Pooh Bah is a wrong description. My knowledge of Gilbert and Sullivan leads me to suggest—I apologise to those who are not so knowledgeable—that the Minister is really King Gama from "Princess Ida". *[Interruption.]* You will not laugh when you hear it, brother. Taking a little liberty with the lyric, he might be summed up thus:

He has an irritating chuckle,
He has a celebrated sneer,
He has a most annoying snigger,
He has a despicable leer.
To everybody's prejudice he knows a thing or two.
If you want your poll tax estimated in half a minute, then he can,
And although he feigns to make himself the economic man,
To everybody else he is such a disagreeable man.

That is the person we in Scotland have to suffer as the so-called Minister for Health and the so-called Minister of Education.

12.36 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) for raising this matter for debate—if not, perhaps, for the way in which he chose to do it. In the time that he has left me — having taken so much time to indulge in personal abuse—I shall try to answer some of the points that he has made.

The hon. Member seems somewhat aggrieved about what he sees as a decision to force the Fife health board to accept an option that it does not want. I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would be glad that I had made a decision. Indeed, when he came to see me, he urged me to take a decision quickly. We did. We have made a decision which will bring considerable improvements to hospital facilities in Dunfermline.

The problem of acute hospital bed provision in Fife has been discussed for almost a decade, as the hon. Gentleman said. It is high time that the debate ended and we got the hospitals built. That can only be of benefit to the people of Fife as a whole, and especially to the hon. Gentleman's constituents.

Throughout the period of discussion, Fife health board has attempted to meet the needs of all the people in Fife, but its task has not been helped by the polarisation of views between east and west Fife, and the heat generated by that debate. I am delighted to see the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) present. That debate has led some people to lose a sense of proportion about what is proposed. I was recently asked by the local paper why I was perpetuating a

"cottage-hospital level of acute-bed provision for Dunfermline".

I am not aware of any cottage hospital in Scotland with 572 beds, but that will be the size of the hospital that will be completed under option D. It will compare favourably with other district general hospitals now being planned and built elsewhere.

There has also been talk about downgrading Dunfermline, but option D brings a new expansion of acute beds. We should be quite clear: we are proposing the

replacement of the acute and maternity beds in three aging hospitals, with a net increase of 59 beds in brand-new facilities.

The hon. Member should not look a gift horse in the mouth. He has said that my decision will further delay the development of new acute beds in Fife. That need not be so. The board has accepted my decision and is making every effort to expedite a new approval in principle submission for the reduced scale of provision at Dunfermline. I would expect the work to be completed within three months, and it is possible that the hospital, being smaller, will be open sooner than under option C. Further delays will, however, occur if the wrangling, which the hon. Gentleman seems intent on continuing, about opinions and options in Fife, continues indefinitely.

The hon. Member asked why I chose option D. It may be helpful to recall the background to the option appraisal exercise carried out in 1983, which considered in detail the five strategic options. Option A involved closing most of the acute beds in Dunfermline, with a substantial increase in patients treated in Edinburgh. Because of the inconvenience that that would bring to patients, the board rejected that option. Option B involved upgrading the existing hospitals in Dunfermline, but the board concluded that they were unsuitable for upgrading. Option E concentrated on all acute beds in the east of Fife at Kirkcaldy. That was considered unacceptable because of the inconvenience for residents in west Fife.

Mr. Douglas: Oh, come on, we know all that.

Mr. Forsyth: The hon. Gentleman may know all that, but his constituents may not. He asked me to justify the decisions taken by the SCottish Office, and I am attempting to do so.

The real choice lay between options C and D. Both options involved building a new hospital at Dunfermline and an extension to he Victoria hospital, Kirkcaldy and only the size of the two resultant hospitals varied beween options C and D. Option C provided an equal distribution of beds in west and East Fife so that when complete, the two hospitals at Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy would be the same size. To achieve that, two specialties — urology and ophthalmology — would transfer from Kirkcaldy to Dunfermline. Option D proposed to limit the increase in beds at Dunfermline, and to have proportionately more beds at Kirkcaldy to reflect the balance of population between east and west Fife.

The choice was by no means clear-cut; indeed, the health board had great difficulty in reaching its choice of option C. A substantial proportion of board members favoured option D, as did the board's own officers, two local health councils, a community council and the North-East Fife district council.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: I will not give way to the hon. Gentleman after the way that he has behaved during the debate.

In deciding on option D, I took a view of what was best for patients throughout Fife, taking account of the location of population and the need for patients to travel. Costs and the demands on the Scottish hospital building programme were other factors that I had to take into account. I firmly believe that option D gives fairer access to health care for all of Fife's residents.

The hon. Gentleman suggested that my noble Friend had been engaged in some sort of breach of faith, and that the letter sent to him gave undertakings that have now been broken.

Mr. Douglas: I will stand many things in this House, but I will not allow the Minister to assert that I said something that I did not say. I said that Lord Glenarthur had said certain things in good faith, and I quoted him in good faith. I ask the Minister to withdraw his remarks.

Mr. Forsyth: No doubt *Hansard* will make it clear that the hon. Gentleman said that he thought that the undertaking given by my noble Friend in his letter had not been fulfilled by the Scottish Office. That is not correct. The board was told that the preferred choice of options was a matter for it, on the basis that the costs and benefits of the two options were broadly similar. It was never possible to give any assurance that the resultant submissions would necessarily be endorsed. That would be to offer the board a blank cheque.

When I had the submission before me, with the full details of both options, it was clear that there were advantages in both cost and patient care from option D. The choice was not so evenly balanced as was first thought, and I could not, in all conscience, go along with the board's preference when it did not give the best deal for the majority of Fife patients and, moreover, had higher costs. We are, after all, talking about a multi-million pound investment that will serve the people of Fife for many years to come. The Government have a proper and legitimate interest in ensuring that the right decision is made, and I reject any suggestion that there has been a breach of faith.

The hon. Gentleman has suggested that the motivation for our decision has been cost and not concern about patient care——

Mr. Douglas: The Minister has admitted that.

Mr. Forsyth: No, I have not admitted anything of the sort ——

Mr. Douglas: *Hansard* will show it.

Mr. Forsyth: I have not said anything of the sort. I have made it clear that a major factor in my decision was patient care. It seems to me beyond argument that the size of a hospital should match its catchment population, otherwise more people will have to travel further. That view is based on an analysis of the population spread in Fife carried out by the board's officers as part of the option appraisal. They concluded that a substantial proportion of the west Fife population is located to the east of Dunfermline in the Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly areas. For them, the distance and the public transport services to Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy are not dissimilar.

Mr. Gordon Brown (Dunfermline, East): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No.

A substantial proportion of the east Fife population is located to the north and east of Kirkcaldy — that is Glenrothes, Levenmouth, East Neuk and Cupar. For them, the distances to Dunfermline are much greater than to Kirkcaldy and the public transfer less convenient. Option D offers a better match between the size of the two hospitals and their catchment populations.

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No.

It is equally beyond argument that we must get the best value from scarce resources and, happily, in this case the option that offered the best deal for patients was also the best in cash terms. Option D is marginally cheaper in absolute terms, and also made more even, and therefore more manageable, demands on central capital. Equally important, it is less demanding in revenue in the early years, so giving the board opportunity to continue its work for the mentally handicapped and elderly.

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West has said that he is concerned that the requirement for Dunfermline to proceed first will cause long delays to the works at Kirkcaldy. That need not be so. The board has recognised, since before my time, that it makes sense to complete the building at Dunfermline before starting work at Kirkcaldy. That point has been made by the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) in a local newspaper——

Dr. Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy): No, for Kirkcaldy.

Mr. Forsyth: I apologise to the hon. Gentleman: I meant the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie).

The board has recognised since before my time that it makes sense to complete the building at Dunfermline before starting work at Kirkcaldy.

Mr. McLeish: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Forsyth: No, I have little time.

If the board proceeds——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock on Monday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at thirteen minutes to One o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 22 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

DEFENCE

Small Firms Initiative

1. **Mr. David Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with his Department's small firms initiative; and if he will make a statement.

8. **Sir Geoffrey Pattie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with his Department's small firms initiative; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Tim Sainsbury): The small firms initiative, which was launched by my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement in November 1986, has contributed to a 30 per cent. increase in the number of firms seeking registration on the defence contractors list, and a greater proportion of those applying are accepted for registration.

Mr. Evans: Is my hon. Friend aware that it was the Ministry of Defence which, in 1980, pioneered the arrangements under which small and medium-sized firms were invited by the Ministry of Defence to tender for services and that in the process it saved £14 million—40 per cent. of previous costs? Does my hon. Friend agree that, with 1,300 companies now applying to the Ministry of Defence through the initiative, we may look forward to further value for money and competitiveness and a higher standard of goods, as was intended in 1980?

Mr. Sainsbury: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. I am glad to say that nearly 2,000 small firms have approached the Ministry of Defence as a result of the initiative, and those firms make a valuable contribution to our procurement effort overall.

Sir Geoffrey Pattie: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the main problems facing small companies is the excessively long time that it takes them to get paid by the bigger companies involved in defence work? Will he consider using the considerable leverage that the Ministry of Defence has to insist that the smaller companies' terms of business are adhered to by the bigger companies, which, in turn, no doubt like their own terms of business to be honoured by the Ministry of Defence?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am very conscious of that point, and we have emphasised it in our defence contract guides. If my right hon. Friend has any particular examples of slow payment to bring to my attention, I shall be happy to follow them up.

Mr. Wilson: As part of his general concern for small firms and their dealings with the Ministry of Defence, will the Minister give some consideration to small firms which undertake subcontracting work in good faith and find themselves with no protection from the Ministry of Defence, despite the fact that it is the end beneficiary of the enterprise? For example, he may be aware that several small firms in Scotland have experienced extreme financial difficulty as a result of not being paid for the work that they undertook on the Gairlochead bypass project.

Mr. Sainsbury: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that small firms have for a long time played a major part in the defence procurement effort as subcontractors of main contractors. In those circumstances, the contractural relationships are the responsibility, not of the Ministry of Defence, but of the main contractor and his subcontractors. As I said earlier, we emphasise to main contractors the importance that we attach to their passing on proper payments to their subcontractors. I repeat that I shall be happy to investigate specific examples which are brought to my attention.

Mr. Latham: Is the initiative, and the small firms involved in it, sufficiently robust to avoid the gross waste of up to £2 billion of public money on defence procurement every year, as revealed in the internal Ministry of Defence report "Learning from Experience"?

Mr. Sainsbury: I shall not be drawn by my hon. Friend on the specific figure that he mentions. However, I should like to emphasise again that we believe that if we have the widest possible number of contractors contributing to our competitive procurement methods that will help us to obtain value for money, and small firms have a valuable role to play in that process.

Nuclear Disarmament

2. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for nuclear disarmament he will take to the NATO nuclear planning group meeting at Kolding in April.

3. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he next expects to attend the nuclear planning group of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Ian Stewart): My right hon. Friend, who is on an official visit to the far east, has asked me to reply.

The next meeting of NATO's nuclear planning group will take place on 27-28 April at Kolding in Denmark. My right hon. Friend supports NATO's arms control priorities, which include 50 per cent. cuts in the strategic nuclear weapons of the United States and Soviet Union.

Mr. Mullin: Will the Minister confirm what the Prime Minister told the House on 4 March, that the meeting at Kolding will have on its agenda proposals for new deployments to compensate for the withdrawals being made under the INF agreement? Did not the Prime Minister let the cat out of the bag, and is not one of the aims to sabotage or undermine the great gains made by the INF treaty?

Mr. Stewart: It has long been recognised in NATO that force adjustments are needed from time to time in the light of changing circumstances, including, of course, questions such as the INF agreement, and that matter rests. There is no sign of remission by the Warsaw pact in the modernisation of its forces and it is entirely right that NATO should consider what it needs to do about updating its nuclear and conventional capabilities and making sure that its forces are deployed in the most effective way for the security of the West. Conservative Members believe that that is the top priority.

Mr. Duffy: How does the Minister suppose the Secretary of State will react when he is reminded by his German colleague that all parties in the Bundestag are agreed that the disarmament process should continue in respect of nuclear weapons with a range of less than 500 km? Moreover, how will he react when he is reminded by the rest of his European colleagues on the NPG that they are disinclined to link any approval of compliance with the INF with any correction of the conventional imbalance? Does the Minister see how far his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has been isolated by the Prime Minister? Is he prepared to conjecture how far the Secretary of State will react?

Mr. Stewart: The impression that I gained when I visited NATO and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe, last week was that the other members of NATO were coming to accept the wisdom of my right hon. Friend's position. Indeed, the priorities established in NATO—arms control is indeed a question of priorities—are clear. We want a 50 per cent. agreement for the reduction of strategic weapons, we want a worldwide ban on chemical weapons, and we need to tackle conventional forces. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State knows perfectly well that in Germany there is some political anxiety about the process, but all Heads of State, including Chancellor Kohl of Germany, accepted the declaration at the end of the NATO summit meeting that short-range nuclear forces should be tackled only in conjunction with conventional forces and a chemical ban, not vice versa.

Mr. Mates: Is not the pernicious and false propaganda being peddled by the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) and some of his hon. Friends precisely what we have to counteract with the truth? Is it not true that we have to modernise our weapons, and that if we had not modernised our intermediate nuclear forces we would not have the first agreement to reduce and eliminate one set of nuclear weapons? That is what our opponents understand. We must continue to modernise, and it must never be confused with substitution. There is no question that we are substituting any INF weapons that have been removed. There is every need for us to modernise and keep up to date with the rest so that we can negotiate more real reductions from strength.

Mr. Stewart: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The question of modernisation hardly seems to be a matter capable of dispute because, shortly after the INF agreement, the Soviet Defence Minister said that the Soviet Union would exert all efforts to make the Warsaw pact even more powerful. Non-modernisation by NATO in the face of the relentless build up by the Warsaw pact would be unilateral disarmament by another name. It would be gradual unilateral disarmament I agree, but, none the less, that is what it would be. Perhaps that is why it appeals so much to Opposition Members.

Mr. Cartwright: Does the Minister accept that there is no case for trying to replace the INF systems that have been so painfully negotiated away, but that there is a powerful argument for sticking to the 1983 Montebello decision, which argued that NATO's nuclear stockpile should be smaller but effective, survivable and more sophisticated? Is it not a matter of prudent common sense in the current situation?

Mr. Stewart: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is right, that it is not only prudent but necessary to follow through the Montebello decisions in the way that he suggests. The reduction of nuclear weapons was an important part of the Montebello decision, and I welcome the fact that the INF agreement removes a whole class of nuclear weapons. It is our intention that it should lead to a reduction of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Sir Antony Buck: Will my hon. Friend confirm that if the unilateralist policies advocated by the Opposition had been pursued, the INF agreement would probably not have come about? When he deals with the NATO nuclear planning group, will he be kind enough to put forward some of the points advanced by the French, who are still members of NATO, although, regrettably, not part of its integrated structure?

Mr. Stewart: Like my hon. and learned Friend, I regret that the French are not part of NATO's integrated military structure, but they are showing welcome signs of taking a closer interest in the general affairs of NATO, which is greatly to be welcomed.

As for the INF agreement, if the Opposition had had their way and there had been no deployment of cruise missiles, there could never have been an INF agreement, because there would have been nothing to have an agreement about.

Mr. O'Neill: When the nuclear planning group meets, will the remit of the Minister's right hon. Friend be secure compensation, his objective at Monterey, or modernisation, which was the Prime Minister's objective at Brussels? Or, in respect of short-range weapons, will it merely be the deferment of any decision until the 1990s, as suggested by Chancellor Kohl after the last summit?

Mr. Stewart: Many matters are under consideration by NATO. This is a continuous process. The modernisation of forces that we have been discussing is one of those matters, but, equally, adjustments and deployment of forces are always on the agenda—and so they should be. I cannot understand why some Opposition Members think that there is something wrong or immoral about ensuring that, as there are no limits on the deployment of forces by the other side, our forces should be deployed in the most effective way for the security of the West. That is what NATO will be considering.

Anti-submarine Capability

4. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the Navy's operations in the Gulf have on its anti-submarine capability in the north Atlantic.

15. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the Royal Navy's operations in the Gulf have on its anti-submarine capability in the north Atlantic.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Royal Navy maintains an active programme of training in all aspects of anti-submarine warfare in addition to carrying out its current tasks.

Mr. Patchett: Does the Minister agree that the Gulf operation has stretched the Royal Navy elsewhere? Would it not be better, perhaps, to order more ships for the genuine protection of our country's interests than to spend billions of pounds on Trident?

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Gentleman is correct that the activities in the Gulf entail a great deal of effort and involvement by ships of the Royal Navy, but we must always consider the balance of tasks and training, which varies over time.

In a fleet of about 150 ships we have about 50 destroyers and frigates. Today there are 49, but we expect by the end of the week to have 50, when HMS Sheffield is accepted into service in Portsmouth.

Mr. Flynn: The whole House will have been saddened by the unprecedented loss of life that has taken place in the Gulf in the last 24 hours. It is a reminder to us all of the courage of our seamen who are engaged there, but the fact remains that if our most capable ships are employed there, performing a role that is at best secondary for this country—defending the interests of foreign business men using our country as a flag of convenience—we are neglecting our primary role of patrolling the north Atlantic and carrying out an anti-submarine function there. Should we not seek an expansion of our fleet, because the abnormal military position is rapidly becoming the norm?

Mr. Stewart: I have explained to the House that we have a substantial destroyer and frigate fleet. Of course, in the Gulf it is necessary to concentrate more on air defence of ships as opposed to the anti-submarine capability. We must balance the need for training and exercises for a potential wartime role—which, I am sure, is not imminent—against immediate operational needs. The Navy, and, indeed, all the armed forces, must do that.

I thank the hon. Gentleman for his comments on the courage of our service men in the Gulf. As I know from my visit there, it is a dangerous, difficult and uncomfortable place in which to work, and they deserve the support of the whole House.

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend: Does my hon. Friend agree with the views expressed in Washington that, post-INF, the Soviets may redeploy their missile submarines to face European targets, or does he believe that the Soviets probably have more than enough submarines with a missile capability, including the giant Typhoon class, in these waters already?

Mr. Stewart: I do not want to speculate on the strength of the Soviet submarine fleet as currently deployed, but it is true that the Soviets have made substantial strides in updating their submarine capability by increasing the numbers, size and range of their submarines, so my hon. Friend's anxieties are not misplaced.

Mr. Sayeed: As the Soviet Union is launching a new submarine every 37 days, which reflects an increase in the building of submarines, may I ask whether we are matching this with an increase in our frigates or anti-submarine forces?

Mr. Stewart: As my hon. Friend will recognise, one factor in the Government's policy for the frigates and destroyers in our fleet is to enhance their anti-submarine and anti-air missile capabilities. Although the number of ships in the fleet has remained at about 50 for some time, there has been a marked uprating in the capability of those ships with the latest type 22 and type 23 ships, which are much more capable than their predecessors.

Mr. Douglas: Will the Minister tell the House truthfully how many of those so-called 50 destroyers and frigates in the fleet are operational?

Mr. Stewart: Taking the figure of 49, which is today's number rather than Friday's, there are six currently in refit, and the remaining 43 are therefore available either immediately or within a short period.

Sir Ian Lloyd: As well over 100 Western seamen have now lost their lives in the Gulf and several million tonnes of Western shipping has been destroyed or damaged at the cost of billions of dollars, is my hon. Friend satisfied with the cohesion and effectiveness of the total Western response in the Gulf? Is this not piracy in the 20th century, and is there not only one cure for piracy?

Mr. Stewart: To answer the essence of my hon. Friend's question, I am satisfied that the Western presence has been coherent. I am sure that the presence of navies from the European members of NATO alongside those from the United States has led, after an initial period of exceptional activity, to greater stability at sea in that area. At the moment the land war is raging furiously, but I have no doubt that the co-operation between Western navies and their very presence in the area has contributed to that stability. Not only the British Navy but the other navies have played an important role in an area which is vital for the economy and stability of the whole world.

Mine-laying Vessels

6. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mine-laying vessels are currently in service with the Royal Navy.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Royal Navy has a large number of vessels which are currently capable of laying mines.

Mr. Graham: I understand that there is only one purpose-built mine layer in the British fleet. What is its age and when will it be replaced? It is incredible that we should enter into negotiations with our NATO partners on developing advanced mines when we do not even have any ships, except for that one, to lay them.

Mr. Stewart: On the hon. Gentleman's last point, advanced mines are a long-term project. On the immediate position, I believe that he must be referring to the mine-layer HMS Abdiel, which is over 20 years old. We have not felt it necessary to have a specialist replacement ship for mine laying, because mines can be laid by a wide variety of vessels. They can be laid by submarines, offshore patrol vessels, Royal Maritime auxiliary vessels, Royal Fleet auxiliaries and aircraft. The task can be done by any suitably modified vessel at short notice. We do not regard it as cost-effective to have a specialist ship for that replacement.

Mr. Robert Banks: Can my hon. Friend say whether NATO has an agreed plan and strategy for the laying of mines and whether he has sufficient powers for the commandeering of merchant ships and other vessels and aircraft for that purpose, if the need were to arise?

Mr. Stewart: I can assure my hon. Friend that NATO has confidential plans for these matters and that arrangements for taking out ships from trade are also available. I hope that such contingency plans will never have to be put into practice.

Defence Contractors

7. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many companies are now on the register of defence contractors; and what steps he is taking to increase this number.

Mr. Sainsbury: In order to encourage the widest possible participation in Ministry of Defence work, we have introduced both the MOD contracts bulletin and the booklet "Selling to the MOD". Also, we attend "meet the buyer" exhibitions and we offer advice through the small firms division. Currently, there are about 9,000 companies on the defence contractors' list.

Mr. Burns: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that reply. Does he agree that the increase in the number of companies on the register of defence contractors is assisting the Government in obtaining better value for money in fulfilling defence contracts?

Mr. Sainsbury: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. It was gratifying that, in 1987, 3,780 applications for inclusion in the list were received, which represented an increase of 30 per cent. over the previous year. Over 45 per cent. more companies were accepted for inclusion in the list last year than in the previous year. This is making a major contribution to the Department's obtaining the best possible value for money in competitive procurement.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: In the case of Marconi, a company on that list, may I have an assurance that if, and when, fraud is found in respect of its contracts with the Ministry of Defence, no deal will be done behind closed doors between Ministry of Defence officials and the company? Will the Minister confirm that those people found to be responsible for fraud will be prosecuted in the British courts?

Mr. Sainsbury: I am sure that the House is by now well aware of the hon. Gentleman's interest in this matter. I hope that he is also now well aware that the investigation currently under way is under the direction of the Director of Public Prosecutions and, therefore, is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

Mr. Michael Marshall: Is my hon. Friend aware of the trend in the United States for increasing numbers of contracts to be placed in the service sector, whether in information technology, computers or even procurement, on behalf of the defence authority? Does he believe that there is an opportunity in this country to move in the same way and to put out to contract much of the task that is frequently tackled in-house?

Mr. Sainsbury: I very much agree with what my hon. Friend has said. Of course, contracts for services, like contracts for the supply of goods, can be subject to competition, and, wherever possible, we subject them to competition. In addition, where services provided in defence establishments can be provided more satisfactorily and economically by the private sector, we are prepared to put them out to contract, and we have an ongoing and successful programme in that respect.

Mr. Rogers: Does the Minister accept that, given the increasing numbers of contractors, there is an urgent need for the proper supervision of contracts? The Minister talked down my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), although he gave the House proof of the absolute scandal of defence contractors ripping off the British taxpayer. It is about time that the Minister got to grips with these defence contractors and stopped this fraud.

Mr. Sainsbury: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I take as serious a view of any potential fraud as does the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). We are anxious to ensure that no such fraud occurs. I hope he will agree that competitive contracting is one of the best ways of ensuring that the Ministry obtains value for money. As I have already pointed out, the matter to which the hon. Member for Workington referred is being investigated, and that investigation is now under the direction of the Director of Public Prosecutions. It will be up to him and my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General to decide what prosecutions, if any, should result.

Mr. Hind: Does my hon. Friend agree that many of the contracts where problems have arisen have been cost-plus contracts, many of which were inherited from the previous Labour Government, and that the changes in policy that have been brought about by the movement away from cost-plus contracts to tenders have cut out a great deal of the potential for fraud and brought about much better value for money?

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend is right. Unfortunately, we inherited from the previous Government a large proportion of contracts which had been placed on a cost-plus basis and they were an invitation for potential overcharging. Indeed, since many Ministry of Defence contracts are of long duration they unfortunately take some considerable time to work through the system. I am glad to say that we have reduced the proportion of cost-plus contracts to a much lower proportion of the total than in 1979, and we seek to bring it down even further. That, combined with applying the shortest possible contract conditions, is making it much less likely that there will be a repetition of some of the unfortunate cases of the past.

North-west England (Defence Resources)

9. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to relocate defence resources to the north-west of England.

Mr. Sainsbury: We are always prepared to consider relocating defence work to areas of high unemployment when it is justifiable on both operational and economic grounds. Indeed, I have recently approved a reorganisation of the Defence Industrial Pay Organisation, which will result in the transfer of about 60 jobs from Portsmouth to Cheadle Hulme.

Mr. Fearn: Does the Minister agree that defence work should be relocated to the north-west, thus releasing high

value land in the south-east, which would give the Minister's coffers a considerable budget? Is there a relocation policy in the Ministry of Defence?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure the hon. Gentleman that we are well aware of the high land values in parts of London and the south-east. I hope he is well aware that many of the operational parts of the Ministry of Defence are located in the south-east because of long operational requirements. We are prepared to look at relocation to areas of high unemployment, but only where such relocation would be operationally effective and economically worth while.

Mr. Jack: Does my hon. Friend agree that the best service that he could do for the north-west would be to encourage successful companies there, such as British Aerospace, Lucas Aerospace, Rolls-Royce and Royal Ordnance, to compete for available defence contracts?

Mr. Sainsbury: My hon. Friend is right. The Ministry of Defence creates employment, not only by direct employment in its own establishments, but through the contracts that it places with British industry. I am conscious of the considerable contribution made to the Ministry of Defence by substantial contractors, such as those mentioned by my hon. Friend, who have long-established traditions of being major suppliers to the Ministry of Defence and employ a large number of people, including skilled people, in the north-west.

Hydrogen Bombs

10. **Ms. Primarolo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to replace any of the Royal Air Force's hydrogen bombs with air-launched cruise missiles.

11. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to replace any of the Royal Air Force's hydrogen bombs with air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No decisions on a replacement for the United Kingdom's free-fall nuclear bombs have yet been taken.

Ms. Primarolo: Are air-launched cruise missiles being considered by the Government as an option to replace the hydrogen bomb carried by the Tornado aircraft in the Royal Air Force? Is it not true that that decision is a consequence of the Montebello agreement and the decisions on modernisation? Is it therefore true that the article in *The Guardian* on 29 February is correct in saying that a decision has been taken to develop a new cruise missile—a new nuclear weapon—without Parliament being told?

Mr. Stewart: The hon. Lady is wrong. No decisions have been made, but there are many options. The requirements of the United Kingdom and of other countries need to be considered, and it will be some time before a decision is made.

Ms. Ruddock: Further to that answer, will the Minister give the House an assurance that no decision will be made to develop a nuclear warhead at AWE Aldermaston for an air-launched cruise missile without a debate in the House? Is it not true that such a weapon, if carried on a plane, would take it within the range of the very INF missiles that have just been negotiated away? As the hon. Gentleman is so enthusiastic about INF, surely the better thing to do would be to negotiate a ban on all air-launched missiles, instead of unilateral escalation.

Mr. Stewart: I am glad that the hon. Lady shares my enthusiasm for the INF agreement, especially as she and her hon. Friends played such a part in trying to prevent its ever coming about.

As I have said, any decisions about replacement for the United Kingdom's nuclear bombs are some way off. I have no doubt that the House will be fully informed and will have many occasions on which to debate and consider the matter when the decision is made.

Mr. Cormack: If my hon. Friend and his colleagues want to update weapons without telling anyone, will they consult the Chevaline brigade?

Mr. Stewart: The example of which my hon. Friend has reminded the House is just another aspect of the way in which the Labour party, even when in power, is entirely dishonourable about these matters.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Tornado aircraft is a very expensive and sophisticated platform for the carrying of weapons systems, and that the pilot is trained at great expense? Is it not therefore essential that both pilot and aircraft are given the equipment that will meet the challenges and demands of the sophisticated Soviet equipment that they will have to face, and that a stand-off capability will have to be produced in the very near future?

Mr. Stewart: I am sure my hon. Friend is right in saying that a stand-off capability of that kind is likely to be very important for the Royal Air Force and our allies for a number of years ahead. However, I join him in saying that the pilots of the Tornados are the most professional in the world. The RAF pilots of Tornados and other aircraft have no match, not only in NATO, but anywhere else. We rely on them for the strength and the degree of security that we possess, and we are grateful for that.

Mr. O'Neill: Is the Minister aware that his predecessor, the right hon. Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley), repeatedly attacked any concept of the SLCMs and air-launched cruise missiles, on the basis of the difficulty of verifying such weapons and the problems that would arise for the deal beyond the next deal? Is that still the Government's view, and are they still prepared to reject as an option any possibility of having air-launched cruise missiles as part of Britain's nuclear arsenal?

Mr. Stewart: We think that we will need what is technically known as a TASM—a tactical air-to-surface missile—as a replacement for the free-fall bomb. I have no recollection of my right hon. Friend the Member for Tonbridge and Malling (Mr. Stanley) ever having spoken against that, because it has been the Government's policy for some considerable time to support that proposal, alongside our NATO colleagues.

Mr. Wilkinson: May I emphasise as strongly as I can to my hon. Friend the importance of giving the Royal Air Force a stand-off capability as early as possible? The air defences of the Warsaw pact are improving greatly, and without such a capability British air crews would be lost unnecessarily were deterrence to fail.

Mr. Stewart: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. Developments of this kind must take account of the threat of the Warsaw pact capability. My hon. Friend is right to state that the uprating of the Warsaw pact air defence

capability means that we must bring our own forces up to date and not adopt the policy of non-modernisation, which appeals so much to the Labour party.

Multiple-launch Rocket System

12. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans for the introduction into service of the multiple-launch rocket system.

Mr. Sainsbury: As my predecessor stated in answer to the hon. Gentleman on 5 June 1986, the contract for the European production of the multiple launch rocket system phase I was placed by Germany on behalf of the European partners in May 1986. The United Kingdom plans to introduce MLRS into service around the end of this decade.

Mr. Pike: Will MLRS be nuclear capable? Will the Minister assure the House today that neither nuclear nor chemical warheads will be fitted to MLRS? Does he accept that the system will cause verification problems in respect of both conventional and nuclear weapons, as it can use various warheads?

Mr. Sainsbury: I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Warsaw pact has had similar systems that are chemically capable since the 1940s. The rockets planned for the MLRS are of several types of warhead. These include bomblets in phase 1, mines in phase 2, and guided sub-munitions for attack on armoured vehicles in phase 3.

Armed Forces (Recruits)

13. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many recruits joined the armed forces in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available; what was the number of recruits actually needed for this period; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman): In the 12 months ended 31 January 1988 the United Kingdom regular forces recruited 33,805 men and women. In 1986-87 recruitment reached 99 per cent. of the targets for officers and other ranks.

Dr. Clark: Will my hon. Friend confirm that it is the sheer professionalism of our armed forces that makes the services so attractive to recruits? Does he agree that it is this, coupled with the good and realistic rates of pay since 1979, that has led to the satisfactory figures that he has been able to report this afternoon?

Mr. Freeman: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. The Government's pay policy, which has involved pay comparability for the armed forces, has been successful in recruitment. The record is excellent and is in stark contrast to the policy pursued by the Labour party.

Mr. Sean Hughes: Should not the figure of 33,000 recruits be placed in the context of almost 37,000 who left the armed services over the same period?

Mr. Freeman: The reasons why officers and men leave the armed services vary greatly between those wishing to leave before the end of their term of engagement and those who reach the end of their engagement. Premature voluntary retirement rates — PVR rates — for all three services have been broadly stable for the last 18 months. They are still too high, but they are very much lower than the level reached under the previous Labour Government.

European Fighter Aircraft

14. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he is able to give a firm date when he expects production of the European fighter aircraft to commence in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Sainsbury: Production of the European fighter aircraft is expected to commence in all four countries in the early 1990s, subject to international agreement to the launch of the intervening phases.

Sir John Farr: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that reply, but will he assure the House that he is aware of the fact that an American team is in this country trying to sell Britain an updated version of one of its fighter aircraft? Can he assure the House that he recognises how important it is to British industry that the European fighter aircraft goes ahead?

Mr. Sainsbury: I assure my hon. Friend that I am well aware of the importance of the European fighter aircraft to British industry. It is only to be expected that in the run-up to such a major procurement decision there will be intense lobbying from rival aerospace camps. I am confident that the case for the European fighter aircraft will prove sufficiently robust to withstand comparison with all the alternative options, including the updated F18.

Mr. Cryer: Should we not be concentrating resources on civilian aircraft production instead of embarking on another massive expenditure such as the Tornado, the biggest peacetime expenditure in the history of this country? Why do we need to spend all this money on these massively sophisticated aircraft, which seem to keep falling out of the sky, at enormous cost as well? Would it not be better to get a licence for single-seater Cessna production from the United States, as this seems to be the type of aircraft that can get to Red Square, if that is what the hon. Gentleman wants.

Mr. Sainsbury: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will, like most hon. Members, attach high importance to the protection of United Kingdom air space. I can assure him that the European fighter aircraft will be a very effective and substantial contribution to that protection.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, and I also attended the launch of the Tidy Britain Group's litter initiative. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Prime Minister of Kuwait. This evening I hope to have an audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Mr. Flannery: Has the Prime Minister read the report in *The Daily Telegraph* today which states that St. Thomas hospital, just across the river, is to close another 200 beds, and that that is in addition to the 137 beds closed less than five months ago? How much longer is this appalling attack on the Health Service to go on? Will the Prime Minister give me a straight answer and not read out that long list of statistics.

The Prime Minister: I notice that the hon. Gentleman does not want the long list of statistics which prove how very much more is being spent on the Health Service and how very many more nurses and doctors there are now. Like other hospitals, St. Thomas has to live within a budget. Many hospitals live within a budget, but some do not. We are entitled to ask why some do and others do not. With regard to provision in Greater London as a whole, in spite of the increased allocations of money to other regions in preference to London, London has received an increase in real terms.

Q2. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Stewart: Will my right hon. Friend find time in her busy programme today to commend the immense efforts by the AEU—the Amalgamated Engineering Union—to try to gain agreement to attract Ford to Dundee? Does she agree that the vote taken earlier today in the STUC was, sadly, too little, too divided and too late? Will she make it absolutely clear that ordinary trade unionists in Scotland are appalled by what has happened, in marked contrast to the deathly silence and total inactivity by the best-known TGWU-sponsored Member of Parliament in the House?

The Prime Minister: I share the view of my hon. Friend and agree with what he said about the great efforts of the engineering union to come into the 20th century and to take the requisite action, which would have persuaded Ford to give these much-needed jobs to Dundee. I condemn, with my hon. Friend, the attitudes of other unions which are more interested in their own sectional interests and in demarcation than in winning the jobs for Dundee, and one condemns the attitude of the Labour party which, over five months, did little to bring the other unions into the 20th century.

Mr. McAllion: The Prime Minister knows that only yesterday an all-party delegation from Dundee successfully lobbied the TUC to support a deal which might yet bring Ford to Dundee. Dundee still has a fighting chance, particularly as Mr. John Emmert, the spokesman for Ford, has said that no decision has yet been taken on the location of the plant. In those circumstances, may I call upon the Prime Minister, and those on the Benches behind her, to stop trying to score petty party political points—*[Interruption]*—and to stop playing politics with Dundee's jobs?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman should address his remarks to the unions, which, after five months, have been unable to come to a reasonable agreement, and even now are split. I commend to the hon. Gentleman the words of Gavin Laird, set out in *The Sunday Times*:

"After five months"
the patience of Ford
"has run out. Dundee has lost 1,000 jobs but the trade union movement has lost much, much more. Once again, we"
—the trade unions—
"appear to be a destructive force in British society, ignorant, disunited and living in the past."

Sir John Biggs-Davison: Will my right hon. Friend, or her right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, draw the attention of the broadcasting authorities to section 11 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974, under which it is an offence to withhold information of material assistance in bringing terrorists to justice—or are they above the law?

The Prime Minister: I believe that everyone, the media included, has a bounden duty to do everything that he can to see that those who perpetrated the terrible crimes that we saw on television and that disgusted the whole world are brought to justice. Either one is on the side of justice in these matters, or one is on the side of terrorism.

Q3. **Mrs. Rosie Barnes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mrs. Barnes: Does the Prime Minister agree that the most crucial change that is needed in the National Health Service is to acknowledge patients' rights to treatment within a given period of time? If that means that they may have to go to an alternative health authority, they should be entitled to do so and their own health authority should have to pay for the necessary treatment.

The Prime Minister: I agree with the kind of formula that the hon. Lady enunciated in her question. We must make it easier for patients to go from one health authority to another. At the moment the requisite money is a long time in coming and the amount that has to be calculated is not altogether clear. We are trying to move in the direction where the money moves with the patient to the hospital that carries out the operation. The hon. Lady will know that we have just allocated an extra £30 million, which it is hoped will enable about 100,000 additional operations to be carried out, thereby reducing the waiting lists.

Mr. Beaumont-Dark: Does my right hon. Friend agree that over the weekend a crime took place that was almost unique in its evil and wickedness? Is it not a fact that we have the right to control the number of demonstrators who go to funerals? These funerals have become, not a day of mourning, but a day of death. Is it not right that we should limit the number of people who go to a funeral to 50 without the Secretary of State's specific permission? The killing of people is no part of mourning or of death.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, together with the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, will consider these matters, but there is another factor. There was a terrible crime, there were many, many witnesses, and expressions of revulsion and condemnation are not enough. The acid test is whether all those who expressed them—all constitutional parties and those members of the Church who have expressed revulsion—will go to the Republican areas in Northern Ireland and urge those who know who perpetrated these crimes, or who know where to find them, to co-operate with the police in every single matter. Mere expressions of sympathy and condemnation are not enough. It is what people do which tells us whether they are really determined to root out terrorism.

Mr. Kinnock *rose*—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Kinnock.

Mr. Kinnock: May I first welcome the approach that the Secretary of State and the Chief Constable are taking, and the reappraisal which the Government are prepared to make of the approach that they are taking in Northern Ireland? I am sure that the right hon. Lady will carry full support for that aspect of her policy.

In the public debate taking place in the Government, does the Prime Minister take Lord Young's view that we long ago found that the pound seems to rise and fall to its own level, or does she agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that greater exchange rate stability has an explicit role?

The Prime Minister: I take the view that the economy is being superlatively handled by the entire Government, that it has led to growth far greater than that in any other European country without the emergence of inflation, and I am not prepared to take lectures from anyone who was in a Government who saw devaluation, inflation and economic decline.

Mr. Kinnock: Is it not the case that while under this Government we have lost 20 per cent. of our world trade share, under the last Labour Government we gained 13 per cent. in world trade share? On the subject of inflation and the Prime Minister's refusal to answer the previous question, may I ask whether she is saying that the pound should be allowed to go higher, in the hope that it will bring inflation lower?

The Prime Minister: I am suggesting that the economy be continued under the excellent management of the Government, which has had such marvellous results and which, if the trade unions would come into the 20th century, would have even better results.

Mr. Kinnock: That is still no reply to the question about the Chancellor and Lord Young—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Kinnock.

Mr. Kinnock: We still have not had a reply to the question about the difference between the Chancellor and Lord Young, which is rather fundamental. If the Prime Minister agrees with Lord Young and is now against intervention, why did the Government allow $21 billion to be spent in the period before 4 March to try to stabilise the pound?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman goes on and on because he has not got a single thing to say: no criticism of the economy, and he votes to increase taxation, knowing full well that it is the reduction in taxation that has led to the growth that has led to the higher standard of living and the higher standard of social services. He is against the whole lot.

Mr. John Browne: Does my right hon. Friend agree that while terrorists abuse the law, they always expect the full protection of that law? Will she at least consider amending the law to resuscitate the status of outlaw and therefore remove the full protection of the law from certain specific terrorist organisations and their members?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, there is a Prevention of Terrorism Act, which we on the Government side vote for and support. It gives the police certain powers against terrorism, which has helped them very much in apprehending terrorists, sometimes before they have committed a crime, and sometimes in enabling others to be excluded. My right hon. Friend will be considering whether anything further needs to be done.

Q4. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Carlile: Does the right hon. Lady accept the words of her noble Friend the Earl of Caithness, that in recent European power station negotiations nothing was further from his mind than privatisation? Or is it not rather the case that the Dutch Minister, Mr. Nijpels, was right when he accused the British of diktat and of obstructing the cleaning up of the air over Europe?

The Prime Minister: No, that is not correct, as the hon. and learned Gentleman knows. We have a large programme for the large power stations, where most coal is burnt, and we were protesting against having to spend a great deal of money on smaller power stations, which are responsible for only 2 per cent. of the sulphur emissions, which would have been very expensive. I advise those who criticised us to realise that we have the second biggest programme in the whole of Europe for reducing sulphur emissions from power stations.

Q5. **Dr. Goodson-Wickes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Dr. Goodson-Wickes: Is my right hon. Friend aware that, following the so-called Moonie case, there is widespread concern over the definition of what may or may not be a bona fide charity? In view of the major contribution of charities to the benefit of others, is it not time to consider a statutory definition of charities?

The Prime Minister: As my hon. Friend is aware, there is a review of charities and of the definition. As he is also aware, it is easier to analyse the problem than it is to find a satisfactory redefinition of charities, but we shall nevertheless try to do that.

Murders (Northern Ireland)

3.31 pm

Mr. William Ross (Londonderry, East): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the refusal of the British Broadcasting Corporation to make available to the Royal Ulster Constabulary its film of the assault and murder of two members of Her Majesty's forces in Belfast on Saturday 19 March".

The horrific events in Belfast last Saturday were, in some measure, transmitted by major television networks and came into the living rooms of many millions of people, so that many millions of people saw for the first time the ugly reality of IRA murder.

We who live closer to those events in Northern Ireland know that for nearly 20 years that terrorist organisation has imposed its rule by kidnap, murder, torture and kangaroo courts. We believe that what people saw happening on Saturday simply happened in broad daylight, when it normally takes place in darkened alleys and on country roads. Those many people whose fate preceded that of the two unfortunate soldiers at the hands of the IRA have normally had a much longer drawn-out period of terror and agony before a bullet through the skull brought them merciful release.

Common decency, and, I believe, Members of this House, demand that citizens help the police to stop such crimes and to identify the murderers. The BBC transmits the "Crimewatch" programme and shows reconstruction of many crimes. No reconstruction is necessary for these events. All that we want, and all that the country wants, is the record of the vile and ugly murders that we saw in full on television.

The matter is urgent and specific, because I believe that many of those people who know that they are on the film will flee jurisdiction, and flee it soon. Yesterday, I asked the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House for a debate, but the matter has moved on from then. It has now become specific and is, if possible, even more urgent. I do not believe that we in this House can be fobbed off with a few minutes' discussion during the Easter Adjournment debate on Friday. We must have a full debate, and we want it soon.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I ask you for justice for those who died, and for the feelings of the people in this House and across the whole nation, and to rule that this debate should be granted soon.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the refusal of the British Broadcasting Corporation to make available to the Royal Ulster Constabulary its film of the assault and murder of two members of Her Majesty's Forces in Belfast on Saturday 19 March."

I have listened with great concern to what the hon. Member has said, as indeed I listened with distress to what was said in the House yesterday. As the hon. Member well knows, the granting of a debate under Standing Order No. 20 and whether it should take precedence over the Orders of the Day set down for today or tomorrow has to meet the criteria. I have to rule that is not so in this case, and I regret that I therefore cannot submit the hon. Member's application to the House.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I seek your guidance? As you will know, Select Committees of the House have the power to send for persons and papers. Some years ago, there was a celebrated incident when the British Steel Corporation was obliged to divulge certain information. If the appropriate Select Committee of the House sent for these films, would that be a legitimate request?

Mr. Speaker: It would be up to the Select Committee concerned to decide who it wished to send for.

Later——

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am a little concerned. I seek your guidance about what makes a matter specific and important under Standing Order No. 20. Whatever view one takes of it, citizens of the United Kingdom have been foully murdered in a part of the United Kingdom, yet apparently their deaths are not regarded as specific or important enough to take precedence over legislation which the House is about to consider. I do not understand. Perhaps it would be helpful to hon. Members if we knew what was specific and important. If that matter is not specific and important, I do not know what is.

Mr. Speaker: I do not disagree with the hon. Gentleman in the generality of what he has said. If he would like to come to see me privately, I will gladly explain to him the criteria as to what is urgent, what is specific and what is important in the context of Standing Order No. 20 applications.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I will put together the four motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the draft Advice and Assistance (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Civil Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Legal Advice and Assistance (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

Companies (Audit Committees)

3.32 pm

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams (Kensington): I beg to move,

"That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to public companies and the contents of the directors' reports; to make provision concerning the appointment of audit committees of the directors of certain public companies; and for connected purposes.

In every Session of Parliament since 1969, I have introduced a Bill or a measure of reform of company law with a view to giving somewhat greater powers to the shareholders in public companies.

The privilege of limited liability was a very important concession. Shareholders have a clear responsibility to ensure that their undertakings are efficiently and properly managed. Unfortunately, it can sometimes happen that the supervisory elements within the company, in particular the non-executive directors and the auditors, are not able to be as effective as they would like to be—or as they ought to be—for the good of the business. It is not always easy for the shareholders, when they suspect that something may not be quite right, to ensure that suitable changes are made.

Since 1970, in my series of proposals for reform of company law, I have sought ways to make it easier for shareholders, particularly the institutional investors, to overcome this problem without causing a major upheaval which might damage the business. In general I have sought to recommend a number of minor changes in the statutory procedures of public companies which would tend to give the non-executive directors more authority and which would give somewhat greater influence over management to the outside auditors.

My Bills have enjoyed all-party support from the beginning, and on three occasions, including last year, I have completed the Committee stage. I was encouraged by the amount of support that my Bill received last year. I think that the number of notorious cases of managerial failures and dubious practices that have lately been coming to light has convinced very many people that some changes in the law would be opportune.

In drafting my proposals for the present Session, I have consulted a number of eminent people in the profession of accountancy, and I have also received very helpful advice from a number of important institutions which are concerned with the efficiency and the rectitude of British management.

I should like to mention in particular the Bank of England, the stock exchange and the takeover panel; the CBI, the Institute of Directors and PRONED; the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants. I have also been assisted and encouraged by colleagues on both sides of the House and I have been helped by a number of useful hints from the Department of Trade and Industry. In so far as I could, I have taken up all the suggestions that have been made. I have also had the invaluable help of a company law specialist who is a partner in one of the most prominent firms of solicitors in the City.

My Bill this year will make two particular proposals — firstly, that the directors' reports of all pubic companies should indicate which of the directors are independent directors; and, if fewer than three such appointments have been made, what is the policy of the board in respect of such appointments.

Secondly, for major public companies, for which I include a definition which would cover some 250 or 350 of our largest public companies, it should be a regular item of business to be considered at the annual general meeting whether to require the board to appoint an audit committee of the directors. The practice of appointing an audit committee is now well established in north America and it is, in fact, part of the listing requirements of the New York stock exchange; but the practice has not yet made much progress among British companies.

It should be noted that my Bill would not require any company to set up an audit committee, but it would make it a relatively simple matter for the shareholders in very big companies to get it done if they thought it desirable.

For the convenience of companies which have decided to have such a committee, I include in my Bill a schedule of model rules for the conduct of an audit committeee. In this I have sought to define procedures which will give a degree of influence to the members of the board who are nominated to serve on the committee, without weakening the collective responsibility of the directors as a whole. My schedule is something like an extension of "Table A." If a company preferred to register its own rules for the conduct of its audit committee, I have provided that it could do so by ordinary resolution.

I hope that the House will see the merit of these modest proposals and will once again give me leave to introduce my Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Mr. Sydney Bidwell, Mr. John Butterfill, Mr. Matthew Carrington, Mr. Hugh Dykes, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr. Jeremy Hanley, Mr. Robert McCrindle, Mr. Anthony Nelson, Mr. Tim Smith, Mr. Dafydd Wigley and Mr. Mark Wolfson.

COMPANIES (AUDIT COMMITTEES)

Sir Brandon Rhy Williams accordingly presented a Bill to amend the law relating to public companies and the contents of the directors' reports; to make provision concerning the appointment of audit committees of the directors of certain public companies; and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 15 April and to be printed. [Bill 130.]

Civil Servants (Assistance to Ministers)

3.41 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, arising not from today's business but from observations of what has been happening over the past few weeks, and more particularly during the Budget debate.

By custom and practice, civil servants are allowed to sit in a Box on the same level as hon. Members so that they can help members of Her Majesty's Government by providing information which enables Ministers to answer questions and points which have been raised in debate. Observations over the past few weeks, and more particularly last night during the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), showed that information supplied by civil servants in the Box was being handed to Government Back Benchers, who were then using it to intervene in the speech of my hon. Friend.

This is not the first time that this has happened and it would seem that the privilege rightly extended to civil servants who need to be here to advise Ministers is now being abused. I hope that you, Sir, will take steps to restrain the practice.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman has raised an important matter. Civil servants are admitted to the Box to be at the disposal of Ministers. They should not distribute papers direct to other hon. Members. That should be done either through the Vote Office or on the letter board, in the normal way.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. Could you tell the House precisely what civil servants are allowed to pass from the Box into the hands of Ministers, or, as usually happens, into the hands of the PPS, sent to the Box to receive information? There has been reason to complain in the past—for example, in Standing Committee, where there has been a much freer flow of information from civil servants to Ministers and then to Back Benchers. Of course we want to ensure that we all argue from the point of view of perfect information and knowledge, but if we are to have civil servants who are supposed to be impartial, they should not willingly involve themselves—it appears to be willingly in many cases—in party political conflict.

Mr. Speaker: I find it difficult to answer that question, because I have never been in that position, although I have occasionally heard Ministers state, having received a message, that a blinding light has struck them and that they can answer a question that has been asked of them.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that I was one of the hon. Members who intervened last night in the speech of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown). I did so because, in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton), the hon. Gentleman referred to *Hansard* of 24 January. I went out into the Lobby and discovered that 24 January was a Sunday, so the reference could not be correct. I have since discovered that the reference related to 18 February. However, far from relating to an authoritative statement of what the adjudication officer may or may not have said, it related to the remarks of another Opposition Member. Could we find out from the hon. Gentleman the source of his original quotation?

Mr. Speaker: That happened last night and is certainly not relevant to a debate on the Education Reform Bill today.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is significant that the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) has not denied the charge that has been made — namely that — [HON. MEMBERS: "He has."] It was sleight of hand; that is all. Like other civil servants, the civil servants in the Box are supposed to be impartial. It is not their job to supply briefs to Tory Back Benchers. They are supposed at all times to act for the Executive and the Executive alone. The Prime Minister seems to think it right and proper to go up in the air when civil servants are alleged to have leaked information, and on one occasion—perhaps two—serious action has been taken against them. But it looks as though the Prime Minister and Ministers do not care tuppence when the same civil servants leak information in a different fashion to the Government's supporters. Surely, what is sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure that it helps much, but I shall take it.

Mr. Pawsey: It seems from what my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke, (Mr. Bennett) said that he went outside to obtain the information, so all these points of order are based on a misconception. Furthermore, as my hon. Friend pointed out, the question arose from an inaccurate quotation by an Opposition Member.

Mr. Speaker: I accept the explanation given by the hon. Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) that he went outside to get the information, and I have already stated the rule about civil servants.

Mr. Roy Hughes (Newport, East): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the hon. Member for Pembroke, (Mr. Bennett) honoured the conventions of the House by notifying my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) in writing that he intended to raise a point of order relating to him.

Mr. Speaker: We should always keep to the conventions of the House. We must move on, as today's debate is subject to a guillotine motion.

EDUCATION REFORM BILL (ALLOCATION OF TIME)

Resolved,

That the Report [14th March] from the Business Committee be now considered.—*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

Question, That this House doth agree with the Committee in their resolution, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) — [Mr. Wakeham.]—and agreed to.*

Following is the Report of the Business Committee:

Education Reform Bill (Business Committee), — The Chairman of Ways and Means reported from the Business Committee, That it had come to a Resolution in respect of the Education Reform Bill, which it had directed him to report to the House:

That—

(1) the order in which proceedings on consideration are taken shall be Government new Clauses; remaining new Clauses; Amendments to Clauses Nos. 1 to 7, Schedule No. 1, Clauses Nos. 8 to 33, Schedule No. 2, Clauses Nos. 34 to

[Mr. Speaker]

57, Schedule No. 3, Clauses Nos. 58 to 99, Schedule No. 4, Clauses Nos. 100 to 102, Schedule No. 5, Clauses Nos. 103 to 112, Schedule No. 6, Clauses 113 to 134, Schedule No. 7, Clause No. 167, Schedule No. 9, Clauses Nos. 168 to 173 and 135 to 164, Schedule No. 8, Clauses Nos. 165, 166 and 174 to 186 and Schedules Nos. 10 and 11; and new Schedules;

(2) the allotted days which, under the Order of 1st February, as varied by the Order of 17th February, are given to the proceedings on consideration and Third Reading shall be allotted in the manner shown in the Table set out below and, subject to the provisions of that Order as so varied, each part of the proceedings shall be brought to a conclusion at the time specified in the third column of that Table.

Table

Allotted day	Proceedings	Time for conclusion of proceedings
First day	Government new Clauses	6 p.m.
	New Clauses Nos. 1 to 9	8.45 p.m.
	Remaining new Clauses	10 p.m.
Second day	Amendments up to the end of Clause No.37	7.30 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 98	10 p.m.
Third day	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 109	6 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Schedule No. 7	8 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 173	10 p.m.
Fourth day	Remaining proceedings on consideration	7.30 p.m.
	Third Reading	10 p.m.

Orders of the Day

Education Reform Bill

[1ST ALLOTTED DAY]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

3.50 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We are facing this evening's debate and discussion on a large number of new clauses and amendments before the House in a limited time. May I have your procedural guidance as to how the discussion will proceed? Will it be that we shall follow each line of new clauses or amendments as on the Order Paper and does that not mean, therefore, that a great many new clauses and amendments will not be reached? My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) and I have tabled new clauses on the important question of discipline in schools, including consideration of the restoration of corporal punishment at a period of extreme indiscipline in some schools. Will we have to decide whether to seek to move those new clauses without any discussion, or will we be able to contribute to the debate on the cluster of new clauses with which our new clauses are grouped?

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps when you come to reply to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) you might wish to invite him to say whether he voted for the guillotine motion on 1 February and, if he did, to suggest that he has been hoist on his own petard, because all the consequences to which he has referred flow directly from the guillotine motion which I think he voted for and which Opposition Members voted against, precisely because we thought that hon. Members on both sides of the House ought to have an opportunity to discuss the Bill fully.

Mr. Greenway *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We cannot have a debate on this. I can answer the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). We shall proceed in the order of the selection on the Order Paper. The guillotine falls at 6 o'clock, 8.45 pm and again at 10 o'clock. If we get on, it is possible that the new clause of the hon. Member for Ealing, North will be reached. However, that will not happen if we have lots of points of order.

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We are considering this evening not only a long Bill — it must be one of the longest we have ever considered — but a complex one. It is one of the most botched-up hastily assembled Bills that I suspect has ever been on the Floor of the House. Time and again when we were considering the Bill in Committee, the Government presented us at the last minute with a series of amendments and ill-prepared texts. On Friday, not only were we asked to consider amendments tabled after the time in which Government new clauses could be amended but some of the amendments, masquerading as Government amendments, were in the name of Mr. Stanley Baker and there is no Member of that name in the House.

Today, hon. Members might like to note that we are being asked to consider a series of amendments, the first

of which is in the first group we are asked to consider, together with Government new clause 41, which make no sense. Government amendments Nos. 107 and 108 do not refer to the clause listed. Government amendment No. 107 refers to

"Page 7, line 35 [Clause 7]"

There is no clause 7 on page 7 of the Bill. The same applies to Government amendment No. 108.

How can we adequately debate these matters when we do not even know the clauses to which the printed amendments refer? It is only too typical of the chaotic and botched-up way in which the Bill has been brought before the House. We really must know what issues we are debating.

Mr. Speaker: I shall look into the point that the hon. Gentleman has mentioned and say something about it when I have done so.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. New clause 62, standing in my name, and the new clauses standing in the names of Welsh nationalist Members and other Opposition Members, have not been selected. Will it be possible to debate the new clauses that have not been selected in the final group of new clauses?

Mr. Speaker: I cannot alter my selection. We are under a guillotine motion and we must get on. We stand no chance of getting to the new clauses tabled by Back Benchers if points of order continue. In order to get to those new clauses, we should now get on with the Government new clauses, which come first.

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have listened to your advice, and to what the Opposition have said, and I voted for the guillotine, but the way in which the timetable has been operated means that only an hour and a quarter has been given to a substantial series of new clauses. Great interest has been exhibited in new clauses 30 and 31 which, as you properly remind me, Sir, are Back Benchers' clauses. Recalling that when you were elected to your august office you declared your intention of safeguarding the interests of Back Benchers, it seems unfortunate that we may not reach new clauses 30 and 31, which deal with an important matter—corporal punishment in schools.

Mr. Speaker: The Business Committee has considered this matter and a few moments ago the House passed the resolution of the Business Committee. I am bound by that order of the House.

Mr. Straw: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you explain to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) that his failure to have new clauses 30 and 31 on the flogging and beating of children discussed arises from two consequences of his actions? One was to vote for the guillotine motion that has curtailed the debate; and the second was his failure to get in the two new clauses before the Opposition.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is clear that many Conservative Members have not the faintest idea what the guillotine is. They are now trying to go back on it and have new matters included. They are so ignorant about it that they thought they had set up a guillotine in New Palace Yard and put the Opposition on it. They do not know what they are doing.

New Clause 41

EXCEPTIONS FOR CATEGORIES OF PUPILS

'The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that the provisions of the National Curriculum, or such of those provisions as may be specified in the regulations, shall not apply in relation to such categories of pupils as may be so specified.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss also the following: Government new clause 42 — *Temporary exceptions for individual pupils.*

Government amendments Nos. 107 to 113 and No. 117.

Mr. Baker: I welcome this opportunity for a debate about the effect of the Bill on pupils with special educational needs. A great deal of concern has been expressed about such pupils in Standing Committee, in the country at large and, not least, in the representations made to my Department. I want to take this opportunity to reassure the House that the Government are deeply concerned about this group of children, although that may not be the impression given by some of the public debate. I want the reforms that we are introducing to bring benefits to children with special needs—those who are handicapped in one way or another, physically or mentally —just as to other children.

The Education Act 1981, which followed the Warnock report, marked a major change in attitudes to the education of children with special needs. It produced a legislative framework that took account of progressive changes in attitude and methods of provision and set the scene for further development along the lines of the report. One of the themes of that report was that the need for special provision does not apply only to a small minority —the 2 per cent. or so of pupils in special schools—but, in various degrees, to perhaps as many as one sixth or one fifth of the school population.

The other principle was that children with special needs should, wherever possible and appropriate, be educated alongside children without such needs—that is to say, the principle of integration. That does not mean integration regardless of the circumstances of the individual child. Some children will continue to need provision that is so specialised that it cannot be provided in an ordinary school, and account must be taken of the wishes of parents about the way in which their children are educated.

The 1981 Act has brought about changes. Some changes can be observed and quantified. Others, which can be more important in the long term, are changes in attitude —the attitude of other children and the attitude of our society to children who are less gifted, less able or more handicapped than other children.

4 pm

There is a growing tendency to educate children with statements of special needs — those who previously would have been in special schools — in ordinary schools. In January 1987—the latest date for which we have figures—there were 29,000 children with statements attending ordinary schools, compared with just under 100,000 in special schools. Since 1982, my predecessor and

[Mr. Baker]

I have approved the closure of over 150 special schools maintained by local education authorities. In many cases, those closures were part of a reorganisation plan to make better provision for children with special needs.

I do not think that I need tell the House that those closures were not an exercise in saving money. If integration is carried out properly, the cost for the individual child in a special school may be very much the same as the cost for a child who is educated in an ordinary school. The benefit lies in the fact that the child in a junior school of 400 pupils has access to a wider range of curricular opportunities than he or she might get in a special school of 150 or fewer pupils. Some special schools are very small. To gain the full benefit, however, that child needs to be supported by specialist services and, most important, by the school, teachers and other children.

It is gratifying to see how the attitudes of the ordinary schools have changed and are changing. As I visit local authorities, I see examples of children who, 10 years ago, might have been in special schools being integrated into the ordinary schools. I particularly recall one visit which I made a couple of months ago to a school in Northumberland. I was impressed to see the way in which that primary school, the teachers and the young children had adopted handicapped children, from a neighbouring school. Some of those children were severely handicapped and could not fend for themselves.

That was a splendid and wonderful example of ordinary children, blessed with the full faculties that God has given them, looking after children who would never be able to cope alone in the world. It was a good example of caring and sharing. The commitment of the ordinary pupils was impressive. They felt an obligation. I know that many hon. Members have seen this in their constituencies: not only the children with special needs benefit. The ordinary children benefit by being in close relationship with children with these difficulties.

I pay tribute to the teachers in our special schools and the teachers who deal with children with special educational needs. They have a demanding task which requires enormous patience, devotion well above the normal course of duty and love, which is generously and willingly given every day by thousands of teachers in our schools.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): When I was a teacher, I agreed strongly about the protective nature of other children towards handicapped children in the same school. What policy conclusion does the right hon. Gentleman draw in relation to creating the provision to encourage the basic physical conditions which allow often very handicapped pupils to remain in the school? There is a problem.

Mr. Baker: This is very much a matter for local education authorities. As I go round, I see more and more education authorities willing to absorb children with special educational needs into their classes. Sometimes that means that there must be adaptation of the means of access — for example, ramps or special handrails. Some schools may not need that provision. I have seen some schools in which a new lift has had to be installed to take children who are in wheelchairs up to classrooms. Since 1981, nearly 30,000 children who would otherwise have been in special schools have been absorbed into normal schools.

There are those who say that the Bill's provisions will slow down this progress and will undo some of the good work that has been done. I can see that that is a danger, if the provisions of the Bill are wrongly implemented. We have built in provisions to try to prevent that, and we are proposing further amendments to strengthen the safeguards. Clause 10 deals with children with statements and says that the provisions of the national curriculum can be modified or lifted in the case of individual children, if the statement says so. These are children who can be specifically identified. In the statement, it is possible to say that the child who may have locomotion difficulties or physical difficulties of co-ordination can be exempted from specific parts of the national curriculum.

Clause 4(3) aims at children with special needs who do not have statements and provides that, in making an order about a subject under the national curriculum, I, or the holder of my office, can make modifications in respect of a group of pupils. For instance, if the technology curriculum contained certain practical requirements which would be difficult for children with poor sight or imperfect control of their hands, I could provide for alternative ways of demonstrating the pupils' grasp of the principles that lay behind the practical experiment which the other children were taking.

New Clause 41 would extend this principle so that a designated category of pupils could be exempted from that part of the national curriculum.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): The Opposition welcome almost everything that the Secretary of State has said so far, but he uses the term "category" in new clause 41.

I should have thought that that negates almost all the idea of the caring concern which is shown by almost everyone involved in special education and in mainstream schools, in that they want to treat the child as an individual with a particulary possible learning difficulty, as opposed to a "category" of children. To treat children as a category tends to stigmatise and be the wrong approach to handicap. Could not the right hon. Gentleman have found some better wording than "category" of children?

Mr. Baker: I shall come to that point. I should like to explain why we think this wording is necessary. As I have said, clause 10 deals with children who have statements. In Committee we amended clause 10 because, as originally drafted, it allowed the statement to modify the national requirements but not to lift entire elements — our lawyers advise us that there is a difference between modification and lifting entire elements — from applying in any way to the child.

Entire elements would mean, perhaps, the whole part of a programme of study. Modification of a programme of study would mean that the programme was still recognisably the same after the changes had been made. Clearly, there may be circumstances in which modification of the national curriculum requirements would not be enough for a child with a particular learning difficulty or other handicap.

We have encountered exactly the same problem with the provision to make exceptions to the statutory requirements for identified categories of pupils. An

example we have previously given of such a case was that pupils with severe difficulties in English might be introduced later, or in a different way, to a foreign language. It might be possible to identify a category of a certain level of attainment. We would not want to ask a child or a group of children with severe trouble in coping with the English language to struggle when they get to year 11 or 12 to cope with French, German, Italian, Spanish or some other foreign language.

Another example might be a pupil or a group of pupils who made such rapid progress as to reach the highest levels in some foundation subjects before the age of 16. These are the very gifted children. They do not have special needs; they have special skills of one sort or another. We would not want the Bill to prevent such pupils from proceeding at an appropriate pace into sixth form studies or from seeking to study different subjects to complement those in which they have already demonstrated high achievement. Equally, we do not want to lay down rules of how this provision will apply to those children or others. We believe that we should consult, and that would be a valuable process. This is a classic case for consultation and regulations.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) referred to amendment No. 107. I cannot be responsible for printing errors. Amendment No. 107 should apply to clause 11 and not to clause 7, and I am not Mr. Stanley Baker.

Mr. Pawsey: He is dead.

Mr. Baker: As my hon. Friend says, he is dead. That has not yet occurred to me.

Mr. Ashdown: The Secretary of State tempts me with his last statement. Although he is not responsible for printing errors, amendment No. 107 still does not make sense because it refers to paragraph (b) and there is no consequential amendment for paragraph (a). That is indicative of the pace at which the right hon. Gentleman and his team have been pushing their officials, who could do their jobs far better at a more reasonable pace.

The Secretary of State said that the provisions in new clause 42 would come into effect, after consultation. However, the new clause says that he should consult the "appropriate bodies", whereas clause 4 requires consultation specifically with the National Curriculum Council. On that important point, why has the Secretary of State decided to limit the level and scope of consultation, instead of retaining the proposal contained in clause 4, which brings the National Curriculum Council into the matter? Does he want to have more power at his elbow rather than allowing others to have it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): Order. I am responsible for printing errors. It is clause 11, but it is a rubric and it does not alter the sense of the amendment.

Mr. Baker: Thank you for assuming that responsibility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It makes nonsense of the point raised by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), which he raised on several occasions in Committee. He has tried to use pettifogging arguments which totally cloud the matter.

Mr. Ashdown *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman will now be offended and hurt. We do not want to hurt him, at least not mortally. Just as Stanley Baker disappeared from the Order Paper, so the amendments will be corrected tomorrow when they come up for approval by the House.

It is important that we should consult on these matters, and we intend to do so. It was intended that there should be the necessary flexibility, but we have now been advised that clause 4(3) allows only modifications of the requirements, so we have amended that as well.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Baker: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman in a moment.

For this reason, we have brought forward new clause 41. It provides us with the necessary flexibility and, together with clause 10 as amended and Government new clause 42, forms a complete package to accommodate children with particular needs within the national curriculum framework. I commend new clause 41 to the House.

Dr. Thomas: It will not have escaped the Secretary of State's notice that there is a suggestion on the Amendment Paper—it will not come up for debate because it has not been selected, so I shall not refer to it in detail—that consultation should be by means of an advisory committee. Has the Secretary of State considered this, and does he believe that an advisory committee should represent interest groups involved with special educational needs? Such a committee might be able to advise him just as effectively as the National Curriculum Council.

Mr. Baker: I hope to appoint the National Curriculum Council in shadow after Easter. It is important that it should be appointed in shadow as soon as possible, because it must proceed with the preliminary planning of the national curriculum, which we want to implement as soon as possible. I do not wish to be too prescriptive about how it should operate. It may want to set up its own sub-committee to deal with special educational needs. I leave that to the council. It will be a body of highly responsible people who will have a great responsibility in fashioning the national curriculum.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins (High Peak): The National Association of Head Teachers is concerned that the Bill should make it clear that head teachers will have a role to play in this and that they will be able to determine the most appropriate curriculum for children with special educational needs. That could be done by, for example, putting the words "subject to the approval of the head teacher" into clause 10. Will the Secretary of State make clear the role of head teachers in this matter?

4.15 pm

Mr. Baker: In the various groups that I have set up already, I have tried to involve teachers and head teachers. I envisage the some members of the National Curriculum Council will be teachers or head teachers, but I cannot yet say whether they will have experience of special educational needs. If they did not have that expertise, the council would be able to set up groups to take that into account.

Head teachers are a critical element in the formation of a national curriculum and, indeed, in the whole range of our educational reforms. My hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) will know, as he was in Committee, that the Bill gives head teachers a huge new

[Mr. Baker]

raft of responsibilities. The financial delegation clauses give head teachers a huge responsibility. Within three or four years, head teachers of all secondary schools and larger primary schools will control the budgets of their schools. I assure my hon. Friend, and the National Association of Head Teachers and the Secondary Heads Association, that we highly value the role of head teachers.

My hon. Friend will also know that I am bringing forward proposals to improve the training of head teachers. That is important, because they will be taking on managerial roles as a result of the education reforms. The present training does not include a great emphasis on managerial roles. Some courses have it, but others do not.

Head teachers will be responsible for budgets of up to £1 million. They will also be responsible for the day-to-day management of staff in their schools. They will have the right to hire and fire, in conjunction with their governing bodies. I assure my hon. Friend that we consider the role of head teachers to be most important.

Mr. Harry Greenway: The National Association of Head Teachers and the Secondary Heads Association will be delighted to read my right hon. Friend's comments, that head teachers and assistant head teachers will be on the National Curriculum Council. Does he agree that it is important for that body to remain dynamic, for people to be on that body for a limited period and constantly to bring new people on to it, particularly those from the profession who are active at head and deputy head level?

Mr. Baker: My hon. Friend makes an eternally valid point. One does not want important bodies such as the National Curriculum Council and the School Examinations and Assessment Council to become moribund and sink into a state of torpor. I do not think they will. They will be exceptionally busy in the next few years, because they will be consulting widely as a result of the recommendations of the working groups in various subjects. I am glad that the hon. Member for Yeovil pledged support for the heads' associations.

Mr. Ashdown *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Baker: I am a little surprised that the head teacher unions are praising some of my speeches, particularly the one that I made before Christmas, in which I emphasised the role of parents in bringing up children.

It is no good society saying that the blame for social misfits, juvenile delinquents, violence and drugs lies with teachers and schools. The first educators of our children are the parents. It is important that the parents should fulfil their responsibilities to teach their children the basic principles of right and wrong and what they should and should not do. It is no good expecting schools and teachers to do that, if it does not start in the home. There is tremendous support on that from the two head teacher unions, and I am sure that all hon. Members share that view.

Mr. Ashdown: The Secretary of State leaped like a trout after a fly for that support from the National Association of Head Teachers. It is a false bait. The hon. Members for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) and for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and I were at the conference of the NAHT in Cambridge on Saturday. If the Secretary of State had been there, he would be in no doubt that the NAHT quite properly recognise some of the extremely damaging and dangerous aspects of the Bill.

Mr. Baker: I am a fly fisher, and the trout for which I go rarely leap. They have to be tempted to rise to a well-cast fly. This is not a lesson in fly-fishing, although I am happy to give the hon. Gentleman a lesson on any occasion.

As the Bill goes through the House, there is a growing acceptance of its main provisions. There is a growing acceptance of the national curriculum and the processes in it that we shall bring about. There is growing acceptance of the need for financial delegation and for the greater involvement of parents. Before the for hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) jumps up——

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I am just pulling up my socks.

Mr. Baker: It is about time the Opposition pulled up their socks.

I remind the hon. Gentleman that the Opposition did not seek to divide the Committee on any of the clauses that we are debating. They accepted them. The difficulty that the Opposition have, and why they constantly attack me personally, is that they agree with about 75 per cent. of the Bill. It is difficult for the Opposition to explain to their supporters, such as the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), that the Government are on the right lines. The hon. Member for Hillsborough, in his strange, atavistic, neanderthal way, believes that all that has gone wrong with education in Britain in the past 30 years is somehow right, and he is opposed to all the changes that we are making.

Mr. Flannery: Would the Minister kindly explain whether a fly fisherman means a fisherman who is fly, or does it mean something else?

The Government's dilemma has emerged in the first few minutes of the debate. The Secretary of State tells others that they do not know things, but he is clearly out on the horns of a dilemma because we have gone too quickly for the Secretary of State, as well as for the rest of the Committee, and he does not know his stuff.

Mr. Baker: I should not have given way. That is an absurd intervention. We have debated the Bill for nearly 200 hours.

Mr. Flannery: Not enough.

Mr. Baker: Since 1945, only one Bill has been debated for longer. When the Bill returns from the other place, I shall almost certainly be able to say that, since 1945, no Bill at all has been subjected to such extensive parliamentary scrutiny, and that is entirely appropriate. The hon. Gentleman knows that it has been debated at length in Committee. He was not much of an absentee. He turned up regularly. He even turned up on his 70th birthday. I thought that that was very touching. We all wished him a happy day, but none of us said, "Many happy returns."

The Bill and the issues that it raises have been debated in a way that I can barely recall. In the past eight years I have taken three long Bills through the House — two relating to British Telecom and one to the abolition of the Greater London council and the metropolitan county councils. The Education Reform Bill has been debated in much greater detail and depth than any of those.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Let me briefly help my right hon. Friend to evaluate the appreciation of the National Association of Head Teachers' conference by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who was there with me and hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). The hon. Member for Yeovil left after an hour, so he did not hear the president say how very much the association would welcome its representatives being included on the National Curriculum Council.

Mr. Baker: I am glad to have that placed on the record. The hon. Member for Yeovil was there just long enough to appear in the footnotes of the conference.

Mr. Fatchett: The right hon. Gentleman has been arguing that the Education Reform Bill has gained popularity and wider acceptance as it has gone through the House. Why then, according to the most recent opinion poll on educational issues, has support for the national curriculum and the opt-out provision fallen by 20 per cent? Less than one in five now support the opt-out provision for schools. Would the right hon. Gentleman be happy to have more debate, because, with that success rate, he would soon have no supporters at all?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hope that both Front-Bench spokesmen will set a good example by sticking to the new clause that we are debating.

Mr. Baker: You have cut me off in full flight, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was about to demonstrate the growing and increasing popularity of our measures as shown by the growing support for the national curriculum which, in opinion polls, regularly notches up support of between 60 and 70 per cent.

When we announced our proposal for grant-maintained schools, its acceptance took some time, but support for it in opinion polls varies between 20 and 35 per cent. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would want it recorded that there is nothing compulsory about grant-maintained schools. It is entirely up to the parents and the governing bodies, if they wish to exercise their right. Many governing bodies and parents will wish to do that, because some will want to save schools that are threatened by reactionary councils or by politically biased councils or where many parents will want to exercise that right if they feel that the quality of education is not high enough.

Mr. Hawkins: I welcome what my right hon. Friend has said about head teachers being involved in the committees advising on the national curriculum and so on, but head teachers are often concerned about what happens at the level of the individual pupil. Will head teachers determine what proportion of the national curriculum will be suitable for children with special educational needs? They would like some assurance that head teachers will have a fundamental role to play in such decisions.

Mr. Baker: Principally, yes, but such decisions will be held in consultation with particular subject teachers and a teacher who knows something of the child. We are also providing appeals for parents in these matters because they often feel passionately and deeply about their children with special educational needs. In many cases, they do not want their child excluded. We have tried to produce some flexibility so that the experts on the spot—the teachers—in discussion sometimes with parents, can decide what is best for a particular child. One does not want to make the demands upon a child with special educational needs so exacting that he feels a failure, but at the same time one does not want to exclude a child. Decisions virtually have to be made on a one-off basis.

I know that the intention behind new clause 42 will be welcomed on both sides of the House. The hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg), who is present today, has great experience in these matters having been the head of a special school, and he was very good in Committee. He spoke many times, prefacing each of his long speeches by saying that he would not take long. We shall remember him by that endearing characteristic. He has brought his considerable practical and recent experience to bear on the problems of children with special needs.

In Committee, the hon. Gentleman urged us to consider the need for greater flexibility in applying the national curriculum to those with special needs for whom statements of special need might not be appropriate. The hon. Member for Yeovil also pressed us on the particular point that pupils in the process of being assessed for a statement of special need should not be asked to meet unrealistic requirements. This new clause, along with our other amendments on the disapplication of the national curriculum provisions, offers reassurance on both points.

The clause will allow head teachers—my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) is temporarily out of the Chamber, no doubt in consultation with the National Association of Head Teachers—within limits broadly defined in the clause, and more closely defined in regulations, to modify or disapply the national curriculum with respect to an individual pupil for a temporary period. That point was raised by the hon. Member for City of Durham.

The broad constraints set out in the Bill are, first, that temporary withdrawal from the national curriculum shall be limited to six months, but may be renewable in circumstances defined in regulations. Secondly, the head must give information about his plans for the pupil—one may be dealing here with children who are psychiatrically disturbed and particularly unruly children—to the parents, the governing body and the local education authority.

Thirdly, the information given must include the head's reasons for his action, the provisions to be made for the pupil during the period of withdrawal, and either proposals for the pupil's reintegration with his classmates—an important point for children of this sort—or an opinion that he should be assessed for a statement of special need.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The obvious reason for providing a period of six months is so that the statement can be prepared. The Government were carrying out a survey of how well local authorities were performing their duty to prepare statements, and whether they were managing to do it within the six months. Can the Secretary of State now tell the House the results of that survey? Will he also make it clear that, if a statement is being prepared, it should be completed in six months, and the head should not have to ask for a further extension?

4.30 pm

Mr. Baker: I am afraid that I cannot give the hon. Gentleman precise figures in answer to his first question. I shall have to see what progress we have made.

Obviously, an attempt should be made to produce statements within six months. It may well be that, for that

[Mr. Baker]

six-month period, no statement is required. It may be that the child who has been temporarily withdrawn can be reintegrated into the normal class. It does not necessarily follow that every child who is withdrawn for six months should have a statement, but it would be better to produce a statement in that period if the child clearly needed one, and was in some way physically or mentally handicapped.

The clause also gives parents the right of appeal to the governing body if the head makes or refuses to make a direction, contrary to their wishes. Government amendment No. 117 secures that the LEA complaints procedure may be used if parents are dissatisfied with the governors' action following an appeal.

We believe that the provisions give the right degree of flexibility, while guaranteeing that pupils with behavioural problems, or temporary needs, such as a crash course in English as a second language, or waiting to be statemented —as the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) suggested—cannot be denied for too long the benefits of the national curriculum. The six-month period will, we hope, serve to encourage local authorities to speed up where possible their statementing procedures. It should also avoid disruptive pupils being consigned for too long to "special units" without decisions being taken about the need to reintegrate them into school, or to assess their special needs for long-term provision.

We had an interesting debate in Committee on the important subject of the powers of heads and governing bodies to expel unruly children, or to put them into special education units. Since then, I have appointed a committee, under my noble Friend Lord Elton, to examine disruptive behaviour and violence in the classroom. Among other matters, it will consider the sanctions available to heads and governing bodies for dealing with children with that sort of behaviour pattern.

One of the arguments that have been used by those who are anxious about special education units is that a child can be conveniently put into one and almost forgotten. We want to ensure that if that happens — this helps a particular type of pupil in a particular way—the child's case should be re-examined to assess how it may be possible to reintegrate him after a period of treatment or special education. I am sure that hon. Members will welcome that flexibility.

As is clear from the many interruptions from hon. Members on both sides of the House, this is a complex subject. Hon. Members will have noted that we make provision for consultations about the regulations, which will fill in the detail and set out procedures to be followed in schools and LEAs in implementing the clause.

The hon. Member for Yeovil interrupted me — so passionate was his concern that he has now left the Chamber — about the process of consultation. Of course we shall consult very widely. The National Curriculum Council will be involved, along with various bodies concerned on a daily basis with the interests of children with special educational needs. We shall listen carefully to all the points made to us: the clause is evidence that we have been willing to do so thus far. I am confident that the provisions will benefit many pupils, and that they offer a real improvement on the present position — in which, too often, they and their parents may be left in limbo without understanding, or being able to challenge, the decisions made about their educational needs.

Mr. Malcolm Thornton (Crosby): I have followed my right hon. Friend's statement with considerable attention, and I am relieved by much of what he said. Does he not agree that all the evidence that we have received—both the evidence to the Select Committee and that given to other bodies that have considered the matter — has shown that the quality of remedial provision, and the speed with which that provision is made, are essential in any treatment of special needs? We are not talking particularly about those who are being statemented, or those who are close to being statemented. The vast majority of children who require some special needs provision will require it for a short period, and will require it to be applied immediately, like a plaster. Unless that provision is there, much of what the Bill seeks to achieve —for instance, in attainment testing—will fall by the wayside.

Mr. Baker: I agree with my hon. Friend, who knows a great deal about these matters — not only from constituency experience, but from his work for the Select Committee. Some children will, as he says, need special education provision for the whole of their scholastic lives, and indeed beyond that. The policy is to try to integrate those with lesser handicaps into ordinary schools.

I said earlier how proud we should be as a country of the excellence of the provision in special schools. That is one of the most successful parts of the British education system. There is tremendous expertise and devotion there. We are now taking children out of what used to be called hospital schools and moving them into what used to be called special schools, and moving children out of the "special schools" into the ordinary run of schools in the local authorities. That is the pattern for children who are likely to need assistance throughout their lives.

Some children — my hon. Friend the Member for Crosby (Mr. Thornton) rightly identified them — need particular help and attention at a particular time, perhaps for a few months, perhaps for a year. They may have behavioural problems, or problems at home. They may simply be unable to fit in, or to relate to other children. That may trigger off other problems as well. For those children, there must be flexibility. The system must be able to respond. Otherwise, those children may become completely alienated from the system, and once that has happened, they may be alienated for the rest of their lives. We have tried to produce that flexibility in new clause 42.

Mr. Ashdown: I am sorry to hear that I could not be absent from the Chamber for rather less than a minute without the Secretary of State choosing my absence as an opportunity to attack me.

The new clauses are welcome, but, if they are so important — I agree that they are — why has the right hon. Gentleman chosen to introduce the measures by regulation rather than by order, as in the rest of clause 4? Is it simply because he wants the opportunity to sign the bottom of a piece of a paper himself, rather than suffering any parliamentary scrutiny on what we both agree to be an important matter?

Mr. Baker: Let me reply first to the hon. Gentleman's point about my comments on his absence. If he aspires to lead his party, the first thing that he must do is develop a thicker skin, and not worry about such things. He must bear the slings and arrows.

The education system contains many procedures, which operate by different methods. Some are introduced by order, and some by regulation. I should have thought that this procedure could operate by regulation. There is not much controversy about it, and there is no controversy at all between the parties. It is a matter on which we have traditionally consulted very widely.

Mr. Flannery: Let me extend the point made by the hon. Member for Crosby (Mr. Thornton) — who, as the Secretary of State has pointed out, is a member of the Select Committee and was also a member of the last one, when we put out a major document on special educational needs. He stressed that those involved are not only the 2 per cent. who are statemented, but the 18 per cent. who are still in the classrooms, many of whom are very difficult. Has the Secretary of State considered the fact that a great deal of money will have to be spent on special needs so that the 18 per cent. have more teachers and other helpers? All that the Bill contains and its resolutions will be a waste of time if there is not enough money to carry out the proposals.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman raises the question of resources on every aspect of the Bill. He will be aware that I always reply that we have increased resources substantially in the past two years. In the financial year that is about to start, the amount that we have planned for education is increased by 8·2 per cent. over the previous year. That is a substantial amount of money. The local education authority must decide how to deploy those resources, and that varies from authority to authority. The hon. Gentleman cannot claim and thereby sustain with any credibility that the financial resources in the education system are not sufficient.

The hon. Member for Hillsborough is obviously very reluctant to address the efficient way in which the money is used. If we were looking for a more cost-effective way of using the approximately £18 billion that is available for all the various aspects of education in our country, we would concentrate on better value for money. That is what we are trying to do.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The Opposition very much welcome the two new clauses. I am delighted that the Secretary of State for Education and Science paid tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg), who pressed so hard for the new clauses and these provisions in Committee. It is a tribute to my hon. Friend and to others outside the House that they have managed to move the Government is this way.

I fully understand why the Secretary of State felt that he should table the new clauses and amendments. He felt that he had to undo some of the damage that has been done to the Government's reputation in special education during the Bill's progress. We understand why he made his speech. We also understand that he said the right things at the start of his speech and when he addressed the amendments. However, people outside the Chamber will be puzzled and will not understand why the Secretary of State had to fill out his speech with references to trout fishing and other matters that did not add much of substance to his speech.

The Secretary of State obviously felt that he had to say a lot, but he did not have that much to say. He did not address the problem of money. Indeed, he was not going to say anything about money until my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) brought him round to the subject. The right hon. Gentleman and all hon. Members are aware that if we are to make a reality of integrating children with special needs into mainstream education, the Government must provide the resources.

It is no good the Government claiming that local authorities have the money in the round to do that. They do not have the money. The Secretary of State is aware that the local authorities have found money in spite of the Government's determination to make cuts. If anything, the authorities have raised educational spending per pupil. The Government have not been producing the money.

There was nothing in the Secretary of State's speech about the money to make the proposal a reality. The Government have shown no real understanding in the amendments of the fact that we have to treat children with special needs as individuals. It has been interesting to see, during the progress of the Bill, the way in which the Secretary of State has learnt about education in this country. He has slowly realised that education is about the needs of individual children and that it is extremely difficult to apply national criteria to categorise those children.

By the amendments, the Secretary of State obviously accepts that the 2 per cent. of children who are statemented will have to be treated as individuals. He has also realised that the requirements of the 18 per cent. whom Warnock described as probably having special needs must be recognised, rather than have a national curriculum and national testing imposed upon them.

The Secretary of State referred to the small percentage — he did not give a figure — of children who do exceptionally well, who are exceptionally able and who reach attainments in school very quickly. He has clearly recognised that they have special needs. It is time he recognised that the majority of children in schools are individuals and have particular abilities and aptitudes. We must recognise that. The Secretary of State must recognise that that causes a problem in imposing testing, especially the kind of testing that the Prime Minister wants.

We welcome the fact that the Secretary of State is talking about making exceptions in the legislation for those children whom he recognises have special needs. However, the right hon. Gentleman still considers these children as a problem rather than seeing an opportunity for them to be educated individually and an opportunity for them to bring enlightenment into the mainstream school so that other children can appreciate the particular needs and attributes of children with special needs.

The Secretary of State did not consider dyslexia. He gave us no hint of how he sees the development of the national curriculum with regard to the teaching of English and other subjects, taking into account the special needs of some children with reading and writing difficulties. The only reference in the Secretary of State's speech to reading and writing difficulties related to problems with the way in which the amendments had been tabled.

4.45 pm

One of the most engaging aspects of the House of Commons is the way in which hon. Members can table amendments in appalling handwriting. The printers usually turn those amendments into very good, accurate

[Mr. Andrew F. Bennett]

English, with a little help from the Clerks. I suspect that most hon. Members would fail any test imposed on children at the age of seven.

The Secretary of State did not address the problem of children with special learning difficulties and how they will be tested and assessed. When the right hon. Gentleman referred to new clause 41 and the categories of pupils, did he recognise that there is a category of pupils with dyslexia? Where do we draw the line in respect of those children? I believe that the major problem is that children have shades of difficulty, and that it is very difficult to place them in categories. I hope that the Secretary of State will even now reconsider new clause 41, when it reaches another place, and realise that it might be better to deal with individuals rather than with categories.

We welcome the fact that the Secretary of State has set up his inquiry, under Lord Elton, into the action to be taken over disturbed children. It would be better if a wider group, of people were involved. It might also be better if he had recognised that he might be causing some of the discipline problems. I do not believe that the right hon. Gentleman has ever addressed the problem of how to persuade 14 and 15-year-olds to study subjects that they do not want to study.

By imposing a national curriculum on pupils in that age group, the Secretary of State might create considerable difficulties. The right hon. Gentleman may not have been a teacher in the classroom, but I have. I know from experience that trying to teach 15 and 16-year-old pupils subjects that they do not want to study is an extremely difficult task for the teacher. The young person has every opportunity to indulge in disruptive behaviour rather than participate and be helpful in the learning process. If the Secretary of State imposes subjects on 15 and 16-year-olds, he must understand that he may make the discipline problem worse.

Instead of rushing into this legislation, it might have been better if the Secretary of State had considered some of the inquiries first and produced proposals in the legislation for the highly disturbed young person, instead of setting up an inquiry and having to take powers to make regulations. The Secretary of State does not know how he will use those powers.

The Government have not addressed one fundamental criticism that was raised in Committee. They have no plan for developing education for those aged 16 to 19 and over with special education needs. We are very disappointed that there is not another new clause to set out a clear Government policy to ensure that the special education needs of young people are met. I hope that when the legislation reaches another place the Government will have second thoughts and produce proposals in that respect.

I also wish that the Government had said more about statements. There were two major faults with the Education Act 1981—the lack of money and the way in which the statements were aimed at balancing the rights of parents and children. As a result of the lack of resources for local authorities, many do not have sufficient educational psychologists to prepare the statements. Indeed, some local authorities are reluctant to produce statements that will demonstrate that they do not have the facilities necessary for individual children. They are therefore producing the statements far too slowly in some instances. The Government should have had the results of their inquiry into statementing before they started on this legislation.

I hope that before the Government complete the legislation in the other place they will be able to tell us much more about statementing and will make it quite clear that they will expect local authorities to produce statements and will provide the resources for those statements when they are necessary in the interests of the child, rather than simply providing a limited amount of money to be spent in preparing statements, and limited resources to meet the requirements, which will result in the statements being produced very slowly.

I very much welcome the new clauses, as far as they go, and I hope that the Secretary of State will continue learning and realise that we must treat all children as individuals rather than as categories. As the Bill progresses through the other place, I hope that there will be further progress in the recognition of the special education needs of children, that the Government will put forward proposals for the education of those aged between 16 and 19, that there will be a new statement about statementing and that the Government will continue learning. They have a long way to go if they are to reclaim ground in regard to those with special education needs.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): I shall speak briefly about new clauses 41 and 42, and I certainly join hon. Members in welcoming the aspects of the new clauses that relate to children with special needs.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has obviously worked hard to meet the desires of parents and those who campaign on behalf of children with special needs. As my right hon. Friend mentioned, the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) gave us a great insight into that area in Committee. This afternoon, I do not wish to talk about special needs in particular. I seek an assurance from my right hon. Friend about those children who are specially gifted, whom he mentioned briefly in dealing with new clause 41, and about how the new clause and the regulations which he will have the power to make will deal with those children.

I wish to deal with the matter more broadly and to talk about those pupils who, at the critical fourth stage, surpass the necessary standards for age 16 when they are still only 14. The Secretary of State has given assurances in Committee and in his speeches outside the House that the national curriculum will not impose a straitjacket on the education system. Anyone who remains sceptical will now be reasonably convinced and reassured, and will have their scepticism removed by the clause.

I know that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and his ministerial colleagues have listened to the concerns of those who will have to deliver the national curriculum. Indeed, many of them, including heads and teachers in schools, are fully sympathetic to the case for a national curriculum, but had feared that the Bill provided insufficient flexibility at the fourth key stage for pupils aged between 14 and 16, who, at the age of 14, have reached the necessary standards to qualify for testing at the age of 16. New clause 41 moves to reassure teachers and heads who have raised that point.

We should remember that we are setting a curriculum for the end of the century and the beginning of the next century. We must not forget that in 1992 there will be a single European market, and the ability to speak more

than one European language will be very important. That point was raised with my right hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues by members of the teaching profession. Perhaps, in the context of Europe, the national curriculum may be inflexible in specifying a single foreign language, as some pupils may wish to broaden their knowledge of a second European language. My hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Mr. Walden) said that in his view the study of classics is necessary. Again, he has brought to the attention of the House the fact that the national curriculum may be too inflexible.

One could talk about other areas of study. Certainly in my constituency, within the royal borough of Kingston, teachers from the two excellent Tiffin grammar schools raised the possible problems that inflexibility within the national curriculum might impose. Will my right hon. Friend reassure us that new clause 41 will give him the power to inject the necessary flexibility into that fourth key stage at ages 14 to 16?

Mr. Gerry Steinberg (City of Durham): I congratulate the Secretary of State on introducing new clauses 41 and 42, although I do not believe that he has gone far enough. It is important to remember that 20 per cent. of our school population at some time in their educational careers have special educational needs, and that only 2 per cent. are actually statemented. In other words, 18 per cent. were ignored by the original Bill—that is five or six pupils in each class. In many cases, the 18 per cent. of children who were actually ignored were worse than the 2 per cent. who were statemented in the first place.

Children with special educational needs need programmes that are child-centred and not subject-centred. Under the original Bill, that would not have been the case. New clauses 41 and 42 go a little way to help that problem. Children with special educational needs need programmes for their individual needs, and to force the 18 per cent. of the children that were not statemented to follow the national curriculum was plainly daft.

In Committee, I gave an example of a child who was at my school. When we read his report it said that Johnny did not try hard enough at French. When we tested the boy, we found that he had a reading age of 6·5 which meant that he could not even read English, yet he was being forced to take French. As the Secretary of State has altered the Bill and introduced new clauses 41 and 42, that silly situation should not occur. Frankly, it might well have occurred had the new clauses not been introduced.

I should like to touch on the anomalies in statementing. My hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) mentioned the problems of statementing. Statementing is often not necessary because the teacher has a good feeling about what is right for the child and does not require that child to be statemented to provide the course of work necessary for that child to meet his full potential. Many local education authorities have widely differing policies on statementing. That does not mean that they do not have children with special educational needs, but just that they provide in different ways what they regard as the best courses to follow.

The local authorities have different policies on statementing, but even within local education authorities there are discrepancies. Some head teachers flatly refuse to accept that they have children with special educational needs in their schools. They regard it as a stigma. They feel that they can cope with children with special educational needs and that they do not need to statement them. Children are often not statemented because head teachers know that if a child is statemented and the statement recommends that the child should go to a special school it could affect their staffing ratios. That is appalling, but it has happened.

5 pm

Many head teachers in nursery and primary schools are often reluctant to refer children for statementing. It is only when a child is in its third or fourth year at secondary school that the head refers it, usually because it has become disruptive. That is because the child cannot cope with the curriculum and the head teacher wants to get rid of it. I hope that new clauses 41 and 42 will solve that problem. However, we do not want a rush of statementing, because it could clog up the system and nobody would benefit. There must be flexibility. The Secretary of State referred to flexibility, and I hope that he was sincere when he did so.

Since the passing of the 1981 Act, much progress has been made in integrating children with special educational needs into mainstream schools. The new clauses provide that such children will not be tested and compared with their peers. That would have been damaging; it would have put the clock back. Many children would have been humiliated. It would have meant that, if a child could not cope with the curriculum, it would be put into a corner with a jigsaw puzzle and told to get on with it.

Children with special educational needs require a broad and balanced curriculum designed to meet their individual needs. They must be allowed to work at their own pace; they must not be pressurised. Teachers have a gut feeling about what is right or wrong for a particular child. Teachers should not be put into a straitjacket. The Bill allows head teachers and the experience of teachers to play a great part in dealing with children's special educational needs, but I hope that the Bill will not hinder the professionals from doing their job. It would be a pity if the Bill put too much power into the hands of the Secretary of State.

I welcome the new clauses, even though they are slightly disappointing. They do not fully meet the needs of children with special educational needs. They refer only to the national curriculum. What about the rest of the Government's proposals? Open admissions and financial delegation are not included in the clauses. I wish that they were. I hope that they will be included in the Bill when it reaches the other place.

Despite what was said by the Secretary of State, sufficient resources were not provided to implement the 1981 Act. Local authorities and schools have had to face great difficulties. I ask the Secretary of State to make additional resources available, particularly for special schools, if progress over integration is to be made.

Sir Rhodes Boyson (Brent, North): The hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) has great experience of special schools. He and I were involved in the debate on the 1981 Act that deals with special educational needs. I welcome the Bill in its entirety. I have reservations about parts of it, but other parts I welcome with excitement and full approval.

There should be a national curriculum. It is a concept that I have always defended. In addition, there must be testing, but that creates problems for children with special educational needs. If there is to be testing and if school

[Sir Rhodes Boyson]

results are to be examined, some heads may not want to have certain children in their schools. It is important that these children should be given a fair deal and that schools should be encouraged to keep chilren with special educational needs. That was the intention of the 1981 Act. The new clauses, and the accompanying amendments, will provide a better deal for those children. If there is to be a national curriculum and testing, it is important that the egos of children with special educational needs should not be hurt.

When we refer to children with special educational needs, we think of those with learning difficulties. We do not think enough about talented children. It is essential that their talents should be developed to the full, but we are not doing as much for them as many other countries are doing. I am glad that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that the new provisions will also help children who are able to take examinations early. If a child is gifted enough to be able to learn three or four languages by the age of 15, the core curriculum should not restrict him. I hope that children with special talents will not be placed under a handicap by not being able to develop fast enough under the core curriculum.

Mr. Ashdown: I, too, welcome the new clauses and the accompanying amendments. Before I comment on their substance, it would be useful if the Secretary of State could refer to the amendments because I want to put a technical question to him.

Government amendment No. 117 extends the complaints procedure of clause 15 in relation to schools that take children up to the age of 16. We shall be dealing shortly with new clause 43, for which I pressed hard in Committee. The Government promised to introduce a new clause to cover that point, and I am delighted to see that it is now included in the Bill. It ensures that certain complaints, consultation and other procedures that apply to the national curriculum covering mainstream age groups also apply to any extension that the Secretary of State puts in place to cover those aged between 16 and 19. That, too, is welcome.

New clause 43 picks up the wording of clause 15 in respect of complaints, consultation and other information procedures. However, Government amendment No. 117 does not appear to apply to those aged between 16 and 19. It would be useful if the Secretary of State could explain to the House why new clause 43 applies to those between 16 and 19 but not Government amendment No. 117.

The new clauses are welcome. The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) was absolutely right when he said that we ought to judge the Government not on the wording of the new clauses, welcome though they may be, but on their substance. The record shows that, whatever the theoretical position may be as a result of this new clause, the reality as it is experienced by children with special needs is that resources are hopelessly inadequate to put into operation even the legislation currently on the statute book, let alone that which might be put on the statute book.

The 1981 Act was an excellent Act and was widely welcomed: if only it had been carried through from legislation into practice; if only it had meant as much as it could mean because the resources were there to put it into effect. But I suspect that the 1981 Act is more honoured in the breach than in the observance in Britain.

I see the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), shaking his head. He must know, as I certainly know from my experience in Somerset and elsewhere, that the whole movement towards statementing would be more comprehensive, more effective and faster if it were not for the situation described very accurately by the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg), who said that local education authorities often simply do not have the resources to statement children and therefore either slow up or sometimes do not statement children. The 1981 Act, excellent though it is, is nevertheless significantly deficient in its application because the Government will not put resources behind it.

I predict that, even if these very welcome clauses are in operation, they will not mean very much until the Government are prepared to put resources where their mouths are. So far, they have failed to do that. We see this most clearly in the lacunae that still exist over speech therapy, where the Government will not clarify the position of children who need special speech therapy services, but simply allow a legal muddiness to exist about whether the local education authority or the area health authority should provide the service. Into that hole fall many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of pupils in Britain who cannot get special services in respect of speech therapy because the situation is allowed to remain legally unclear; providing authorities can say that it is not their responsibility, while the Government refuse to clarify the position. The Secretary of State knows perfectly well that we pressed him on this in Committee, and many others have pressed him on it too. He will not provide any clarification, and that is simply not acceptable.

I want to turn briefly, because I agreed with very much of what he said—I suspect for the first time—to the very important point made by the hon. Member for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey): that this meant genuine variations in the national curriculum. We shall discover that these variations, put into effect in a very specific, minor collection of cases, would be very welcome in other areas of the curriculum as well.

It is, unhappily, only too indicative of the Government's attitude towards children with special needs that they exempt those children and then leave them by the wayside. We ought to be having a positive statement about what we do, because all the Bill says is how they are removed from the main stream, there to be abandoned, without resources and without any positive framework for the provision of the special services that they require.

How much better and how much more in keeping with the Government's rhetoric about giving parents choice it would be if the Government would allow schools, on a vote of all parents, to opt out, in whole or in part, of the national curriculum, if they so wish. If the Government really want to give power to parents, rather than the Secretary of State of the day, why do they not give them that power? We had a long and detailed discussion about whether the independent sector ought to be brought within the constraints of the national curriculum. Perhaps we argued that the wrong way round. Perhaps we ought to be giving the maintained sector the same freedom to depart from the national curriculum as the independent sector currently enjoys.

That was the burden of an amendment that I tabled, which of course has not been selected. How much better it would be if we allowed variation at the choice of the parents, at the will of the parents, on a parental vote, from the national curriculum—not just in respect of children with special needs, but in respect of all children. That really would show that the Government are interested in parental choice. We see instead, however, a Government interested in the power of the Secretary of State and central direction.

5.15 pm

Mr. Pawsey: The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) was somewhat harsh in his reference to the 1981 Act. It was, after all, an enabling Act, and it is significant that some local authorities have done a great deal more than others. My hon. Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Amos) was formerly the chairman of the Enfield education committee, and I am advised that in Enfield an excellent standard of education was provided for children in special need. It is also fair to tell the hon. Member for Yeovil that it might be helpful if he listened, rather than have private conversations with others sitting in the Gangway, because in fact the resources are available if the will is there. It is certainly necessary to have the will, though.

My right hon. Friend referred to the input of head teachers and others to the national curriculum. Like other hon. Members, I certainly welcome the fact that head teachers will be able to make a substantial input; it is clearly right that they should do so.

I also appreciated my right hon. Friend's comments about the training of head teachers. I am concerned because, although the NAHT makes provision for training head teachers, clearly what it does, although a step forward, is not enough. Therefore, I very much hope that my right hon. Friend will make special and adequate provision for the training of head teachers. It has to be done in order that heads and their deputies may have a good knowledge of their new responsibilities and powers. Clearly, there should be no shortage of funds for the training of head teachers.

I want to refer to the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), and in particular his remarks about gifted children. He was absolutely right to draw attention to this facet of the education scene. Clearly, we need to encourage gifted children. If they are not encouraged and stretched, they will lose interest. That was the point that my right hon. Friend made at some length.

I believe that gifted children, too, are important and that we must not lose sight of their talents and needs. The curriculum must be capable of holding their interest and imagination. If we fail gifted children, we shall be depriving the nation of the substantial talents and qualities that they possess.

It is right that emphasis should be put on those with special educational needs—a point well made by the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg), who is clearly extremely knowledgable on this matter. Indeed, he combines knowledge and modesty to an engaging degree. When he speaks on these matters, the House listens.

I argue that children with special gifts have rights and that we have responsibilities to them. An example from my own constituency leads me to believe that in many local education authority areas the needs of gifted children are not understood. Unless we have the correct facilities and unless gifted children are able to receive the appropriate teaching and training, their talents will be diminished.

I listened with interest to what the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) had to say when he referred to

"the needs of individual children."

He was right to draw attention to that. Gifted children, too, are individuals, and it is entirely right that they should not be forgotten in this Bill. I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North for bringing this important matter to the attention of the House.

Mr. Dalyell: I am strongly in favour of what the Secretary of State had to say about handicapped children being accommodated in normal schools, where possible.

Secondly, I am very unhappy about what he said regarding head teachers, on the grounds that, although they may have the right to hire and fire, it means that they get bogged down in administration. Often they are some of the best teachers in the school. It is a great pity that facilities are not made available for them to do more teaching.

I refer to a letter about the

"National curriculum task group on assessment and testing report".

The letter was written by Mr. Paul Gray to Mr. Tom Jeffrey. I should like to ask two questions about the substance of that letter. The second point made by the Prime Minister's private secretary is:

"Second, the Prime Minister notes that the philosophy underlying the Report is that tests are only a part of assessment, and that the major purpose of assessment is diagnostic and formative rather than summative. As a result the method of assessment places a heavy responsibility on teachers' judgements and general impressions. She is also concerned to note the major role envisaged for the LEAs in the implementation of the system."

It is relevant to ask, what was the Secretary of State's reply to the Prime Minister on that point of substance? The House deserves to know what he has said in reply. I think that there is a good reply to be made, but some of us are curious to know what he has said.

The third point that the Prime Minister makes is:

"Third, the Report does not pull together the overall costs of the exercise, but the general impression is that these would be very large."

That is the point that was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery). The letter continues:

"In view of the recommendation in section xix, the Prime Minister wonders whether, for example, the group has considered the likely costs of training teachers prior to implementation and the regular annual costs of teachers' time once the system was in operation."

Can the House be told something about the cost?

Finally, I should like to ask another, and rather long question. On 14 March I tabled a question to the Prime Minister, asking

"what steps she is taking to discover the source of the leak of a letter from Mr. Paul Gray to Mr. Tom Jeffrey in relation to educational testing; and if she will make a statement."

As often, the answer was:

"It is not the usual practice to give information on such matters."—[*Official Report*, 14 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. *425*.]

Forgive me for saying this, but it was rather different in those 11 days at the Old Bailey when I attended the trial of Clive Ponting—sauce for the goose and sauce for the gander!

[Mr. Dalyell]

Be that as it may, on 21 March I asked the Prime Minister

"if, pursuant to her answer of 14 March, she will set up an inquiry to discover the source of the leak of a letter from Mr. Paul Gray to Mr. Tom Jeffrey on educational testing."

The Prime Minister's answer was a non sequitur:

"I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 14 March, at column *425*."—[*Official Report*, 21 March 1988, Vol. 130, c. *19*.]

For what purpose did Mr. Bernard Ingham's office authorise the disclosure of that letter from the Prime Minister's private secretary to the private office of the Secretary of State for Education and Science? Unfortunately, on Question No. 8 to the Prime Minister, a closed question, I had in mind a specific question on Mr. Ingham——

Mr. Hawkins: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I think that I anticipate the hon. Gentleman's point of order. I am finding it difficult to relate the comments of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) to the clauses that we are discussing. I remind him that we are discussing them under a timetable motion.

Mr. Dalyell: The letter was headed, "National curriculum . . . and testing". That was the subject of the letter. I can save the House a great deal of time with just one final question. Is there going to be a leak inquiry; and, if not, why not? The Secretary of State can answer that question easily. Well, silence speaks volumes. I ask the Secretary of State once more: is there going to be a leak inquiry?

Mr. Hawkins: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Dalyell: The Secretary of State has had his chance. The silence is deafening. I do not want to take up my colleagues' time, but people will have to draw their own conclusions——

Mr. Hawkins: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I get the strong impression that the hon. Member for Linlithgow is about to sit down. Yes, he has sat down. Mr. Hawkins.

Mr. Hawkins: It is nice to have something to do with these two new clauses and not see the guillotine being misused to get into the newspapers.

The hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) suggested — I thought unfairly — that the Government were not showing proper concern for those with dyslexia — *[Interruption.]* It is not a speech — I merely want to ask the Secretary of State a question. I thought, and still think, that the drafting of the new clauses, especially new clause 41, is so wide as to include all children with special needs, including those with dyslexia. To get the record straight for those outside the House, will my right hon. Friend assure us that the problems of those with dyslexia can be covered under the clause and that their special needs will be properly considered?

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): I want to speak briefly. I welcome the fact that the Government have listened to some of the representations that have been made to them on educational special needs. However, they have once again missed a marvellous opportunity. The reality is that we are seeing the gradual unpicking of the national curriculum, and we are going to see more of it as the week goes on.

From the beginning we said that if the Government had been starting from the right end—that is, looking at the needs of children and the ways in which one encourages and enables them to learn—they would have looked at the national curriculum very differently. They would have considered what a child needs in order to learn, and at cross-curricular activities, and so on. They would have looked at the flexibility that every hon. Member who has spoken this afternoon has recognised as necessary when addressing the needs of different children in different situations.

The reality is that initially the Government gave us a hidebound boxed method, which is clearly nonsense when one comes to address children with special needs. I regret tha even at this late stage the Government have not taken the opportunity to look at the national curriculum in a new way. I also deeply regret that they have not fulfilled their commitment to address the needs of the 16-plus. they gave that commitment at the end of 1981, but they have not yet fulfilled it. They have not met the sincere and almost desperate pleas of organisations such as the National Association for Handicapped Students.

I think, and hope, that the Government will look at this matter much more seriously. No one outside their own Front Bench is convinced that those needs have yet been adequately addressed. I hope that the Government will take the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Harry Greenway: I should like to make a brief contribution to this important discussion and to welcome the two new clauses. I welcome also the success of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in establishing, under the Bill, a national curriculum. That is warmly to be welcomed. I have long felt, both in my 23 years at all levels of the teaching profession and since, that it is absurd for children in, say, London, to have one curriculum and on moving to York to find that children of the same age are studying something entirely different. That cannot be right, and it cannot have contributed to the prosperity of our country. It is high time that that matter was put right.

Another aspect of the success that the national curriculum will bring to children and schools is the standardisation in teaching. That is welcome also. By standardisation, I mean standardisation in methods. If children are taught in a particular way in one part of the country, it is valuable for them to be taught similarly, and with a similar curriculum, in another part of the country, but without total standardisation. The Bill will achieve that.

5.30 pm

Does my right hon. Friend accept that the logic of a national curriculum means that schools will, as a result, have curriculum-led staffing? If he is able to accept it, even if only gradually, teachers will match the curriculum to the needs of the children. That has not always been the case. There has been an unsatisfactory situation in many schools and local education authorities, and it is high time that the situation was put right.

I warmly welcome what my right hon. Friend said about heads and serving teachers at all levels being

members of the National Curriculum Council. I am certain that they will make a continuing and dynamic contribution to the council and will be an essential part of it.

On the question of special needs, I agree with my right hon. Friend that the value of these new clauses lies in the state-maintained child having access to a wide range of subjects in the curriculum of ordinary schools. That is the achievement of the Education Act 1981, and of the Bill, and it is to be warmly welcomed.

I have experience of Sedgehill school, with 2,200 children. It contained the largest unit in the country for partially-hearing children, with about 57 children. Some of them were stone deaf and others were not so deaf. Some might think that the integration of those children with special difficulties into that very large school would cause them to be overlooked, but it had a tremendous effect. The other children always took care of those with hearing difficulties, who ran around with their hearing aids on. They took part in normal physical education lessons and in the curriculum generally in an almost normal way, yet they received the special help that they needed as partial hearers. That was of the highest value. I believe that the Bill will enhance such education and I warmly welcome it, for that reason and for many others.

Dr. Thomas: The hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) has given the House an excellent example of the importance of an integration policy. However, what concerns many of us is that, having had an integration policy after Warnock, where the special needs of children caught up, as it were, with the rest of the system, the rest of the education system is now going ahead with its so-called national curriculum.

The children with special needs — the 18 to 20 per cent. to whom we have referred — will be made an exception. These new clauses attempt to deal with that. They could be seen as providing for children with special education needs by taking them beyond the provision of the national curriculum, as the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) said, but they do not prescribe or clearly indicate what will be available instead for these children.

The Secretary of State has told us that he will produce regulations. What I shall pursue with him is the form of consultation about pupils with special educational needs. It has been argued ever since the Warnock report was published that some form of advisory council for special educational needs should be set up. New clause 42 refers to consultation. It is important for the Secretary of State to specify, either now or in the other place, how he intends such consultation to take place.

As a result of a report issued in 1984 by the Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children, an attempt was made to establish some kind of national advisory committee. The problem here is that individual children with special education needs will be stereotyped, yet again, within the classrooms. Their needs overall, across the curriculum, will not be taken into account. They will be seen, not as individuals, but as exceptions to the rule of the national curriculum, rather than being catered for in a positive way. An advisory body, or perhaps a body with stronger powers, could have an important role in representing the educational needs of such children. This could be introduced nationally within the proposed new structure in England, and within the Curriculum Council for Wales.

I hope that the Secretary of State will tell us whether the Government intend that the membership of the National Curriculum Council will include persons with special interests in special education. If it does not, it will mean that yet again this area of education will be excluded. We are dealing with 18 to 20 per cent. of pupils, as has been said repeatedly in the debate. This consideration applies not only to the need for an advisory committee on curriculum development for England and Wales, but to the additional resources that need to be made available, as we have also mentioned in the debate. The Government have made small concessions in this part of the Bill, but, with regard to implementing the rest of the Bill, the special education needs of children have been neglected.

Mr. Flannery: I should like to continue the debate with a major point about resources. Clearly, the two new clauses relating to special needs contain provisions that we are not struggling against, although there is much more to be said, and the second new clause is lengthy.

On the question of resources, we have heard some nonsense from the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey). He has a peerless record in the House of never saying a phrase or word against his Government. One cannot get anywhere with people like that, because they always say what is cautiously good for themselves rather than examining the problem.

The hon. Gentleman canonised the Secretary of State and almost all the Conservative Front Bench throughout the Committee stage. He has said that there is not a problem of resources. I do not know how anyone who knows anything about schools can possibly say that. I used to be on a committee of the National Union of Teachers that dealt with special needs, and it was made up of dedicated people from all over the country. Its great problem was that it was so highly specialised that only two members of that committee of 33 dealt with hospital schools, and only one of them, for example, dealt with some other subject. It needed a whole mass of people. One person could never learn everything about the specialised subjects.

The amount of money that is necessary for special needs is very clear. It is very expensive for pupils to re-enter mainstream education. People thought it would be easy for pupils with special needs to re-enter ordinary education. Such an approach has been tried in mental hospitals, and as a result many poor souls are wandering about because there is no back-up for them and no money. It is the same with special education. Unless it is backed up with money, a commitment to special education is an idle piece of piousness.

The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth said correctly, that we are not talking about a block of perhaps 2 per cent. or 18 per cent. of children. This issue concerns perhaps six children in most primary classes. They make up the bulk of that 18 per cent. We are trying to cater for the 2 per cent. It amounts to a teacher having perhaps one disruptive child in a class of about 30 children. There are many classes with about 30 children. If one speaks to that child's teachers, they may say that the child is holding back the education of the other pupils.

This is a fundamental point. Back-up is required so that these children can be taken out of a class and another teacher can look after them. To say that the resources are available if one looks for them is the most dishonest

[Mr. Flannery]

claptrap. Such an attitude shows that the hon. Gentleman has never entered a school. We need more resources. That is the lesson of special needs.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): Like the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) I believe that, while these new clauses are to be welcomed for the flexibility they give to special education and children with special needs, nevertheless they fail to provide for proper integration of children with special needs into the national curriculum and the system of testing.

Because one cannot talk about the national curriculum without talking about a system of testing, the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) was valid. I know that the Secretary of State was appalled at the leak of the letter from his Department. I believe that there should have been an inquiry to find out what happened.

The system of testing is the major drawback in applying the national curriculum to children with special needs. Families with such children want them to be part of the national curriculum but are apprehensive about the tests which the children will have to take; they are afraid that their children will be branded failures. The Secretary of State should tell us something about the tests which he proposes for these children.

Mr. William Cash (Stafford): I have had a special problem in my constituency in relation to dyslexia in respect of which I have corresponded with the Minister of State several times. In a nutshell, there are times when a dispute occurs between the local education authority and the persons employed by the local education authority who are responsible for making the assessment of whether or not dyslexia is properly identified. It is a difficult problem. The British Dyslexia Association has taken the question up several times.

I congratulate the Secretary of State on bringing forward this most important provision as an amendment. I sincerely hope that it will be used in a manner which will help resolve the difficulties which I have outlined. Parents of backward children have an instinct about why their children are backward. Some parents have exaggerated ideas about why their child is backward. From my experience of studying various cases, I have come to the conclusion that, if not for ideological reasons, certainly for qualification reasons, the persons who have the job of making the assessments tend too often to go on railway tracks. As I have said, on various occasions I have raised the matter in correspondence with the Department.

In that context I am particularly interested in the provisions of subsection (6) of new clause 42 and its relationship to subsections (7) and (8). In the last line of subsection (7), the specific right of appeal to the governing body is given to the parent, although the clause has already conferred on the head teacher the original power under the provisions in subsection (1). In subsection (8), there is in pursuance of the appeal the power for the governing body to confirm the head teacher's action or to

"direct the head teacher to take such action authorised by the regulations as they consider appropriate in the circumstances".

Then it becomes the duty of the head teacher to comply with those directions.

In no sense am I seeking to be critical; I merely wish to inquire. When one goes back to subsection (6), one sees that there is an equivalent duty on the local education authority, on receiving the requisite information described there to consider—these are the important words—

"whether any action on their part is required in the case of that pupil under section 5 of the 1981 Act".

I simply make the point about whether there may not be a potential conflict between the procedure relating to appeal and readjudication of the head teacher's decision by the governing body on the one hand and the duty of the head teacher and the duty of the local education authority on the other to consider whether or not to put what is being asked for into practical effect.

I invite the Secretary of State to consider that question. In the context of my experience in my constituency of Stafford, I would be extremely keen for a proper resolution of the question and not a potential conflict of functions and duties.

5.45 pm

Mr. Kenneth Baker: This has been an interesting debate. I am glad to see such strong support from all sides of the House for the thrust of the two new clauses and the amendments which go with them. Hon. Members have made various points which I shall try to answer. My hon. Friends the Members for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey) and for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) all talked about the problems of gifted children. They posed the question whether the brightest and most able children would be able to move through the national curriculum more quickly than the rest. In my opening remarks, as those who were here will remember, I said that there was a possibility of provision for this very point; yes, they would be able to.

There is nothing in the proposals to stop a child with outstanding ability in, say, mathematics, from learning that subject in a class of older children. He or she would be assessed against the attainment targets at the same time as the rest of the class and could move on into the sixth form with the other pupils. The attainment targets and programmes of study for each core and foundation subject will also reflect the whole range of likely attainments at each key stage, from the most to the least able. The bright or gifted child will be fully stretched throughout the period that he or she studies the national curriculum. That is important. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Surbiton has been particularly concerned about this point and has brought a delegation of parents to see one of my ministerial colleagues about it. I hope he will think that we have met the point.

The question was also asked whether gifted children educated in a class of their own age group, not with older pupils, will be able to take the GCSE early and move into the sixth form, or drop a foundation subject in which his or her attainments are already those expected at 16, in order to take other subjects at GCSE—possibly more science, a second foreign language or perhaps classics. We have received a number of representations pressing on us that we should allow the most and the more able children to drop foundation subjects if their attainments are already those expected at age 16. We certainly do not want the Bill to rule out that possibility. New clause 41 will give us flexibility to make special provision for such a pupil, but we do not want to lay down the rules now as to how that

provision should apply. It is a matter for consultation, on which I shall value the advice of the National Curriculum Council.

There are difficult judgments to be made about the level of attainment which a pupil should demonstrate before being allowed to drop a subject. It also seems that there are good reasons for saying that the ablest pupils should continue with the core subjects and foundation subjects until the age of 16 to the highest level of which they are capable. I hope that my hon. Friends who were concerned about the matter, as indeed we are, will feel that there is sufficient flexibility to allow for the gifted child.

The hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) spoke most eloquently about the matter. Various hon. Members have paid tribute to him because he knows a great deal about it. The House would be wise to listen to him, because he said some sensible things about statementing. He first said that there should be no rush into statementing. Those who have dealt with children with special educational needs have felt this quite strongly. The decision to statement a child must be a very individual decision. It must be taken most carefully. It should not be seen as a decision to be taken precipitately. It is a very important decision.

The hon. Gentleman rightly counselled care. He said that some children would not benefit from statementing. I am sure that he has personal experience of such children. Others, who are not experts in dealing with children with special educational needs, may feel that a child should be statemented. The hon. Gentleman rightly said that some parents feel strongly that their child should be statemented, while others feel strongly that he or she should not. The hon. Gentleman had experience of the problem as a teacher and I commend strongly to the House what he has said.

The hon. Member for West Lothian, if he is still the hon. Member for West Lothian——

Mr. Dalyell: Linlithgow.

Mr. Baker: Those of us who were here at the time remember the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) as the hon. Member for West Lothian because of the famous West Lothian question. I must tell him that we have developed the concept and devised an East Oxford question, which is all about academic freedom. The hon. Gentleman posed the West Lothian question because it could not be answered. That is why it was such a brilliant device. We have built on his experience and posed the East Oxford question, which also cannot be answered. I shall pose it to the House yet again not tonight but on Thursday, when we consider the question of academic freedom.

Mr. Dalyell: May I ask the Secretary of State a question that can be answered very easily: is there to be a leak inquiry?

Mr. Baker: I was coming to that. The hon. Gentleman is very preoccupied with this matter. He has moved on from the missing log book of the Belgrano to the missing log book of the Department of Education and Science. I do not intend to say whether there will be a leak inquiry. He must address such questions to the Prime Minister.

On the hon. Gentleman's comments about the alleged differences between my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and me on assessment and testing, I can only say that I am delighted that, according to its Front Bench, the Labour party is now in favour of Professor Black's report. Opposition Members have been enthusiastic in saying that they are in favour of Professor Black's report.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): Fulsome.

Mr. Baker: As my hon. Friend says, they have been fulsome, and I am delighted, because Professor Black's report recommended that there should be assessment and tesing at seven 11, 14, and 16. Many Opposition Members said that it would be impossible to establish a committee in the educational world that would come up with age-related tests. *[Interruption.]* Many in the teaching profession and the unions said exactly that, so I am glad that the Labour party is now committed to age-related assessment and testing, at seven 11, 14 and 16. I am delighted that they have made that progress.

Professor Black also said that there should be pencil and paper testing at seven 11, 14 and 16 and I am delighted that the Labour party is now committed to that. Professor Black went on to say that the results of the assessment and tests should be published. *[Interruption.]* I have been asked to answer questions and I must make the best use of the time available to me. I am delighted to hear that the Labour party is committed to the publication of assessment and tests to allow parents to assess the success or failure of schools. I welcome Opposition Members' support for those progressive measures.

The hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong) felt that new clauses 41 and 42 and the amendments represented an unpicking of the national curriculum. I do not look upon them as such, and nor does any other hon. Member who has spoken. It has been accepted that, in introducing the new clauses, we have recognised the strong points put to us by hon. Members —including the hon. Member for City of Durham—in Committee and responded to representations from outside the House and from hon. Members—including my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash)—about the need to recognise the problems of children who are statemented and children who are not statemented. That is important.

We have now injected into the national curriculum a degree of flexibility, particularly for such children. The hon. Member for Durham, North-West will know that we have always envisaged flexibility. Clause 10 as drafted allowed flexibility for statemented children, and, as the hon. Lady knows, we amended it in Committee to improve it. There was also flexibility in clause 4(3), and we have built on that in the new clauses.

The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conway (Dr Thomas) asked about consultation. Clearly, we would want to take the advice of those who are expert in dealing with special needs, of whom there are many. Various associations and groups of teachers and some of our own inspectors are expert in such matters. Local authorities, too, have advisers and inspectors. We are developing the national curriculum not only in respect of special needs, and we shall want to draw on the advice of experts because they have a great deal to offer.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway), drawing on his wide experience as a schoolteacher, strongly supported the measures, and I am sure that they will lead to better treatment of children with

[Mr. Baker]

special needs in facing up not only to the problems,—about which one tends to think too much—but to the opportunities of the national curriculum. As my hon. Friends the Members for Ealing, North and for Stafford said, many children have special learning difficulties of one sort and another—particularly in learning to read—and we try to recognise that fact.

Mr. Straw: The right hon. Gentleman referred to his hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). I am reminded that at a meeting of the National Association of Head Teachers in Cambridge, addressed by the hon. Members for Ealing, North and for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and myself, the hon. Gentleman said that the Conservative party was not interested in the publication of league tables of test scores of schools. Is that also the view of the Secretary of State?

Mr. Baker: The publication of schools' results, not for children aged seven but for those aged 11, 14 and 16, which is what Professor Black recommends, will make it possible to assess the school in the context of its area. The results of the tests and assessments will be published and made available in the education authority's annual report and in the local newspapers. The local community, including parents, will be able to assess the performance of their school and judge it in relation to other schools. That is what is envisaged.

Unlike Opposition Members, we want to ensure that every possible piece of information is made available to parents so that they can assess the school. That is the thrust of our proposals. A later clause deals with open enrolment, which will increase parental choice. Parents will be able to decide on the basis of the best information available which school in their area is better for their children. Surely that is what the House requires, although some Opposition Members may not require it, and some of the teachers' unions were totally opposed to it until a few weeks ago.

Mr. Straw: As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the argument is about whether the information published is fair and takes account of a child's background so that it does not lead to a distortion of teaching to the average. The Secretary of State made what I thought was an important statement when he excluded the possibility of publishing test results at the age of seven. Is that now Government policy?

Mr. Baker: Professor Black recommended that the results should be published at 11, 14 and 16. He said that it would be difficult to assess a school according to its results for children aged seven because the children have been in the school for only two years and they enter the learning process at different ages. Some children start learning to read and write at three or four, while others start at five. Professor Black recommended that there should not be a statutory requirement to publish results at that age, but that the matter should be left to the discretion of the head teacher. We are consulting on that. I should tell the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw)—we have debated this in Committee—that that is an attractive solution. It is a good idea not to make it statutory but to allow head teachers, if they wish, to publish. That is what Professor Black has recommended.

Finally, I should like to deal with points raised by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery).

Mr. Hawkins: What about dyslexia?

Mr. Baker: I am trying to answer all the various points that have been raised.

I will not go back over the question of resources because the hon. Member for Hillsborough knows our argument on that. He made an extraordinary accusation. He accused my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth of being loyal to his Front Bench. That is an accusation that we never level against the hon. Member for Hillsborough.

It being Six o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution this day to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on new clauses moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Six o'clock.*

New Clause 42

TEMPORARY EXCEPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PUPILS

'—(1) The Secretary of State may make regulations enabling the head teacher of any maintained school, in such circumstances and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed—

(a) to direct as respects a registered pupil at the school that, for such period as may be specified in the direction (the "operative period" of the direction), the provisions of the National Curriculum—

(i) shall not apply; or

(ii) shall apply with such modifications as may be so specified; and

(b) to revoke any direction give by him under the regulations and to vary any such direction except so as to extend its operative period.

(2) The conditions prescribed by the regulations shall, in particular, limit the period that may be specified in any direction given under the regulations to a maximum period specified in the regulations; and any maximum period specified in the regulations in relation to directions given under the regulations or in relation to directions so given in any circumstances so specified—

(a) shall be either—

(i) a fixed period not exceeding six months; or

(ii) a period determinable (in such manner as may be specified in the regulations) not later than six months from its beginning; and

(b) may (without prejudice to section 180(5) of this Act) differ according to whether or not the direction in question is given in respect of a period beginning immediately after the end of the operative period of a previous direction or within such period after the end of the operative period of a previous direction as may be specified in the regulations.

(3) Where a head teacher gives a direction under regulations made under this section in the case of any pupil or varies any direction so given, he shall give the information mentioned in subsection (4) below, in such manner as may be prescribed—

(a) to the governing body; and

(b) where the school is a county, voluntary or maintained special school, to the local education authority;

and shall take such steps as may be prescribed to give that information also to a parent of the pupil.

(4) That information is the following—

(a) the fact that he has taken the action in question, its effect and his reasons for taking it;

(b) the provision that is being or is to be made for the pupil's education during the operative period of the direction; and

(c) either—

(i) a description of the manner in which he proposes to secure the full implementation in relation to the pupil after the end of that period of the provisions of the National Curriculum' or

(ii) an indication of his opinion that the pupil has or probably has special educational needs by virtue of which the local education authority would be required to determine the special educational provision that should be made for him.

(5) Where the head teacher of a grant-maintained school includes such an indication of opinion as is mentioned in subsection (4)(c)(ii) above in information given to the governing body under subsection (3) above, he shall also give that information, in such manner as may be prescribed, to the local education authority.

(6) It shall be the duty of a local education authority, on receiving information given to the authority under this section by the head teacher of any maintained school which includes such an indication of opinion with respect to a pupil, to consider whether any action on their part is required in the case of that pupil under section 5 of the 1981 Act (assessment of special educational needs).

(7) Where the head teacher of a maintained school—

(a) gives, revokes or varies any direction with respect to a pupil under regulations made under this section;

(b) refuses to give, revoke or vary such a direction in response to a request made, in such manner and circumstances as may be prescribed, by the parent of a registered pupil at the school; or

(c) fails within such period as may be prescribed following the making of such a request to give, revoke or vary such a direction in accordance with the request;

the parent of the pupil concerned may appeal to the governing body.

(8) On any such appeal the governing body may—

(a) confirm the head teacher's action; or

(b) direct the head teacher to take such action authorised by the regulations as they consider appropriate in the circumstances;

and it shall be the duty of the head teacher to comply with any directions of the governing body under paragraph (b) above.

(9) The governing body shall notify the appellant and the head teacher in writing of their decision on any such appeal.

(10) Before making any regulations under this section, the Secretary of State shall consult with any persons with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable.' — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 43

EXTENSION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS

'—(1) The Secretary of State may by order direct that the provisions of sections 5 and 6(1)(b) of this Act shall have effect as if—

(a) any reference to pupils of compulsory school age included a reference to persons in secondary education or full-time further education who are over that age but have not attained the age of nineteen;

(b) any reference to a maintained school included a reference to an institution required to be covered by a scheme made under section 116 of this Act and, except in relation to a local education authority—

(i) any institution within the PCFC funding sector; and

(ii) any institution (other than a university) which provides further education and is a grant-aided institution; and

(c) any reference to the head teacher of such a school included a reference to the principal or other head of such an institution.

(2) An order under this section may make such consequential modifications of section 7(4) of this Act as appear to the Secretary of State to be necessary or expedient.

(3) In relation to persons in relation to whom sections 5 and 6(1)(b) of this Act have effect by virtue of an order under this section, section 14 of this Act shall have effect

(a) with the modifications mentioned in paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (1) above of any relevant references in subsections (1) and (6);

(b) as if the information referred to in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) were information with respect to the following matters—

(i) the qualifications authenticated by outside persons (within the meaning of section 5 of this Act) for which courses of study are to be provided by or on behalf of the school or institution concerned for such persons as are mentioned above in this subsection;

(ii) the courses of study leading to such qualifications which are to be so provided;

(iii) the syllabuses which have been provided or determined for the purposes of those courses; and

(iv) the results of the assessments of such persons for the purposes of those qualifications; and

(c) with the omission of subsections (1)(b), (2) and (3).

(4) The reference in section 15(1)(b) of this Act to section 14 shall not include section 14 as it applies by virtue of subsection (3) above.

(5) Before making an order under this section, the Secretary of State shall consult with any persons with whom consultation appears to him to be desirable.'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 44

GRANTS IN RESPECT OF MANDATORY AWARDS

'(1) For each financial year beginning after the day on which this subsection comes into force the Secretary of State shall pay to each local education authority a grant equal to the aggregate amount paid in that year by the authority under section 1(1) of the Education Act 1962 (awards for persons attending first degree courses and comparable courses).

(2) Payments of grants under subsection (1) above shall be made at such times as the Secretary of State may, with the consent of the Treasury, determine.' — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 45

GRANTS FOR THE EDUCATION OF TRAVELLERS AND DISPLACED PERSONS

'(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide for the payment to local education authorities of grants in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them in making provision the purpose (or main purpose) of which is to promote and facilitate the education of persons to whom this subsection applies.

(2) Subsection (1) above applies to a person if

(a) by reason of his way of life or, in the case of a child, his parent's way of life he either has no fixed abode or leaves his main abode to live elsewhere for significant periods in each year;

(b) he fell within paragraph (a) above within a prescribed period immediately preceding the making of the provision in question.

(c) he is for the time being resident in a camp or other accommodation or establishment provided for refugees or for displaced or similar persons.

(3) Regulations under subsection (1) above may

[Mr. Baker]

(a) prescribe classes or descriptions of expenditure in respect of which grants are payable under the regulations;
(b) provide for the determination of the amount of any grant so payable;
(c) provide for the payment of any such grant to be dependent on the fulfilment of such conditions as may be determined by or in accordance with the regulations; and
(d) provide for requiring local education authorities to whom payments have been made under the regulations to comply with such requirements as may be so determined.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 46

GRANTS RELATING TO AIDED OR SPECIAL AGREEMENT SCHOOLS

'(1) The Secretary of State may pay grants to the governing body of any aided school or special agreement school in respect of any preliminary expenditure incurred by them for the purposes of any scheme for the transfer of the school to a new site or the enlargement or alteration of the school premises.

(2) Where any persons propose or are considering whether to propose—

(a) that a school established by them, or by persons whom they represent, should be maintained by a local education authority as an aided school; or
(b) that a school which may be so established should be so maintained;

the Secretary of State may pay grants to them in respect of any preliminary expenditure incurred by them for the purposes of any scheme for the provision of a site for the school or of any buildings which would be school buildings.

(3) Grants under subsection (1) or (2) above may be paid in respect of any such scheme as is mentioned in that subsection whether or not—

(a) the details of any such scheme had been formulated at the time the expenditure was incurred;
(b) where such details were not formulated at that time, they are subsequently formulated;
(c) the governing body or persons in question had determined to proceed with any such scheme at that time, or
(d) where the governing body or persons had not determined so to proceed at that time, they subsequently determine to proceed with any such scheme.

(4) Expenditure in respect of which such grants are payable includes, in particular, costs incurred in connection with—

(a) the preparation of plans and specifications for any proposed construction, enlargement or alteration of buildings which are or would be school buildings; and
(b) estimating the sums which would be expended if any such works were carried out;

but does not include any sums expended in carrying out any such works.

(5) A grant under subsection (1) or (2) above shall not exceed 85 per cent. of the expenditure in respect of which it is paid.

(6) Where—

(a) a grant is paid under subsection (1) above in the case of any school; or
(b) a grant is paid under subsection (2) above in the case of any school which becomes, or is established as, a voluntary school;

the grant shall for the purposes of section 14 of the 1944 Act or section 82 of this Act be treated as expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State (otherwise than in connection with repairs) in respect of the school premises.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 47

GRANTS: MISCELLANEOUS

'(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide for the payment of grants to bodies other than local education authorities whose object or main object is, in his opinion, the promotion of learning or research.

(2) Regulations under subsection (1) above may provide—

(a) for the payment of any such grant to be dependent on the fulfilment of such conditions as may be determined by or in accordance with the regulations; and
(b) for requiring bodies to whom payments have been made under the regulations to comply with such requirements as may be so determined.

(3) In section 100(1)(b) of the 1944 Act (grants to persons other than local education authorities) for the words "for the purposes of educational services provided by them or on their behalf or under their management" there shall be substituted the words "by them for the purposes of, or in connection with, the provision (or proposed provision) of educational services".'—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 54

STAMP DUTY

'.—(1) Subject to subsection (4) below, stamp duty shall not be chargeable in respect of any transfer effected under or by virtue of any of the following provisions of this Act, namely—

section 8(2);
section 59 (taken with Schedule 8);
section 79(4);
section 80(2);
section 105 (taken with Schedule 8);
section 107(1)(b);
section 109 (taken with Schedule 8);
section 113(2);
section 140(1) and (2);
section 150(1);
section 158(5);
section 166(5) and (7); and
section 179 (taken with Schedule 8).

(2) Subject to subsection (4) below, stamp duty shall not be chargeable in respect of any transfer to a local education authority under or by virtue of section 79(6) or 85(2) of this Act of property which immediately after the transfer is held by the authority for the purposes of an institution (or institutions) falling within subsection (3) below.

(3) An institution falls within this subsection if it is—

(a) a university;
(b) an institution within the PCFC funding sector;
(c) an institution which provides higher education or further education (or both) and is either—
(i) maintained by a local education authority; or
(ii) designated by or under regulations made under section 27 of the 1980 Act as an institution substantially dependent for its maintenance on assistance from local education authorities or on grants under section 100(1)(b) of the 1944 Act;
(d) a school maintained by a local education authority; or
(e) a grant-maintained school.

(4) No instrument (other than a statutory instrument) made or executed—

(a) under or in pursuance of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (1) above; or
(b) for the purpose of giving effect to any such transfer as is mentioned in subsection (2) above;

shall be treated as duly stamped unless it is stamped with the duty to which it would, but for this section (and, if applicable,

section 129 of the Finance Act 1982), be liable or it has, in accordance with the provisions of section 12 of the Stamp Act 1891, been stamped with a particular stamp denoting that it is not chargeable with any duty or that it has been duly stamped.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 55

REPLACEMENT AND VARIATION OF SCHEMES

'—(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, a scheme may be replaced or varied by a subsequent scheme made under section 23 of this Act by the local education authority concerned.

(2) Section 23 shall apply for the purposes of a scheme replacing or varying a previous scheme with the omission of subsection (1); and subsection (1) of section 24 of this Act shall not apply in relation to such a scheme.

(3) A scheme prepared by a local education authority under section 23 which—

(a) replaces a previous scheme; or

(b) makes any significant variation of a previous scheme;

shall be submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval.

(4) A scheme under section 23 varying a previous scheme which is not required by subsection (3)(b) above to be submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval is referred to below in this section as a "minor variation scheme".

(5) Subsection (5) of section 24 shall not apply in relation to a minor variation scheme.

(6) The Secretary of State may by order specify what descriptions of variation are to be regarded as significant for the purposes of subsection (3)(b) above.

(7) Where a local education authority propose to make a scheme under section 23 which in their opinion is a minor variation scheme, the authority shall notify the Secretary of State in writing of their proposal, giving brief particulars of the nature of the variations proposed to be made by the scheme.

(8) In any such case the authority shall, if so required by the Secretary of State, send to him a copy of their proposed scheme; and it shall be for the Secretary of State to determine whether or not any variation proposed to be made by the scheme falls within any description of variation specified in an order under subsection (6) above.

(9) A scheme made under section 23 may also be varied by a direction given by the Secretary of State, as from such date as may be specified in the direction.

(10) Before giving such a direction the Secretary of State shall consult the local education authority concerned and such other persons as he thinks fit.'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 56

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

'— (1) This section applies to any school to which section 33 or 34 of this Act for the time being applies which is a community school.

(2) For the purposes of this section, a school is a community school if—

(a) activities other than school activities ("non-school activities") are carried on, on the school premises; and

(b) all non-school activities which are so carried on are carried on under the management or control of the governing body of the school.

(3) A scheme may provide for applying sections 33(3) and 34(10) of and Schedule 2 to this Act in relation to persons employed to work—

(a) partly for the purposes of school activities and partly for the purposes of non-school activities carried on on the premises of a school to which this section applies; or

(b) solely for the purposes of non-school activities so carried on;

as if all activities so carried on were school activities'. *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 57

PROVISION FOR DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS BY GOVERNING BODIES OF COUNTY, VOLUNTARY AND MAINTAINED SPECIAL SCHOOLS

'In section 8 of the 1986 Act (proceedings and tenure of office of governors of county, voluntary or maintained special school), in subsection (7) (provision that may be included in regulations made by the Secretary of State as to meetings and proceedings of governing bodies, etc.) the following paragraphs shall be inserted after paragraph (a)

"(aa) for the establishment of committees by the governing bodies of such schools (whether or not including persons who are not members of the governing body concerned) and for the constitution, meetings and proceedings of such committees;

(ab) for the delegation of functions of the governing body of any such school in prescribed circumstances to committees established by that body, to any member of that body or to the head teacher;".'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 58

REPLACEMENT AND VARIATION OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING SCHEMES

'—(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, a scheme may be replaced or varied by a subsequent scheme made under section 116 of this Act by the local education authority concerned.

(2) Section 116 shall apply for the purposes of a scheme replacing or varying a previous scheme with the omission of subsection (1); and subsection (1) of section 117 of this Act shall not apply in relation to such a scheme.

(3) A scheme prepared by a local education authority under section 116 which—

(a) replaces a previous scheme; or

(b) makes any significant variation of a previous scheme;

shall be submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval.

(4) A scheme under section 116 varying a previous scheme which is not required by subsection (3)(b) above to be submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval is referred to below in this section as a "minor variation scheme".

(5) Subsection (5) of section 117 shall not apply in relation to a minor variation scheme.

(6) The Secretary of State may order specify what descriptions of variation are to be regarded as significant for the purposes of subsection (3)(b) above.

(7) Where a local education authority propose to make a scheme under section 116 which in their opinion is a minor variation scheme, the authority shall notify the Secretary of State in writing of their proposal, giving brief particulars of the nature of the variations proposed to be made by the scheme.

(8) In any such case the authority shall, if so required by the Secretary of State, send to him a copy of their proposed scheme; and it shall be for the Secretary of State to determine whether or not any variation proposed to be made by the scheme falls within any description of variation specified in an order under subsection (6) above.

(9) A scheme made under section 116 may also be varied by a direction given by the Secretary of State, as from such date as may be specified in the direction.

[Mr. Baker]

(10) Before giving such a direction the Secretary of State shall consult the local education authority concerned and such other persons as he thinks fit.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 59

SUPERANNUATION FOR STAFF OF FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

'.—(1) The persons to whom section 1 of the Superannuation Act 1972 applies (persons to or in respect of whom benefits may be provided by schemes under that section) shall include—

(a) persons who at any time after the coming into force of this section are serving in employment with the company formed and registered under the Companies Act 1948 and known at the passing of this Act as the Further Education Unit; and

(b) persons who at any time before the passing of this Act have ceased to serve in employment with that company;

and accordingly a reference to that company shall be inserted at the appropriate point in the alphabetical list of "Other Bodies" in Schedule 1 to that Act.

(2) That company shall pay to the Treasury, at such times as the Treasury may direct, such sums as the Treasury may determine in respect of the increase attributable to this section in the sums payable out of money provided by Parliament under that Act.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last night there was an extension of the money resolution in order to deal with the question of student grants. We had the odd procedure whereby the Minister of State did not tell the House what it was about. The hon. Lady chose to move the resolution formally and to wind up the debate, and, skilfully, she ran out of time and failed to answer the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) and the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). Interestingly, the Government chose not to tell us what it was all about.

If one considers the opening speech and reply of the Secretary of State, it seems that he has again skilfully avoided the new clauses in question being debated. I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether you would give consideration, in selecting amendments at a later stage, as to whether it would be possible for us to return to the issue of student grants, because there is a suspicion among Opposition Members that the Government have moved amendments that have given them the opportunity to pave the way for student loans and we would want to pursue that issue.

I know that you cannot commit yourself on future selection, but I hope that you will bear that in mind. We are extremely suspicious that the Government have deliberately contrived the business so as to avoid there being an opportunity for us to probe that issue.

Mr. Flannery: Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I agree with what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett). There are 13 new clauses tabled in this group and, because of the guillotine, we have discussed only two. Therefore, all the others—this needs to be placed on the record—are not discussed. That is what has happened and it seems to be a terrible violation of democracy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am bound by the resolution of the House. However, I shall discuss with Mr. Speaker the point that has been made with regard to the selections for further days. As the House knows, Mr. Speaker has not yet made his selections for the remaining days of consideration of the Bill.

New Clause 1

STUDY GRANTS OR EDUCATIONAL MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCES

'The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision requiring local education authorities to provide educational maintenance allowances for pupils aged 16 to 19.'.—*[Mr. Fatchett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Fatchett: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following: New clause 2—*16-19 Education*—

'(1) Within 6 months of Royal Assent to this Act the Secretary of State shall lay before Parliament a report on education and training for 16 to 19 year olds.

(2) Such a report shall deal with financial support to enable 16 to 19 year olds to remain in full time education, the need to integrate education and training provisions for 16 to 19 year olds; and a review of all examinations and forms of continual assessment for 16 to 19 year olds to ensure they are compatible and will enable a young person to build up a range of skills and knowledge for their own sake or for entry into Higher Education or work.'.

New clause 18—*Further and Higher Education*—

'(1) It shall be the duty of the Secretary of State, within three months of the date of Royal Assent, to lay an Order in draft before each House of Parliament for approval to make provision for the matters specified in subsection (2).

(2) The Order specified in subsection (1) above shall provide for local education authorities to have the duty to undertake functions in relation to strategic planning of post-16 education provision outside schools, including

(a) the drawings up of strategic plans for such post-16 provision;

(b) the undertaking of negotiations with the Manpower Services Commission over the provision of courses;

(c) the submission of plans to the Secretary of State;

and, in relation to (c) above, the Secretary of State shall have regard to such plans in making any determination relating to the funding of provision to which this section applies.'.

Mr. Fatchett: It is a pleasure to have yet another opportunity to debate with the Minister of State. She has told me privately that there were certain difficulties last night and that she was about to lose her voice. Therefore, she found that moving the money resolution formally had certain advantages. I explained subsequently that I was in a somewhat similar position. I will try not to move the new clause formally, so as to give the Minister some time to be ready to answer the debate.

I note that there is an amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). It is typical of amendments moved by the hon. Member for Yeovil and I wondered whether, at some stage, he would be moving our own new clause. He has just failed to get the amendment right in those terms. Those of us who watched the hon. Gentleman's performance in Committee will be interested to note that today he has brought with him reinforcements—or should I say, reinforcement. For this

important debate on 16-to-19 education we now have with us the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes). Therefore, the two spokespersons on education for the alliance are present.

I realise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that poses a problem for you. If both hon. Members were to stand and seek to catch your eye, there may be some difficulty in deciding who gets preference. I realise that the hon. Member for Yeovil may be gallant enough to give preference to the hon. Member for Greenwich. He may be gallant enough to recognise that, according to the recent opinion poll, the hon. Member for Greenwich now represents more people in the country than the hon. Member for Yeovil. There may well be a problem in terms of the normal courtesies of the House in respect of making a choice there.

Before we begin this important debate I should like to say that the Secretary of State was in a slightly unhappy mood during the first debate. He said that the Labour party had resorted to personal criticism of him. I am sorry that it has pricked him in that way. I can say genuinely that we will not do it again, and we promise the Secretary of State—I shall convey this promise to him when he is in the Chamber with us—that we will not criticise him if his colleagues stop doing so, particularly if the Prime Minister stops. We can then all work on the same basis.

There was little chance in Committee to debate the important educational area of post-16 provision. It is a crucial area and one that all political parties need to address as we move towards the next century and the problems that will be created for our economy in terms of new skills and the education and training for those new skills.

It is not an understatement to say that in many respects post-16 education faces a crisis. It is not a crisis of under-performance, because the HMI reports have spoken favourably of what is performed in further education in our tertiary colleges and our sixth forms. I believe that it is a crisis of identity. It is a crisis of future orientation and a lack of innovation and direction on the part of the Government.

The Government tell us regularly—they are right; there is no criticism of this—that a modern economy needs to give its labour force the ability to adapt to new technologies and jobs. That is the basis of a skills economy. It is the basis of a knowledge economy for the next century. We need people with adaptable skills who will enable Britain to compete successfully with other countries. Other countries are already investing in adaptable skills and we feel that Britain is not making the same necessary investment.

If we look at the way in which the Government meet the challenge, we can see that on all figures of international comparison the Government fail in their ability to persuade youngsters at the age of 16 to stay on in full-time education or in high-quality training. That is a loss not just to the country but to the individual. Leaving school early and putting good education and high quality training behind one is a loss to the individual in terms of future opportunities. Every time a youngster leaves good-quality education or training at the age of 16, that youngster is having certain doors closed on him or her. As I have said, it is a loss to the individual and to the economy.

If one looks at the comparisons that can be made between this country and our major competitors, one can see that we perform badly in terms of persuading youngsters to stay on in education at the age of 16. About one third of youngsters in this country stay on in full-time education. Our competitors improve on that substantially. In countries such as Sweden, it is a rare exception for a youngster to leave good-quality education and training at the age of 16. The same is true of Denmark, the United States, Holland, Japan, France, Italy and Germany. All our major competitors fare better than we do in this area.

I am not making a partisan or party political point here. There is a deep cultural problem in this country and staying on rates have not been good under any previous Government. But we must face this crisis if we are to compete in the skills and knowledge economy of the next decade and century. What has happened before is irrelevant to the way in which we build for the future.

One of the Government's arguments is to say that we now have the youth training scheme and that if we take youngsters on that into account our figures bear some international comparison. Two things need to be said about that. First, all hon. Members know that there are good-quality youth training schemes — and appalling ones. The YTS varies in quality. The best schemes can compete internationally, but the medium and worse ones cannot. So including YTS figures makes the figures biased.

Secondly, there is an interesting irony in the British education system. In the debate on special education that we have just had, there was a genuine concern about children performing at one end of the spectrum and about those at the other end. There is an irony that is germane to this context, too. Our post-16 provision does not give a broad enough base in training and education to equip our youngsters with the skills and abilities that they need to manage their economic performance and their lives.

The YTS provision is specific and narrow. We do not build up a range of skills in youngsters on YTS; we build up one specific skill that enables them to find some opportunity in the labour market. A-levels, too are very specific, which is the other part of the irony. We offer youngsters doing A-levels an equally narrow education and training until the age of 18. By contrast with every other western European country, therefore, we have two specific forms of training. Those other countries aim for broader post-16 training.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): I am following the hon. Gentleman's argument closely. Is he saying that 16 is the wrong age at which to test people? Many of the countries that he has mentioned do these examinations at 17½ and 18. Is the fundamental flaw in this country our obsession with exams at 16—and probably with doing so many examinations?

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman has touched on a point that I shall come to later. It is a valid point about the nature of the qualification and examination system in this country. It should be an important item on the agenda for future discussions in the education world.

There are other problems, too. Government statistics show that the number of youngsters going into full-time and higher education will inevitably decline because of demographic factors during the next decade. That decline is an opportunity in some respects and a challenge and worry in others. It is a challenge and worry because, unless we persuade more youngsters of the post-16 age group to stay on, we shall not reinvest in the skills base that the British economy will need into the next century. Also, we

[Mr. Fatchett]

shall not have the opportunity to develop that generation if we miss this chance to invest more in youngsters, because there is now a smaller age group than before. That is the opportunity.

6.15 pm

Another aspect gives rise to anxiety, and I do not want to sound critical about it. In the past few years, during which there has been an increase in youth employment, many youngsters have gone out to find the jobs that are available. That makes economic and domestic sense for families, but we must be worried about the jobs that many of them are taking in the labour market. There are figures to support the argument that some jobs lack skills, training, and the chance to hold aspirations or find future opportunity.

We are creating a two-tier labour market and the youngsters going out into the second tier will find that their futures hold little in the way of training or enrichment of their jobs and lives. So, while we welcome the increase in youth employment, we are also concerned that many of the jobs to which youngsters go will offer little training or hope of satisfaction.

The picture of British education for post-16s shows that the system is not performing well on international comparisons, that it is too specific and narrow and that it is not necessarily adaptable to future requirements. It shows, too, that fewer youngsters are staying on after 16, partly for demographic and partly for employment reasons. There is a potentially damaging lack of investment in young people and their future skills, and we need to do something to reverse the process.

It is a great shame that the Secretary of State, who had all this legislative time, has not thought post-16 education important enough to go on the education agenda. The crisis exists and I should have hoped that the Secretary of State, the Ministers and the Government would have responded to it.

How can we change the depressing cultural feature of many youngsters being driven away from educational opportunities at the age of 16? As a country, we must set ourselves a simple target, which has been achieved by many of our competitors. It is the single most important target for the education system: the goal of making it possible for all our youngsters to stay in education and of effectively raising the school-leaving age to 18—not on a compulsory basis, but by creating a cultural climate in which they will all expect that it will be possible for them to stay on in good schools and training in which to build their future lives and satisfactions.

I offer the Government two suggestions on how this is to be done. First, the crucial precondition for effective post-16 education for all our youngsters is to recognise that there is a need to provide a financial incentive for the youngsters of many working-class families to stay on after the age of 16. All the available evidence is that many families face a financial burden in supporting youngsters staying on post-16. There is a financial incentive to persuade the 16-year-old youngster to join the labour market and take those jobs which I have described, which are without hope and training.

How many families in each of our constituencies include youngsters, especially girls, who have been told that the best thing for them—in fact, the only thing that is necessary in the context of the family—is to find a job rather than stay on in good education and training? We must create an incentive for youngsters to stay on in education. The Government must seriously consider the possibility of educational maintenance allowances.

Secondly, we must consider the whole system of post-16 qualifications. There is a plethora of qualifications, many of which are not understandable to employers, parents or youngsters. We need to be radical and have a system that is understandable. Such a system should have two characteristics. First, it must be modular and portable so that youngsters can build up the skills and qualifications to take with them into their future lives and employment. Secondly, the qualifications should not become specific so that they are divisive and provide categories of youngsters who are either technically qualified or academically qualified. The qualifications should be sufficiently broad to give the technically able youngster a broad general education.

We have had a debate on the national curriculum. Sadly, I have not noticed one Minister—I apologise if Ministers have done this—consider the need to provide basic literacy and numeracy skills for our post-16 education system. We have failed miserably in providing our youngsters with an understanding of the society in which they will make their living. How many of our youngsters leave school at 16 with an understanding of our great institutions? There are many opportunities post-16 on which we should build. Qualifications should not be divisive. They should be broad, which would fit in with the objective of the system being modular and portable. I hope that that partly answers the point made by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel).

One of the great weaknesses of the British education sysem is that we live in a culture of failure rather than success. Someone once said to me, appositely, that the British education system would probably get its ultimate satisfaction in failing someone with a PhD thesis. We should find a way to provide an education that assesses youngsters' abilities and considers those abilities in terms of success rather than failure. We create barriers when youngsters are 16 which limits them to being seen as either failures or successes.

I remember commenting at a meeting in Weston-super-Mare that the most effective way to assess youngsters would be to judge what they can perform against their ability. I made the point that, if I were to be thrown into the sea at Weston-super-Mare, it would be a great success if I could swim 10 yards. Some wag in the audience said, "If anyone from this place can find the sea at Weston-super-Mare, he would also have great success." The ability of an individual to swim a metaphorical 10 yards and to see that as a success is crucial in our education system. Rather than praise success, our education system often seems to look for failure and to limit people because of that failure.

There is an urgent need to re-examine all our provision post-16. That should be given an important place towards the top of our education agenda. Post-16 provision is a crucial investment in this country's future. It is about time that the Government acted with the urgency that the need for good post-16 education requires from a Government who are thinking about the future.

Several Hon. Members *rose*—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I remind the House that there is a lot of ground to cover in a short period; brief speeches will be very much in order.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): I shall follow your instruction, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) has made an important and interesting point. I agree that we need to give young people more encouragement for what they have achieved from their education. I agree that, because of the continuing high unemployment in certain parts of the country, it is important to encourage people from homes where there is unemployment to stay on at school or go into further education.

We should look at the new clause in the context of the Government's forthcoming publication on the future of student grants and loans. I note that the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) is here. He too, served on the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts between 1979 and 1983 when we considered the possibility of grants and loans and concluded that there should be a mixture of the two, although we were not specific as to amounts.

We must let the GCSE settle down. It is one of the greatest upheavals that we have ever had in the education system. I pay tribute to the enormous amount of work that teachers are doing in trying to get it right. It is a mere six or seven weeks before the first examination.

To encourage people to have greater faith in and enthusiasm for education, there should be much greater use of school buildings, homework should be done at school rather than at home and there should be much greater use of libraries for education purposes. There must be a sea change in attitudes to staying on at school from not only pupils but their parents. Whether they change will depend on what is on offer. I hope that, once the GCSE has settled down, people will feel that the curriculum is wider, better and more relevant and provides a better opportunity to get a job.

Before we allow new clause 1 to be passed, we should consider possible changes in child benefit and in tax allowances for people whose children stay on at school. I do not disagree with the spirit of new clause 1, but there are many other matters to be considered. I agree with the comment of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central that there should be urgent re-examination of post-16 education. After this huge Education Reform Bill has been passed, we want gentle and cautious experiment, rather than another great upheaval.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): I found a great deal with which to agree in the speeches of the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) and of my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett), both of whom believe, as I and other Opposition Members do, that education should be an enabling experience, extending opportunities to all our citizens, as well as equipping society with the skills and knowledge that it will need for the 21st century.

Any major educational reform worthy of the name should therefore address at its heart the extension of opportunity and access, both through adequately resourced and properly planned provision and by encouraging and supporting participation. It should especially encourage the participation of those people whose social and economic disadvantage is compounded by their under-representation in education and training, which too often bequeaths poor opportunities and limited expectations from one generation to another.

There is no group for whom that is more important than those in the 16 to 19-year-old band who will be among the principal victims of the divisive and still half-baked aspects of the legislation. They will suffer as a result of the destructive competition which open enrolment and opting out would usher in. They will suffer especially as a result of the attack on planning and co-ordination, as the role of education authorities is undermined. They will pay the price for the absence from the Bill of an effective strategy for education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds.

6.30 pm

Moreover, the Bill is inflicting that damage on the already scandalously unsatisfactory situation in which only 32 per cent. of young people in the United Kingdom remain in full-time education after 16, compared with 79 per cent. in the United States, 70 per cent. in the Netherlands, 69 per cent. in Spain, 58 per cent. in France, 48 per cent. in Italy and 44 per cent. in West Germany.

That neglect of education and training for young people is unique in the industrialised world and is further aggravated by the shortcomings of the youth training scheme. Unfortunately, the good projects in that scheme are vastly outnumbered by those which are no more than cheap labour devices and which have a great deal more to do with manipulating the unemployment figures and undermining wage levels than with developing real skills or providing real jobs.

As the Government have palpably failed to provide any effective strategy for the education and training of 16 to 19-year-olds, the House owes it to our young people and to the cultural and economic future of our society to amend the Bill to provide such a strategy.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central referred to some of the elements of that strategy. I want particularly to address the question of financial support for those staying on in full-time education after 16. Anyone who considers the evidence cannot dispute that there is a need for such financial support. The longitudinal analysis by the national child development study showed the benefits for those who stayed on at school and the extent to which young people were leaving school for financial reasons. As we would expect, those who were disadvantaged at 16 were most likely to leave because, as they put it, "The family needs the money."

Similarly, an analysis by Brown and Madge of the Social Science Research Council and DHSS-funded studies into the cycle of deprivation concluded:

> "The provision of funds to enable older children to stay on at school is grossly inadequate and should be reviewed as a matter of urgency."

Such evidence and pleas have fallen on deaf ears so far as the Government are concerned, and the Bill will do nothing to help the situation.

The Government deny both independence and opportunity to young people under 18. The Bill especially penalises those families who are low-paid or unemployed and for whom maintaining a young person in full-time education imposes a cost which is all too frequently insupportable. I do not suggest that the introduction of an allowance will, of itself, remedy the situation and compensate for the cultural failing within our society to expect and encourage young people to stay on at school.

[Mr. Andrew Smith]

but it is indisputably necessary for us to make progress towards greater participation in education and training after the age of 16.

We need mandatory allowance provision which can make a real difference. No one would deny that such provision would have a substantial cost and that further consultation on the details of its operation and relation to child benefit and tax allowances, for example, would be necessary. We should consider that not simply as a cost, but as an investment, which is more than worth while in terms of extending opportunity and of equipping society with the skills and knowledge that we need for the future.

In the past week, the Government have spoken a great deal about incentives. We have seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer redistribute colossal sums of money to the very rich for totally unneeded and unproven incentives. It is high time that the country and the House rose to the challenge and created incentives where they are really needed to enable all our young people to have a good education. That is why the Opposition have tabled new clause 1. I urge the House to support it.

Mr. Ashdown: In such debates as this there is always a sense of deja vu. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) commented on that. I had a sense of deja vu when he spoke because, as so many times in Committee, it was a pity that he spoiled a good speech by making puerile comments at the start.

I have always believed that the Labour party was unfit to govern Britain, not because it is shot through by the extreme Left, but because it is out of date. When the hon. Gentleman spoke about my party, he clearly showed himself to be out of date and does not even appear to have read the weekend newspapers.

What was even more telling was that the hon. Gentleman accused me of falling back on the device of amending new clause 2, thus omitting completely the fact that I have tabled new clauses 24 and 25. However, Labour Members have constructed events in such a way that those new clauses are unlikely to be debated. I have had to take the Labour party's wishy-washy, generalised, unspecific and soggy new clause and seek to put some flesh on it. That happened time after time in Committee because Labour Members never did any hard thinking about alternatives.

The Labour party is in the middle of what I can only call "reviewitis". Rather than tackle any of the problems, its initial reaction is to have a review and to call for a report. The Labour party is currently reviewing and reporting on its policy as a whole. If we consider the new clauses tabled by Labour Members, we find exactly the same thing. Whenever Labour Members need to take a hard decision, as in the case of education for 16 to 19-year-olds, they call for a report. On the issue of staffing nursery classes, Labour again calls for a report, rather than putting down any specific proposals. If we consider new clause 8——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman is taking too many new clauses at a time. Let us stick to the new clauses 1, 2 and 18.

Mr. Ashdown: I accept your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was merely saying that, of the 11 new clauses tabled by the Labour party, no fewer than five make no specific recommendations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman has not heard me. We are debating new clauses 1, 2 and 18, and I hope that he will confine his remarks to them.

Mr. Ashdown: I accept your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but surely it is in order to answer the attack made upon me by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. I have one sentence to say. Of those new clauses, a full five make no proposal but simply call for a report. That is why I put down the particular amendment that was attacked by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. It is a great shame that the hon. Gentleman should have taken that view at the start of his speech.

The Labour party's new clause is welcome, so far as it goes, because we shall have to move towards the establishment of educational maintenance allowances. The question really is what will happen if we do not do something in that area. The evidence is perfectly clear. The number of students in further education in Britain is depressingly, perhaps even tragically, low.

Compared with other nations, about 30 per cent., depending how one calculates it, of students in Britain stay on in education, whereas, in most cases in the more advanced industrial nations, the rate is at least double that, and frequently more. In Japan, the rate is about 90 per cent.; depending on how it is measured. Therefore, there is no question but that we must take some steps now to ensure that an appropriate number stay on in education after the age of 16.

To pick up a point tellingly made by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel), we shall soon come to a point in our education system where we are not talking about the 14-to-16 age band but about a 14 to 18-year-old band. Within a decade or so we may well find that GCSE, although an entirely admirable model of an exam, will have withered away in importance and we shall be looking much more at the 18 age group. We must encourage the rate of participation in further education.

According to the Government's statistical bulletin of November 1987, participation rates post-16 rose in the early years of this Administration between 1979 and 1982, but since 1982, in the last four years for which figures are available, there has been a full 7 per cent. fall-off rate, while other nations have been making commitments to increase theirs. France, whose participation rates are roughly equivalent to Britain's, has made a public commitment that by the middle of the 1990s it wishes to see participation rates rise from 30 per cent. to around 75 per cent., at which point the British participation rate will still be languishing at less than half that of the French.

The new clause addresses the question of what should be done. The conclusion reached by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central is that we should have educational maintenance allowances. Those have an important part to play, but they will not be the whole story. First, they will be expensive. According to answers to parliamentary questions, even at current participation levels, with an educational maintenance allowance set at supplementary benefit rates, the cost will be about £300 million. If the educational maintenance allowance was set at youth training scheme rates for 16 and 17-year-olds, the cost would be in excess of £600 million. That would be the cost at current rates of participation.

I hope that when the Minister replies she will tell us whether the Government have made any studies into how the establishment of educational maintenance allowances

would raise participation rates, and, if so, how much. I know that that would be a prediction, but it is important to know whether there are any such figures so that we can have an adequate debate.

I strongly suspect that participation rates are held down in Britain, not just for financial reasons, but for cultural reasons. That matter must be tackled. If raising participation rates is our aim, we should be tackling that cultural question by beginning to build a system which widens our definition of participation. It is my view, and that of my party, that we should be constructing a youth training scheme which is not separated from Britain's educational system, but is tied into it, both in terms of qualifications for the participant being drawn within the general framework of national qualifications, and also so that a YTS pupil can obtain credits which could then be accumulated and enable the pupil to pass into further education on a more academic basis, or, indeed, on a higher education basis later.

6.45 pm

I look to a further and higher education system which encompasses training and vocation, bringing training and education within the same department, and academic qualifications. That should be flexible and there should be an easy transfer between the vocational and the academic routes.

If we could achieve a system whereby even those who went through YTS could accumulate credits which would enable them to participate as late developers in the academic process, we should be reaching a valuable position. Educational maintenance allowances have a part to play in that, but setting up a much more flexible system of the sort that I have described would tackle the fundamental problem of the level of participation.

The Government have missed a great opportunity. In their review of student support, they could have taken into account the 16-year-olds. It may well be that they could not reach a conclusion, for reasons which we can well understand, but if that review of student support had taken into account the 16-to-18 age group, we would have begun to tackle that which must be tackled in the future by a Government of whatever party if we are to face up to our needs as a developed industrial nation.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): I do not want to pursue at any length the preamble of the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), but, since he drew attention to his own amendment, I looked at it and saw that it begins with the possibility of containing recommendations as to the possible need for an advisory committee. I do not know the definition of sogginess, but that description would seem to apply to his amendment.

Mr. Ashdown: There is no mention of "possibility".

Mr. Rowlands: It says, "as to the need". It is all about possibilities.

Financial promises for 16 to 19-year-olds in communities such as mine are in a hopeless mess and have been made worse by the changes in the Social Security Bill 1988 and the removal of benefits from 16 and 17-year-olds. Youngsters who go to college or university from my area receive a grant from the council. If they go on a youth training scheme they receive a training allowance, but if they stay on in further education at a technical college or in the sixth form, they are entirely dependent on child benefit.

In other words, the vast majority of those who want to stay on in full-time further education in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney and, indeed, in most other communities, are dependent on their parents and on child benefit. Moreover, that benefit has been frozen and is looked at askance by Conservative Members. It is time that, irrespective of the solution, we recognised the hopeless mess of financial provision for 16 to 19-year-olds which militates against making sensible choices in further forms of educational development.

At least the Government should respond to appeals made by my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) and others to look at the whole question. After all, it should be part and parcel of their objectives. I do not know whether the Manpower Services Commission's corporate plans are approved by the Government, but I am sure that they are supported by the Government. Let me draw the Minister's attention to the corporate plan of the Manpower Services Commission in Wales for 1987 to 1991. Under the heading "Implementing the New Training Initiative," it states:

> "The aim of NTI Objective 2 is to move towards a position where all young people enter the labour market with a qualification relevant to employment. By 1991 the Commission would like to see the vast majority of young people in Wales entering the work force with recognised and relevant vocational qualifications."

We all agree with that objective.

The corporate plan continues:

> "To achieve this, there will need to be a comprehensive and coherent provision for all young people under the age of 18 to allow them to choose between continuing in full-time education entering training or a period of work experience combining work-related training and education. The role of the YTS and TVEI in achieving this aim would need to be developed in conjunction with other developments."

That is exactly what we lack, in financial terms. In communities such as mine, youngsters between 16 and 18 cannot make reasonable choices between staying on in full-time education, adopting a YTS and going on to a university or polytechnic. The local education authority funds no one except those taking up university or polytechnic education.

Parent after parent comes to me—especially around September—saying, "Mr. Rowlands, we cannot afford to send our youngster to the technical college for further full-time education." Some used to take the opportunity of the under 21-hour rule, but that has disappeared as a result of the changes contained in the Social Security Bill. The choice between full-time education, training and a period of work experience is not open to many households in communities such as ours. The choice is made for them—it is a financial choice.

How could anyone possibly recommend a family to keep children on into the sixth form, or put them down for the technical college, when they could receive £28 or £35 a week on YTS? The present financial provisions are distorting the choices that should be available to those youngsters, no doubt throughout the nation but certainly in my community, in which financial provision becomes paramount when youngsters reach that age.

I have teenage kids. It is not much to say that they are taller than I am, but they are taller than most people. They eat like horses. They are fit and healthy 16 and 17-year-olds.

Mr. Pawsey: They would make good forwards.

Mr. Rowlands: Yes. We produce very good forwards as well.

The notion that youngsters should be kept on child benefit at 17, 18 and, indeed, 19 is nonsense, and it has been made even more nonsensical by the mixing and merging between the Manpower Services Commission and further education. The Merthyr technical college now has MSC-funded courses, with people on YTS allowances working alongside youngsters in full-time further education whose parents are in receipt of child benefit. That mixing and merging of post-16 education—which the Government have encouraged through large-scale back-door financing of technical colleges through the MSC—along with the growth of TVEI and the growing percentage of non-A-level sixth-form courses, demonstrates the change in further education which has become something that we can no longer recommend. The financial provisions, however, do not reflect that change.

We may not have all the answers, but the maintenance allowance suggested by new clause 1 is certainly a start. If we make that a statutory duty, we can then work out how to finance and organise it. If the Government do nothing else, let them recognise that we must not allow the distortion of choices on narrow financial grounds to continue.

The other problem in my community has arisen from the decline and destruction of the manufacturing sector —the collapse of the other form of training, the in-service apprenticeship schemes created by many of our companies. The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry speaks interminably about new training and the need for modern technology. But, in the past decade or so, we have seen the destruction of effective apprenticeship schemes in company after company as a result of the pressures on the manufacturing sector. We have also seen young people with great potential chasing the poorer jobs that demand less qualification. They are going down in the labour market. It is even more difficult for the poorly trained and unqualified to get their foot on the first rung of the ladder.

That has been one of the saddest features of the past decade. Young people who could have proceeded to A-levels and polytechnics have opted out to get a job and an income, and to get a foot in the door. They have gone for the lowest possible clerical jobs in the Civil Service rather than stay on in education—partly for financial reasons, and partly because of worry that, however well qualified they are, they may not subsequently obtain a job. As a consequence, those at the bottom of the ladder have been pushed even further down—even further from a proper job and training opportunities.

Even if the Minister is not prepared to accept new clause 1, I hope that she will make a clear commitment, as a matter of urgency, to review financial provision for 16 to 19-year-olds, so that we can remove the anomalies and distortions in communities such as mine and people can make a choice based not on money, but on their aptitude and training abilities.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): When confronted with a cart and horse, for both of which one has some admiration, it is difficult to say that because the cart is before the horse, it should be rejected. I believe that a great deal of what we have heard, both from the hon. Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) and from the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), has much in its favour. The provision for 16 to 19-year-olds is indeed in a muddle, partly because of the creative ways in which the Government have begun to try to gnaw away at the traditional distinctions between one kind of education and another, and between one kind of pupil and another. I do not consider it inappropriate to suggest that the funding should be carefully examined.

I have no clear picture in my mind of how many 16-year-olds leave school because they know that they have got as much out of the education system as they are likely to get. Far too many of our pupils leave school, having attended it from the age of five to the age of 16, with very little to show for it. It would be crazy for them to continue in a system that has so far provided them with nothing that they or the world outside appear to value.

The purpose of the Bill is to alter that, so that schools provide those children with something that they need and the world respects. To pump hundreds of millions of pounds into a system that is in such a state of chaos, without any clear vision of who will profit from it and to what extent, would be a serious mistake.

I also feel strongly that we are stirring up a major philosophical exercise, which should perhaps have been stirred up during the great debates. I was not on the Standing Committee—I was in no position to be—but I feel that these are fundamental debates about re-entry to the education system. I agree with the hon. Member for Yeovil that one of the important questions is how it is possible to get back into the education system. I know that very many people of all ages will benefit most from education when they want it, not when it is handed to them as the next inexorable stage in process.

Mr. Ashdown: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will look at new clauses 24 and 25, which produce precisely that effect.

Mr. Rowe: I must confess that my knowledge of all the complexities of the Bill suffers from my not having been a member of the Committee. However, the business of re-entering the education system is very important. I am not at all clear that the provision of maintenance allowances across the board would benefit anyone at this stage.

7 pm

Dr. Thomas: I agree entirely with the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) about re-entry. My short-lived teaching career began with teaching re-entry students in adult education. It was a very valuable experience for me, but perhaps not for the students. It enabled me to understand the importance of students returning to the educational system.

It is clear from the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) that all hon. Members agree about the variety and unevenness of financial provision in the post-16 sector. I want to stress the positive aspects of the curriculum content of some of the activities of TVEI and YTS training. Although one may disagree with the way in which this is carried out, and where it is carried out, we must accept that we have seen for the first time an introduction of a form of curriculum at 16-plus for a group of young people who were not catered for previously. That is why I want to address my remarks to new clause 18 and develop the ideas that it contains.

New clause 18 refers to the need for

"local education authorities to have the duty to undertake functions in relation to strategic planning of post-16 education provision outside schools"

in their areas. That is crucial. People outside Government have accused the Government of undermining the role of local education authorities in terms of school provision. In the local co-ordination of the 16 to 19-year-old sector, the LEA is best placed to deal effectively with the co-ordination of courses.

As we have already heard, much MSC, YTS and TVEI funding is allocated to schools and FE colleges. It is important that those funds should be properly co-ordinated. We often see what I regard as duplication and unnecessary competition. Although I accept that the Government like competition, there is unnecessary competition among managing agents. Various public authorities compete against one another for the provision of courses. That does not seem to make much sense.

The training and educational experience of the post-16 age group should be better co-ordinated. It is important that we break down the distinction between traditional non-vocational education and education related to training. These are skill and knowledge-acquiring experiences. They are useful, however they are described, or however specific or general they may be.

Every technical piece of education requires a conceptual understanding and some kind of theory, even if that is only theory in the practice. Every form of theoretical teaching must have a base—dare I say it—in a material practice of some kind or other. Without lapsing into sociological jargon and therefore entertaining Conservative Members, I want to emphasise that there should be no distinctions between the kind of knowledge that we provide in our schools, and particularly in our post-16 system.

The reorganisation being carried out in so many areas of the tertiary sector provides an opportunity for local education authorities to be involved in planning across the range. New colleges are being created for those aged 16 plus in which the traditional FE pupils, sixth form pupils and students on MSC schemes come together in the same building, or at least within the same provision. The LEA is the lead agency and should have the kind of provision set out in new clause 18. That would provide us with a "national curriculum" at 16-plus. At the moment, that is not included in the Bill.

I explained several times in Committee that the Government were very keen to introduce the enterprise culture and so-called educational standards to pupils in public sector secondary and primary schools. However, we believe that it is equally important that there should be an effective form of curriculum planning for 16 to 19-year-olds. I do not believe that that should be centrally determined; it should be locally controlled.

That would give the post 16-plus sector of education a new impetus. In particular, it would bring the educational system in England and Wales — I dare not speak for Scotland, even from the Plaid Cymru Bench on this issue — into the 20th century. It would provide an age participation at this level and hopefully increase the class and gender participation. That would bring us into line with the reality of what is happening in most Western developed countries and most countries in central and eastern Europe.

My colleague from the Standing Committee, the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) is right. There is a cultural problem. Obviously there is a financial problem and we have discussed this at length already, and I shall not repeat the argument, which I certainly endorse, about the need for an educational maintenance allowance.

There is also a cultural argument about remaining on at school and then going on to college. We must break that down. The position is so very different in Europe and America. Going to college there is regarded as the norm, while in Britain it is not. That is a historical failure of our educational system. It can be restored only if we plan for it. That is why we must take on the initiatives in MSC schemes, develop them and make them locally based so that they become part of the local education authority system.

I know that the Minister will not accept new clause 18. However, I hope she can say that the Government will insist that local education authorities should be involved in strategic planning in the 16-plus sector.

Mr. Dalyell: I make no complaints about the point that I want to make because I understand the reasons, but there was no Scottish Member on the Committee. However, there is a considerable Scots involvement in various parts of the Bill.

My speech will be much shortened because the points have been made most eloquently by my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands). I hope that the Minister will reply to what he had to say about the MSC involvement. That experience is repeated in many constituencies. I assure the House that my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney spoke for a great many of us in our constituency roles when he outlined the problems in relation to the MSC.

I want to stick to new clause 2 and the review of continual assessment. That is obviously something that bothers Downing street. I want to refer to two different points made by the Prime Minister by way of her private secretary, Mr. Paul Gray, to Mr. Tom Jeffrey, in the letter which found its way to the desk of my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). Has there been a ministerial reply to that letter?

The Prime Minister's private secretary states:

"The Committee seem to have designed an enormously elaborate and complex system. They suggest it requires setting up two new powerful bodies, the Schools and Examination Council and the National Curriculum Council, and a major new role for the LEAs. Is this necessary?"

Downing street asks:

"Has the sort of approach advocated in the Report in fact been put into practice with the proposed degree of elaboration in any large group of schools?"

That point is very germane to new clause 2. I wonder if one of the leading ladies of the Conservative party, a senior Minister after all, will reply to it.

The letter continues, to outline the Prime Minister's fourth point:

"The Prime Minister also notes that, presumably as a result of the complexity of the proposals, the new assessment system could not be introduced in less than five years. Although she recognises the importance of careful preparation and introduction of the new arrangements"

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I find it difficult to understand how any of this arises on new clauses 1, 2 or 18.

Mr. Dalyell: New clause 2(2) deals with the role of continual assessment. My points are highly relevant to continual assessment.

Mr. Straw: Quite right.

Mr. Dalyell: The recipient of the letter, my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn, says, "Quite right."

I shall be very brief. I want to know, on which side of the argument is the Minister of State? Is she on the side of the Secretary of State? I suspect that she is on the Prime Minister's side. If she is, she ought to explain why. I am going to try my luck, and ask her the question about which the Secretary of State seemed a little coy. Why did Mr. Ingham's office authorise the disclosure? As the Minister is so close to Downing street, she will know if there is to be a leak inquiry. Is there to be a leak inquiry? The Minister is like the Secretary of State, in that there is a deafening silence when she is asked whether there is to be a leak inquiry. I have not had much luck.

Mr. Flannery: I shall be brief. I want to take up one or two points raised by the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). It seems that he believes that our children are somehow different from young people in Japan, Germany, France, Italy and America, because our young people are clamouring to leave school at 16. When the school leaving age was 14, ordinary working-class children had to go out to work—Conservative Members do not kick out their kids at 16, it is always our children who have to go out to work. The point I wish to make—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens) has only just come into the Chamber. You should go back to sleep.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. I am very much awake.

Mr. Flannery: I would never dream of saying that about you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You would not have made that comment if you had not been wide awake.

The maintenance allowance in new clauses 1 and 2 is absolutely vital. In other countries there are tremendous incentives to stay at school. When children left school at 14 and did not stay on, there were scholarships. People said that they left school at 14 because the teaching was bad and there was no point in staying on. When the school-leaving age was 15 the same argument was used. That same argument is being used now, when children are leaving school at 16.

The lack of provision deters children from staying on, and we are asking for a maintenance allowance for those between the ages of 16 and 19. Our children are no different from other children. My hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) put the case splendidly for all of us, because he comes from an area like my constituency, which is a steel area, where large numbers of our young people do not have a chance to stay on. Of course they want to stay on, but they have to get what bit of work there is when they can. That is the reality.

Therefore, we want some inducement for them to stay on at school and have an education. They are no more clever in other countries where they stay on up to the ages of 18 and 19, as they do in Denmark, Sweden and the countries that I have already mentioned. Does the Tory party think that our children are not as good as they are? Of course our children are as good: it is a question of money and incentives.

There is a difference between young people in Britain in areas such as Merthyr and Sheffield, and those in the leafy areas of the south where a large number of young people stay on at school because people are well-to-do and have the opportunity to keep them there even if there is no allowance. We want an inducement for our children not to leave school. We profoundly believe that, if that money is forthcoming, and if there is a maintenance allowance for 16 to 19-year-olds, we will prove that our children want to stay on and get a better education to equip them for life.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): The debate on new clauses 1 and 2 and the amendment to new clause 2 raises a number of issues about education and training for 16 to 19-year-olds. Indeed, the debate has been interesting and valuable for all concerned.

My first point is that provision for 16 to 19-year-olds will always be complex. We do not need to accept that we are currently in crisis, but we have to accept that there are a variety of needs, interests, skills and ambitions among 16 to 19-year-olds which are considerable and wide ranging.

7.15 pm

A corresponding variety of education and training provision is needed to cater for that. Clearly we must try to make it as coherent and comprehensible as we can, but not, I hope, at the risk of reducing the breadth of choices and opportunities available to our young people.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire South-West (Mr. Madel) made the sensible and interesting point that we do not yet know the outcome of the GCSE, because that new examination introduces a number of new concepts which we hope will lead to a larger number of young people within the school system having an interest in continuing and furthering their education. It may be that they will continue and further their education in schools or colleges; it may be that they will choose to continue their further education on a part-time basis; or that they will consider the possibility of re-entry. We hope that the GCSE will encourage young people so that what they learn up to the age of 16 will give them sufficient grounding to know that they can continue their education later on if they wish to do so.

During the past few years the Government have been working to increase the range of opportunities available to youngsters. We have introduced a number of important new programmes and forms of provision, including the two-year youth training scheme and the technical and vocational education initiative. The TVEI aims to increase technical and vocational relevance across the curriculum for all pupils from 14 onwards. This is particularly important, as it has an impact on technology and science. It is invaluable in introducing the world of work and the relevant skills into schools so that youngsters in school have an insight into the kind of people with whom they may ultimately work and the things that they might do when they leave school.

Our aim is to ensure that suitable education and training programmes are available to all young people aged between 16 and 19 who want them.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the Minister give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall give way in a moment.

It is very important that young people should be properly prepared for adult and working life, and that they should be equipped with the skills that employers are looking for. Opposition Members will recognise that there

is already a legal duty on local education authorities to ensure an adequate level of provision. The Education Act 1944 places a duty on every local education authority to secure the provision of sufficient schools for senior pupils. Clause 99 of the Bill restates the explicit duty of LEAs to secure the provision of adequate further education — including for those 16 to 19-year olds who have already left school.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: On the question of training and education provision, will the Minister explain why it is logical to give people on training a grant or payment, but it is not logical to give those in education any payment? Surely that pushes some people into training rather than into education, because of their home circumstances or poverty at home.

Mrs. Rumbold: I disagree with the hon. Gentleman. In fact, the YTS scheme attracts a large number of youngsters and has attracted a higher proportion of youngsters into post-16 work. It offers an allowance to young people because they are receiving education and working and making contributions to the output of their employers. For that reason, they are getting an allowance. Young people who remain in full-time education enjoy the advantage of child benefit going to their parents. Furthermore, 82,000 youngsters are supported by discretionary grants from their local education authority.

An important subject has been raised in this debate. The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) blamed the Government for not providing young people with an allowance that would permit them to remain at school, but there has been a failure to motivate young people to remain in education. They have not been told why it would be so much better if they continued with further education or, at a later date, re-entered the education system.

Ms. Armstrong: The Minister is missing the point. In areas of high unemployment there are no jobs on which to graft good skill training schemes. Furthermore, in areas of high unemployment young people who might want to remain in full-time further education, because they recognise that adequate skill training is not provided outside that system, cannot afford to do so because their contribution to the family income is essential.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Lady says that there are no opportunities for young people to get skill training under the YTS scheme. She also says that they cannot remain in education. There appears to be a dichotomy in her statement. If young people stayed on in education, their families would receive child benefit, and they themselves would benefit from further and higher education.

Provision is already available for any 16-year-old who wants it. Those aged 16 can stay on at school, or go to college, or join a YTS scheme. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) pointed out that not all youth training schemes are good, but many of them are improving and they are much welcomed by employers.

The youth training scheme was introduced for young people who are able to benefit from a mixture of training and work experience. There is a wide range of different types of courses and programmes. However, the Government believe that it is important to avoid unnecessary duplication of provision and to ensure that the provision is well monitored. If it is not well monitored, both students and employers become confused.

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central referred to the plethora of qualifications and examinations. That is why we set up the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, whose remit is to bring greater coherence and order to the pattern of vocational courses. We hope that the council's work will ultimately make it easier for all concerned to understand what is available and how the different levels of vocational courses relate to one another. This is an important part of this Government's strategy, and it subsumes new clause 2, which has been tabled by the Opposition.

The Government also accept that it is important that young people should know what opportunities for training are open to them and where they are. It is especially important to acknowledge the fact that the number of people in this age group is declining and that we shall continue to want as many young people as possible to take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them for further education and possibly higher education.

For that reason, my Department, together with the Department of Employment and the Welsh Office, in October last year produced a booklet and an accompanying video that explained the main types of courses on offer. Copies were made available for all 15-year-olds in the country for use as part of a wider careers programme to help them to make the right choices at 16. I think that that programme has been a great success.

A particular issue that is raised by new clause 1 is educational maintenance allowances. The clause would give my right hon. Friend the power to require local education authorities to provide allowances for 16 to 19-year-old students, but, like successive previous Governments, we do not believe that that would be right. The Government do not wish children anywhere in the country to fail to benefit from skill training. It is essential that such training should be offered to as many youngsters as we can persuade to take it. However, until young people in schools fully understand that it will be relevant and beneficial, they will not be persuaded to remain at school or to undertake training or further education.

It is wrong to think that some youngsters stay on at school simply because of the maintenance allowance. To do so would do no more than delay a difficult decision that will ultimately have to be made by them. Young people in full-time education are regarded as dependent on their parents for financial support until their 19th birthday. That is why child benefit is paid for them. Families receiving income support from the Department of Health and Social Security receive an additional payment for those students. The local education authorities also have discretion to pay a maintenance allowance.

The Government share the view that more young people should stay on in full-time education and training beyond the age of 16, but not all young people are suited to such education. For many, the youth training scheme is better suited to their needs. YTS trainees receive an allowance in recognition of the fact that during their work experience they make a useful contribution to production, alongside paid employees.

For those who are suited to education beyond the age of 16, I am not aware of any evidence that mandatory allowances would have any significant effect on participation rates. However, they would have a significant deadweight cost. The net additional cost of paying an allowance at the first year YTS trainee level to all 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time education would be £650

[Mrs. Rumbold]

million in England alone. That sum would have to be paid to young people who stayed on in full-time education, anyway. I cannot tell the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) what the participation rate would be, because we have not yet made the kind of studies to which he referred.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Lady will be doing such studies. Will she make the results available?

7.30 pm

Mrs. Rumbold: We shall be doing some studies on the YTS participation rates and I can certainly let the hon. Gentleman have those.

The Government believe that a far better way of persuading young people to stay on in education is through measures to improve that education. Our policies are designed to raise school standards and make education in schools and colleges more relevant to adult and working life. That will result in 16-year-olds who are better educated and more ready to take advantage of education beyond 16 and have the ability to benefit from that education.

The 16 to 19-year-old provision is unquestionably complex—it always has been—but it has to be if it is to cater effectively for the wider range of needs of our youngsters. It would be impossible, I submit, for us so to codify, so to straitjacket, the provisions for 16 to 19-year-olds as to persuade all to stay on for compulsory education. That would simply not work in this country. The Government are working to increase the range of options available, reduce unnecessary duplication and make sure that young people know what is on offer.

We do not believe that new clauses 1 and 2 are necessary, or that they would help to improve the range of opportunities available. I therefore hope that they will be withdrawn.

Mr. Fatchett: We have had a very interesting debate. The Minister's response left a great deal to be desired. She said that the problem was one of motivation. She did not offer that motivation in two important respects. First, there needs to be, as the Minister almost acknowledged, a sharper definition of provision of qualification post-16. Secondly, there has to be recognition of the financial considerations..

The Minister simply failed to answer the points raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands), in particular, about the financial requirements of families and the pressure upon families for youngsters to leave school and go into training or employment. If the Minister believes that the child benefit allowance, at £7·50, will resolve that problem, she has very little experience of some of the problems about which my hon. Friend spoke so eloquently.

The Minister lacks the urgency that I think is essential on this question of post-16 education. We shall therefore seek to divide the House, not on new clause 1, but on new clause 2, which is much more extensive in its provision, and we hope that we shall carry all hon. Members with us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. Gentleman seek to withdraw new clause 1?

Mr. Fatchett: Yes. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New clause 2

16-19 EDUCATION

'(1) Within 6 months of Royal Assent to this Act the Secretary of State shall lay before Parliament a report on education and training for 16 to 19 year olds.

(2) Such a report shall deal with financial support to enable 16 to 19 year olds to remain in full time education, the need to integrate education and training provisions for 16 to 19 year olds; and a review of all examinations and forms of continual assessment for 16 to 19 year olds to ensure they are compatible and will enable a young person to build up a range of skills and knowledge for their own sake or for entry into Higher Education or work.'.—*[Mr. Fatchett.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:

The House divided: Ayes 205, Noes 271.

Division No. 224] **[7.32 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry

Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen Adams and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael

Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 3

NURSERY EDUCATION

'It shall be the duty of every local education authority to make provision for nursery education and pre-school facilities for all those children under the statutory school age whose parents desire them to receive it, and to ensure that all those children who are admitted to primary school before the statutory school age benefit from appropriate facilities, space, equipment and staffing provision; and section 24 of the 1980 Act is repealed.'.—*[Mrs. Clwyd.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: New clause 4—*Rising fives*—

'Where pupils are admitted to infant or primary schools before the statutory school starting age, they shall be taught in classes staffed at least by a qualified teacher and a qualified nursery nurse if such classes contain more than 12 pupils.'.

New clause 5 — *Staffing of nursery schools and classes*—

'Within 12 months of the coming into force of this Act the Secretary of State shall make a report to Parliament on the training and supply of nursery teachers and nursery nurses, and the development of a training and career structure for nursery nurses.'.

New clause 27—*Pre-school schemes*—

'It shall be the duty of every local education authority to prepare a scheme in accordance with this section.

(2) The scheme shall provide for—

(a) the determination of proposals to enable every eligible child to attend a pre-school group or class approved for the purpose by the authority for a period of not less than one year before attaining the age of five (including in particular, determination after consultation on draft proposals with parents, interested voluntary organisations and other interested persons);

(b) the publication of information and advice to promote the attendance of every eligible child at such a group or class; and

(c) publication of an annual report on the scheme.

(3) A child is an eligible child for the purposes of subsection (2) above if that child has attained the age of three years six months and is not a registered pupil at a school (other than in a nursery class of a school).

(4) A scheme prepared by a local education authority in accordance with the preceding provisions of this section—

(a) shall be reviewed by the authority at intervals of no more than five years; and

(b) may be varied or replaced by a further scheme.

(5) No provision of this section shall be deemed to require or to promote the admission of children to a school (other than to a nursery class of a school).'.

7.45 pm

Mrs. Clwyd: It is 20 years. almost to the day, since my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor) organised the first-ever lobby of under-fives in this House. We are especially glad that she is here for the debate this evening. However, she must feel disconsolate that so little has changed in that time.

It never ceases to amaze any of us that in nine years of wailing and wringing of hands about the rotten educational standards of our school leavers compared with those of other countries, we hear comparatively little about school beginners. One reason for that is that educationists, politicians and Governments have tended to concentrate on the reform of secondary and tertiary education, despite the growing mass of evidence to support the old Jesuit maxim, "Give me a child for the first seven years and you may do what you like with him afterwards."

Indeed, the United States Harvard pre-school project, completed in 1979, after a 14-year study of the development of children from six months to six years, concluded that the magic age was as young as three years. As the Harvard team wrote, to get to the heart of the matter:

"It appears that a first-rate educational experience during the first three years of life is required if a person is to develop his or her full potential. While excellent early development does not guarantee lifelong excellent development, poor progress in the early years seems to be remarkably difficult to overcome."

William Fowler, professor of applied psychology at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, looked down the telescope the other way and declared that he could not "find a single individual of high ability who had not experienced this intensive early stimulation."

Britain has a long tradition of nursery education, dating from the pioneering work of Rachel and Margaret Macmillan, but successive Governments have been reluctant to make a major investment in the expansion of nursery schools and classes. The lack of local authority places for the under-fives, together with a strong demand for pre-school education, has created a unique community response in Britain in the form of playgroups. They are the cheaper alternative to local authority nursery schools and have attracted considerable official support, mainly because they reduce the pressure on local and central Government to provide more comprehensive pre-school education. That, in turn, has led to the system of mixed voluntary and maintained sector provision that we have today.

As well as the failure—and it is a massive failure—to meet the needs and wishes of parents, both those who are in paid work and those who are not in paid work, and to provide them with a choice of different ways of sharing child care, the greatest lack is in day care for the children of working women. Of couse, here the Government have a vested interest in keeping working women out of the economy.

The 1967 Plowden report estimated that places were needed for 90 per cent. of four-year-olds and 50 per cent. of three-year-olds. In 1974 a survey by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys revealed that 89 per cent. of mothers of three and four-year-olds, and 65 per cent. of mothers of nought to four-year-olds desired day-care provision. That was considerably more than Plowden had estimated.

Overall, Plowden's recommendations for nursery education were heeded in 1972, when the Prime Minister, then Secretary of State for Education and Science, issued a White Paper in which the Government's aim was declared to be

"that within the next 10 years nursery education should become available without charge, within the limits of demand . . . to those children of three and four whose parents wish them to benefit from it."

That radical change did not take place.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury) *rose*——

Mrs. Clwyd: I shall give way in a moment.

The promises of 1972 were easily broken. Instead, the number of part-time places in LEA nursery schools more than doubled between 1975 and 1985. In England some of the places in reception classes that were occupied by under-fives were transferred into nursery class places. Despite this large increase, there were still almost as many under-fives in primary school reception classes as in nursery classes or schools by 1985.

Mr. Raison: Does the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clywd) recall that the Plowden report contained a minority report signed by Professor David Donnison and Dr. Michael Young—both of whom were then members of the Labour party and one of whom subsequently defected, I believe—as well as Lady Plowden and, as it happens, myself? We said that it would be a very good idea to promote the provision of nursery schools by charging fees to those who could afford them. Looking back over this period, and in the light of the fact that there has been very limited expansion, would it not have been better to accept that at the time?

Mrs. Clwyd: It was clear that that view was not shared by the then Secretary of State, now the Prime Minister.

At the same time, the number of places in registered playgroups continued to expand in England and Wales. This expansion in part-time places did nothing at all to address the demands for day care and of working mothers. The apparently laudable increase of 10 per cent. in provision that did take place between 1975 and 1985 has been achieved through part-time places. There has been a very heavy dependence on the playgroup movement, again with an increase in places of 10 per cent.

This has had only a marginal impact on the level of demand for more comprehensive day care, as well as education. Indeed, free nursery education, like so many promises made by this Government, for 70 per cent. of three to four-year-olds, which was pledged in the 1972 DES White Paper, has been completely reneged upon by the Prime Minister and the present Secretary of State.

The growth in the nought to four population between 1980 and 1984 showed that the infant population would increase in the latter half of the 1980s, with the result that fewer under-fives will gain access to local education authority places. At present, day care supervision does not meet demand. In some parts of the country there are no day nursery places; in others there is no pre-school provision. The picture is of gross underfunding and of enormous and unfair local variations in the level of provision.

In 1945, Beth Wellman published a review of about 50 American studies, the earliest of which was dated 1918. These studies compared the average IQ of children who had attended pre-school centres with that of children who had had no pre-school education. The results showed conclusively that children with pre-school educational experience had an increased IQ score compared with those who had not attended pre-school programmes. Indeed, compared with the North Americans, British educationists have been somewhat lukewarm about the value of pre-school education.

Last year, the publication of Osborne and Millbank's study of the effects of early education was the first British study to show conclusively that nursery schools and playgroups gave children an important and lasting educational advantage. It was based on data from the child health and education study of 16,000 children who were born in Britain in one week in April 1970, and a series of tests on those children at the ages of five and 10. The study reveals that eccentric and haphazard arrangements are made for under-fives in Britain.

In answer to the question whether pre-school education could have a beneficial effect on the subsequent development, educational achievements and behaviour of the children concerned, the study was convinced that the simple answer is undoubtedly yes.

Children who attend LEA nursery classes that are tacked on to primary schools are a cause for concern. The study suggests that these classes may not be very much different from primary reception classes, as children attending those classes did not show consistently high test scores, and therefore clearly had a worse deal.

The expansion of nursery education since 1975 has been almost entirely in part-time LEA nusery and reception classes. There is an urgent need to ensure that these children are being properly treated for their particular needs. Hence our new clause 4, which will ensure that these classes are appropriately staffed.

The study to which I have referred went on to conclude that the findings should not be used as a justification for LEAs to sponsor playgroups, as a more economical alternative to maintained schools or classes. Children attending playgroups, as we all know, generally come from relatively secure and middle-class homes, whereas those attending LEA-maintained institutions tend to come from relatively underprivileged homes. This factor may explain why playgroup children do well, but it also demonstrates the benefits of the LEA nursery sector.

Another equally cogent, but less obvious, argument for maintaining and expanding LEA nursery provision is the number of children who reach the age of five without any organised form of pre-school education. The main conclusion of the study was the contrast between children who had and children who had not been exposed to pre-school education. Adequate pre-school provision can improve the quality of life of young children and their families, as well as aiding the child's development and increasing his or her educational potential.

Investment in pre-school provision and the improved quality of life that it bestows clearly pays good dividends in future, particularly in preparing for the kind of test that

[Mrs. Clwyd]

the Secretary of State has in mind. Despite this factor, pre-school services remain haphazard. They are uncoordinated and all too often in short supply. According to the latest figures from the under-fives unit and the National Children's Bureau, only 22 per cent. of three and four-year-olds receive nursery education in England, compared with 28 per cent. in Scotland and 34 per cent. in Wales. *I shall not make the very obvious* comment about those figures.

Clearly there is an urgent need for co-ordinated and integrated expansion of pre-school provision. New clause 5 asks that the Secretary of State

"shall make a report to Parliament on the training and supply of nursery teachers and nursery nurses".

Within the education sector there is no career structure for nursery nurses to progress beyond the position of nursery nurse, except for starting again with teacher training, and that is plainly wrong.

With integration of special needs children into the mainstream schools under the Education Act 1981, this is ridiculous. Some progressive local authorities are attempting to move forward towards the integration of services with joint education and social services funding. In inner London—and in Leeds—nursery liaison posts, to link local playgroups and mother and toddler groups with local schools, are being set up, but the programmes are being cut under the Secretary of State's savaging of ILEA's budget.

8 pm

The demand for pre-school provision and day care has never been higher. The educational benefits of pre-school experience have never been better demonstrated. Yet what does the Bill say about pre-school provision? At the end of chapter I, it says:

"Nothing in this Chapter shall apply in relation to a nursery school or a nursery class in a primary school."

There is a desperate need for increased provision for the under-fives and their families. A start to addressing the need would be the repeal of section 24 of the Education Act 1980 and the introduction of a duty on local education authorities to provide nursery education and pre-school facilities, for which we call in new clause 3. There is a need to ensure that pre-school provision is adequately resourced and an immediate need to ensure that children in primary school reception classes get adequate educational experience, as expressed in new clause 4.

There is also a need for services for the under-fives to be brought together and not fragmented, as they are too often at present, and for a career structure for nursery nurses as expressed in new clause 5.

Given that there is an abundance of evidence to show conclusively that nursery schools and playgroups give children an important and lasting educational advantage, the Government's refusal to provide the necessary resources means that thousands of young children will be crippled educationally by callous disregard for their needs.

Mr. Ashdown: I listened with great interest to what the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) said, and I agree with all of it. The omission of provision for nursery and pre-school education marks the Bill out not as a great reform Bill looking to the future, but as a measure which looks back to the rigidities and failures of the past. If we had a great reform Bill, it would tackle such things as nursery education and participation post-16. The absence of nursery education provision is a major omission, just as was the absence of provision for special needs until it was taken up effectively in Committee by members of the Opposition parties.

I go further and agree with the hon. Lady that there is probably no area of education in which we could make an investment which would provide a surer, quicker or larger return than pre-school and nursery education. As she rightly said, the studies have pointed clearly to the fact that if we were to invest small amounts in such provision we would get a much greater return in a very short time in faster and more able learning and particularly in a reduction in the number of children whom we classify as having special needs. If the Government are serious about tackling special needs—we heard brave and important speeches from all Ministers; who can doubt their sincerity?—surely they must take into account the evidence, which is now incontrovertible.

I hate to introduce another note of dissent between myself and Her Majesty's Official Opposition, but, although I can subscribe to the sentiments of what they say and agree completely with the arguments which they use to support their case, I must tell them that I shall go very unhappily indeed into the Lobby to vote for what I regard as three clauses as badly and sloppily drafted as one could imagine. *[Interruption.]* That is true; I shall explain why in a moment.

It is a great shame that the clause on which we will vote is not new clause 27. It sets out specifically and in detail how nursery education might be delivered. It lays down a requirement for a scheme to be provided by a local education authority and says how the determination of the proposals will be made. It defines what would be regarded as a child in need. It lays down a requirement for a year's pre-school education before a child attains the age of five. It sets out mechanisms for providing information and advice to parents, for changing the scheme of a local education authority and for reporting back.

Instead of that new clause, we are considering three new clauses which seem to make no sense. Well, that is not true; new clause 5 uses the classic Labour party ploy of calling for a report. I have to assume that that is to discover whether new clauses 3 and 4 will work. I am not surprised, because when we read the new clauses we find something remarkable.

New clause 3 requires

"every local education authority to make provision for nursery education and pre-school facilities for all those children under the statutory school age whose parents desire them to receive it".

One assumes that that could apply from the date of birth. It does not refer to day care but to nursery education and pre-school facilities for all children. From the day a child leaves the mother's womb in hospital, the parents may say, "Provide us now under the Labour measure with pre-school and nursery education for our child."

Mr. Dunn: Following labour.

Mr. Ashdown: Yes, indeed, following labour they could do that.

I cannot imagine a more ludicrous or more expensive clause. Clearly it has not been thought through.

Mrs. Clwyd *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Member for Cynon Valley shakes her head, but the new clause says that the local

education authority should make provision for all children under the statutory school age. There is no definition or limit.

The clause also refers to the provision of

"appropriate facilities, space, equipment and staffing provision".

There is no definition of those. It would give lawyers a field day. I cannot imagine a more crazy clause. I cannot believe that the Labour party is serious in putting it forward.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: We put down what parents desire. If the hon. Gentleman had been going around schools he would have come across a substantial number of community schools where successful mother and toddler groups are run. We put into the new clauses what parents desire; therefore, we would have thought that the Liberal Democrats would have gone along with us in accepting that parents were good judges of what was appropriate for their children.

Mr. Ashdown: I believe that parents will be good judges, but in many cases parents will abuse the facilities by using them for child-minding and day care. I do not mind that, but I object to their provision through the local education authority and to them being called nursery education and pre-school facilities. I would not object to a body being set up to direct attention to what is needed, but it is ludicrous to suggest that a child at one day old requires nursery education and pre-school facilities.

Mr. Flannery: Are there not Liberal councils which make no provision? What about the Isle of Wight?

Mr. Ashdown: No. It has long been part of Labour party propaganda that the Isle of Wight makes no such provision. That is monstrous. The Isle of Wight helps to assist and fund non-LEA organised bodies. *[Interruption.]* That is reasonable. There is a statutory requirement for provision, but I believe strongly that it is up to the LEA to decide whether it should be delivered through the LEA on an organised LEA basis or whether in rural areas some LEAs might wish to pump prime and assist.

Mr. Flannery: Is there any free nursery provision?

Mr. Ashdown: Some is free and some is not.

Mr. Flannery: Is any of it free?

Mr. Ashdown: Of course it is. The hon. Gentleman should know that.

If new clause 3 is odd, new clause 4 is positively destructive. I draw the attention of the House to its wording. It says that in every case where pupils are admitted to an infant or primary school class

"before the statutory school starting age"

there shall be

"a qualified teacher and a qualified nursery nurse".

That will immediately put a block on provision for the education of rising-fives in many areas of Britain, and I will tell the hon. Member for Cynon Valley why: "before the statutory school age" means anything up to the term following a child's fifth birthday. In 210 primary schools in Somerset alone, the rising-fives — caught by the definition in new clause 4—are taught as part of a class. If there was a requirement to have a qualified nursery nurse and a qualified nursery teacher in every class in which there was one rising-five, such provision would stop the day after tomorrow. The first result of the new clause would be a complete uproar from parents whose rising-fives could no longer take part in that provision.

I have taken the trouble to discover what the proposal would cost in Somerset. If it were put into operation tomorrow, it would cost a minimum of £500,000. The Labour party could have suggested that, where 10 per cent. of children in a given class were aged less than four and a half, such provision was needed. A cut-off point could have been included. Then I would have understood the clause. But the suggestion that if there is one child aged four years 11 months in a primary school class there must be a qualified nursery nurse and a qualified nursery teacher will bring to an end provision for the rising-fives in Britain the day after tomorrow. I cannot believe that that is the Labour party's intention.

Ms. Armstrong: May I refer to new clause 27? Is the hon. Gentleman saying that no child should have provision until he or she is aged three years six months? Is that what the new clause means?

Mr. Ashdown Yes, indeed. Three years six months is the age at which we think it best that provision should first be made for a child's education. One might argue the case for such provision at the age of three, but at least we give a definition. The Labour new clauses contain no such definition.

I shall vote in favour of the new clauses, because that is the only way in which we can express our concern for nursery education. That is the position in which the Social and Liberal Democrats find themselves time and again; the agenda is established between the Government and the official Opposition and one has either to choose between two inadequate solutions or to abstain. I shall not abstain on this occasion, although I have never seen two new clause as unworkable, impracticable, ludicrous and damaging to the cause of nursery education as those standing in the name of the Labour party.

Mr. Raison: As the House may know, the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts will shortly embark on a study of the under-fives. As Chairman of that Committee, I do not propose to come to the House in a very assertive mood this evening. Nevertheless, I have one or two comments to make and questions to ask about this topic, and it is certainly a good thing that it has been raised on Report, because it is important.

The new clause is a bit odd, for reasons that have been explained already, and I should like to have it made clear whether the duty of the local authority to make provision really means that it must provide the facilities, or simply that it has a duty to ensure that someone is providing a pre-school education in its area.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Our intention is that the local authority should facilitate provision. Whether it provides the education itself or uses other agencies is a matter for it. We should have a menu of provision from which parents can choose for their children. Part of that will come from the voluntary sector, and part from the local authority.

Mr. Raison: Whether that is compatible with the wording of the new clause, I do not know. Nevertheless, that is the most sensible approach.

One of the lessons that has been learnt — certainly this impressed itself on Lady Plowden when she was considering the matter—is the great value of the work that can be done by playgroups. I know that playgroups are often seen as something of a middle-class

[Mr. Raison]

phenomenom, and they have been described as such already in the debate. I accept that there is some truth in that, although I do not think that they need be a middle-class phenomenom. As has been stressed repeatedly, the great merit of playgroups has been the way in which they have succeeded in involving parents.

Whatever we think about the statutory education services, we must admit that very few schools can claim a triumphant success in involving parents. Indeed, one of the main problems of the state education system is the difficulty that it is having in getting parents sufficiently involved. Therefore, I am glad to hear from the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) that he is thinking along those lines. The playgroup, if it is run well, has a special value. That is not to say that the well-run nursery school is not also very important.

8.15 pm

The hon. Members for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) talked about a return on investment and the research that has been taking place recently apparently showing the sustained benefits to be derived from pre-school education. I confess that, although I hope to be considering that research shortly, I have not followed it recently. A few years back, what seemed to be emerging was the suggestion that there was a short-term gain from nursery education — perhaps lasting two or three years—but there was no evidence of a long-term gain. If the evidence shows us something different today, we must consider it.

It is also worth making the point that one should not consider nursery education simply in terms of long-term gain or investment. The years between the ages of three and five are just as important as any other years in the life of a human being, and there is much to be said for spending them as well and as beneficially as one can. When pre-school education is conducted well, it can enrich that period, and that makes it attractive and valuable. That is an intrinsic merit of pre-school education.

Having said all that, I think that the official Opposition and, indeed, the Liberal party, or whatever it is called now, must try to face the questions of cost and economics. It is no good thinking that one can propose a new clause providing pre-school education for everybody in whatever form they want——

Mr. Win Griffiths: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has just offloaded about £4 billion on to people who do not need the money. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that he could equally well have used it to provide nursery school places?

Mr. Raison: The money has already been allocated to a great many causes by the Opposition. I doubt whether it would stretch to cover every cause.

We need to be realistic and recognise that no Government will simply wake up one day and announce that there are unlimited funds for pre-school education. We know the record of previous Labour Administrations only too well — they never got within miles of such provision — and it serves no purpose to come forward with proposals such as this. It is a question of priorities, of which there are many in education.

As I said, I am very sympathetic to pre-school provision, but there are other priorities. For example, the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) would tell us of the important needs of science in the community, and he is right in saying that science is an important discipline that is clamouring for more money. Hon. Members on both sides of the House will say that more money is needed for many of the activities dealt with in the education budget.

That takes me back to the point that I made when I intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Cynon Valley. It is a great pity that the Plowden minority recommendation, with its remarkable all-party support, was not taken rather more seriously. It would not have applied to those who could not have afforded it, and it would have brought more money into the pre-school sector at a time when it was badly needed and would have been very valuable. The Opposition cannot propose a new clause such as this without giving some estimate of the possible cost of its implementation. It is irresponsible not to take the trouble to do that when one is trying to persuade the House to support such a proposal.

Mr. Ashdown: We have asked consistently whether the Government will provide the cost of establishing the national curriculum and whether they will say how many teachers will be required. They have not managed to do that. If they cannot do that with their resources, how on earth does the hon. Gentleman expect the Opposition to do it?

Mr. Raison: The Government are often better placed than the Opposition to give us that sort of detail, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility for an Opposition party to come up with some idea—not perhaps a precise proposal — of the scale of resources which, by implication, they would be adding to the sector if they were ever to find themselves in power.

Mrs. Clwyd: We have estimated that an increase of 10 per cent. would cost about £60 million.

Mr. Raison: I assume that that is an increase of 10 per cent. in nursery provision. Surely the impact of the new clause would be more than a 10 per cent. increase in nursery provision if it is to be provided for everybody. It seems quite evident that 10 per cent. is an under-estimation. As I was saying, one must have a clear idea of what the cost would be before one could seriously contemplate supporting it.

One other point is worth making in this discussion. If I understood her correctly, the hon. Member for Cynon Valley spoke with pride about the provision in Wales and said that it was higher than average. Other hon. Members from time to time say that Labour authorities are doing more than Conservative authorities in providing nursery schools. I put it to them that there is an extremely simple explanation, and it is based on the rate support grant. In my view, absolutely rightly, rate support grant is directed towards areas where needs are greatest and where resources are most scarce.

One of the assumptions that has always lain behind the judgment about where needs are greatest is that where there are greater social needs there is a good case for providing additional nursery schools. That was the view of the Plowden committee, and I support it. Therefore, rate support grant is tipped generously towards areas of the country with higher social deprivation.

A special factor is that Wales gets a particularly good deal out of the rate support grant. A little gratitude might

have been expressed by the hon. Member for Cynon Valley. It is well known that Wales has always had an especially favourable rate support grant. It received an 18 per cent. surplus on top of what the poor English received. Opposition Members must realise that if they say that Labour authorities are doing well in providing nursery schools, it is essentially because the rate support grant treats them generously.

Mr. Flannery: The right hon. Gentleman is the Chairman of the Select Committee, and he has probably heard me say this on that Committee. There are now 27,000 schools using the assisted places scheme, and another 126 are coming in. One school alone, a private school in Newcastle-under-Lyme, has 459 pupils out of 1,200 paid for out of public funds. Instead of building up private education, does the right hon. Gentleman not think that that money could be far better used for children who need nursery education?

Mr. Raison: No, I do not. What I said earlier is true. Many different priorities are being advanced in education. People have to make up their minds on which priorities they think are important. Simply to pick on whatever bit of the education system one does not like and say that that should be scrapped and the money put into nursery education does not meet the point.

I do not want to go on, but the essential point is that I would welcome an expansion of pre-school education. However, the way in which it is proposed by the Opposition cannot be accepted as sensible.

Miss Joan Lestor (Eccles): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) on remembering the lobby of the under-fives that took place in 1968. One of the only good thing that the *Daily Express* has done for me in my political life was to produce a brilliant cartoon of that event. A copy of it is in my house as a reminder of how slow progress has been since 1968.

In my naivety and youthfulness 20 years ago I really believed that if hon. Members on both sides of the House, who see so little of their under-fives because of the lifestyle of this place, actually saw under-fives en masse and realised what their wives had to put up with every day of the week, they might be persuaded that there was an urgency in recognising the needs of the parents of those children and of the under-fives themselves. Unhappily, despite the lobby and all that went with it, as my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley pointed out, there has been little progress.

However, having made that point, I am bound to say that the quality of what is provided today is much better than it was 20 years ago. We have all learnt a great deal about the needs of the under-fives since then. Unfortunately, the amount of provision is not better.

What we were demanding in 1968 and what those of us who have been associated with campaigns for the under-fives asked for was that it should be a statutory obligation for local authorities to make provision for all children from the age of three. We wanted to end the administrative confusion that surrounds facilities for the under-fives and would ensure that primary schools that took in pre-school children were properly equipped to do so, and were not simply putting under-fives into classes of 30 or more children with no assistance and with none of the play facilities or the equipment for development that we know those children need. They were our demands then and they are still the demands we are making today.

Looking at the EEC table of provisions, one can see that we rank very low in the amount of provision we make for nursery education and for many other facilities for the under-fives.

I do not want to go over ground that has been covered about the variations in what other local authorities provide. However, I want to comment on something mentioned by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison). I agreed with much of what he said. However, we have moved on a little from the Plowden report. The mistake that he and many other Conservative Members make is to assume that the provision of nursery education in particular should be geared to children who come from deprived areas. Nothing can be less stimulating for a young child than to have a crowd of deprived children all put together. That does not stimulate children. They are stimulated by mixing social classes and social groups and by making similar provision for all of them.

Mr. Raison: Surely charging fees would be a good way of ensuring that. Obviously those paying fees would be the better-off ones and the poorer children would not have to pay fees. They could then be mixed happily together, which is what the hon. Lady advocates.

Miss Lestor: The mistake that the hon. Gentleman makes is that, if one goes to a nursery school, one does not pay anything. However, if one is availing oneself of some of the other provisions made such as day nurseries, playgroups or whatever, one has to pay. Many of those forced to pay are people who cannot afford to do so. In a sense, we have things the wrong way round. I believe that the facility should be free and available for all and it should be a mixed facility.

This is where I quarrel with the spokesman from the Liberal party, or whatever it is called now. We have talked about pre-school facilities. This is a Bill about education, not social services. Pre-school facilities include a large number of facilities which, as the right hon. Member for Aylesbury said, were commented upon in the Plowden report. It includes playgroups and all sorts of other things.

Mr. Ashdown *rose*——

Miss Lestor: I will not give way at the moment.

I recently spent a happy day in a nursery centre in my constituency in Winton, in Eccles. It is a nursery centre funded by social services and the Department of Education and Science. I still list in "Who's Who" that one of my occupations and amusements is playing with children. There is nothing more relaxing than playing with children.

Centres which include day care and education under one umbrella and which offer a flexible day from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening catering for the needs of a variety of children from different social backgrounds offer the way forward. There are all sorts of other facilities such as the voluntary sector, the private sector and child minders, which I believe we have to look at again in more detail, but that is not the subject of this Bill. We need to co-ordinate our services.

We have gross housing problems in this country for a large number of our children. Many children lack any form of play space. Many children are in high-rise flats or

[Miss Lestor]

in accommodation provided for the homeless. Last year, child abuse emerged as a significant problem in child care. In the 1960s, we talked about the battered baby syndrome. Many people, including some who were in the House at that time, did not believe that it existed. "Not in our country," they said. Then we talked about non-accidental injury, which is what the battered baby syndrome became. Now we know to our cost that child abuse of various kinds is widespread in this country.

I have always believed that one of the safeguards for parents under stress and one of the ways by which to detect when young children are being mistreated is to put them in regular daily contact with trained expert people from outside the family who can monitor their progress. Many of the tragedies over the past years could have been avoided if people who had been trained to spot child abuse had been able to look after our young children.

8.30 pm

Deprived children suffer from delayed development, expression and so on. But I do not want any hon. Member to believe that middle-class children cannot be deprived in many other ways. I have met them and their over-anxious parents, who have told me—it seems only yesterday that I was doing this work—that their children do not need to play because they want to read; or that their children do not like percussion because they like Beethoven. They were children of two or three years of age, living in homes in which one would have assumed there was no need for pre-school education, because they fitted into a stereotype of what many people believe we should aim at for our children. So it is not only children who are in need for whom pre-school education is important.

In circumstances in which there is deprivation and in which parents suffer tremendous stress because of tensions between them, poor diet, poor cooking facilities and—sometimes — homelessness, pre-school education is essential.

I mentioned language development and the social acclimatisation of all our children. Education is basically about curiosity. Education is about harnessing a child's curiosity and offering it the stimulation and facilities to express that curiosity and learn from it. The child is at its most curious roughly between the ages of two and five. If we miss out on those years and do not provide the stimulation and facilities to use that curiosity and translate it into the correct attitude to learning, we can never retrieve them. That is the tragedy of the past 20 years.

Mr. Dunn: I begin by congratulating the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd). This is the first time that we have met across the Dispatch Box in this way. I congratulate her on her speech and wish her a belated happy birthday for yesterday——

Mr. Fatchett: Sing "Happy Birthday" to her.

Mr. Dunn: The tune is well worth playing on many occasions, but I do not like it.

This has been an interesting debate and I fully recognise the contribution made to it by hon. Members on all sides. Opposition Members rarely paid tribute to voluntary sector activity in pre-school education. They did not welcome the growth of playgroup provision in this country in that sector, which complements and supports that provided by local education authorities and other local agencies.

I enjoyed the frisson that passed between the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and the Opposition during his destructive analysis of Labour's new clauses. I often wonder what might happen if a time came when the interests of their respective parties had to coalesce, as in the past. Would this be remembered or forgotten in the sweet joy of spring?

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) made a telling speech, which I welcomed. He paid tribute to the work of the voluntary sector——

Mr. Win Griffiths *rose*——

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend referred to the importance of financial resources and of the cost. We have heard a great deal tonight about the need for more public expenditure on this or that aspect of educational provision, but rarely have we heard anything about how the money is to be found. Something was said about the Chancellor finding more money from other sources, but we did not hear about the constant advice given to local authorities—that if they wish to spend more money on pre-school provision they can do so by making savings in other areas, such as school caretaking, cleaning and the vexed area of administration.

The hon. Member for Eccles (Miss Lestor), whom I welcome back after her translation from Slough, made an important speech in which she mapped out the developments that have taken place—or not, in her view—since her time at the Department of Education and Science 20 years ago. I agree with her that the quality of provision is undoubtedly much better today than in 1968, and I shall return to the point about quantity later.

The effect of new clause 3 will be to repeal section 24 of the Education Act 1980, under which local education authorities have a power, but not a duty, to provide nursery schools in classes and education for children below compulsory school age. The hon. Member for Yeovil was right: the new clause would place, instead, a duty on local education authorities to provide nursery education and pre-school facilities for all children below compulsory school age whose parents desired that. Earlier in the debate there was an exchange about the numbers who might present themselves at the doors of institutions provided by local authorities and demand access on the basis of this clause.

Opposition Members spoke of the 1972 White Paper entitled "Framework for Expansion". It endorsed a number of the points made tonight, and set a target for the expansion of nursery education over the decade that followed the White Paper. I must remind the House that Labour Governments were in power between 1964 and 1970, and again between 1974 and 1979. At that time there was no material impact on the trend of numbers——

Mrs. Clwyd: There was a massive impact.

Mr. Dunn: It is amazing how Opposition Members will not let me make my point. They must concede that the objectives were abandoned in practice, if not formally, during the Labour Government of 1974 to 1979. I seek honesty and candour from Opposition Members about this point. If they agreed that I was right about it, our debate would be the better for it.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: The hon. Gentleman's figures are rubbish.

Mr. Dunn: I have quoted no figures, so how can they be rubbish? I am, however, about to do so.

The Government recognise the benefits of school and other collective experience for children under the age of five. Our view is clear: it would be wholly misconceived to impose a general duty of this sort on local educational authorities. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury said, publicly funded education for the under-fives, important and desirable though it is, must compete with other educational needs and sectors for the finite resources that are available.

Government policy since 1980 has been and remains, first, to preserve the discretionary basis on which education for the under-fives is provided by local authorities; secondly, to maintain level funding of this sector in real terms; and thirdly, to encourage local flexibility and diversity and maximum consumer choice.

Mr. Straw: Where are the figures?

Mr. Dunn: The Opposition are electrified by my speech and cannot wait to be given my points. Earlier, we were asked: what about Dundee? We heard no answers on that. It is quite a different matter when the question is asked of the Opposition.

Mr. Straw: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Dunn: Sit down. I am coming to the matter of provision, if the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) will wait one moment.

The success of our policies can be measured in a number of ways. The Opposition will attach most importance to the figures for publicly funded educational provision. Since 1979, the proportion of four-year-olds in primary or nursery classes has risen from about 55 per cent. to about 74 per cent. If rising-fives were counted in, the proportion would be almost 90 per cent.

In addition — these are the figures for which the Opposition are waiting; they cannot wait to write them down and rush back to their constituencies to spread the good news — an estimated 750,000 children, equivalent to 60 per cent. of three and four-year-olds, now go to playgroups and others attend local authority or privately provided day nurseries or independent nursery schools. This diversity and choice are some of the strengths of our current arrangements. They would clearly be undermined if a duty were placed on local education authorities.

I have paid tribute to the work of the playgroup movement. I was delighted that my Department was able to double the grant made to the Pre-School Playgroups Association in the coming financial year, which at £150,000 will be double that for 1986-87. I pay tribute to the voluntary sector and to the work that takes place, but we must not accept these new clauses. They are an attack on the discretion of local education authorities.

The Opposition chose to chide us in Committee on how we were taking powers from local authorities but when we propose to leave local authorities with the discretionary power, the Opposition want to take that power away— *[Interruption.]*—from local authorities. The case speaks for itself.

Mrs. Clwyd: Despite the Minister's kind greetings for my birthday yesterday, I am sorry that he did not take this subject as seriously as I had hoped. Labour Members know that there is gross under-funding and enormous and unjustified local variations in nursery and child care provision for the under-fives, and we believe that something should be done about it.

It is clear that some authorities — mainly Labour — have taken their responsibilities seriously, even though they have been severely restrained by the Government in funding cuts. We all know that central Government have cut education funding and that local authorities have made up the shortfall and looked after education. Others —mainly Tory authorities—do not care. In some areas there are no day nursery places, and in others there is no pre-school education. The general picture is of neglect and insensitivity to the needs of the young. That is why it is incredible that the Liberal party should indulge in petty carping over the wording of the new clauses instead of supporting and welcoming the expansion of pre-school education.

We pay tribute, as we have always done, to the voluntary sector. Unlike the Government, we believe that the primary responsibility for funding and developing pre-school education lies with the Government. The money is there, and again it is a matter of priorities. The demand for pre-school provision and day care has never been higher. The educational benefits of pre-school experience have never been better demonstrated, but the Government do not want to know.

Far too many children start school without a reasonable command of language, without having had their imaginations stretched or their physical skills extended. Learning to socialise with other children at this formative age can be of enormous benefit. Depriving children of these benefits because of inadequate provision and high private charges can be an unnecessary handicap to child's development. Investment in the future of the young and the very young is at the core of our policies. It is clear that many authorities, especially Labour authorities, have taken their responsibilities seriously. We care, and these new clauses are part of our fight to ensure a better future for all our children. I ask my hon. Friends to support new clause 3.

It being fifteen minutes to Nine o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution this day, to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 204, Noes 261.

Division No. 225] **[8.45 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Blair, Tony
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Boyes, Roland
Allen, Graham	Bradley, Keith
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Armstrong, Hilary	Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Ashdown, Paddy	Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Buchan, Norman
Ashton, Joe	Callaghan, Jim
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Barron, Kevin	Canavan, Dennis
Beckett, Margaret	Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Bell, Stuart	Cartwright, John
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Bermingham, Gerald	Clay, Bob
Bidwell, Sydney	Clelland, David

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Adam Ingram and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*

Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 10

SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES FUNDING

'There shall be a Scottish sub-committee of the University Funding Council appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland which shall have the duty of advising the University Funding Council on the discharge of its remit under section 110 of this Act as it applies to Scotland and in formulating the said advice the sub-committee shall have regard to the distinct traditions and academic structure of the Scottish universities, the need to co-operate with other institutions of tertiary education and the requirements of secondary education in Scotland.'.—*[Mr. Norman Hogg.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss also the following: New clause 39 —*Scottish Universities Funding Council*—

'—(1) There shall be established a body corporate to be known as the Scottish Universities Funding Council, to be funded by a grant made by the Secretary of State.

(2) The Council shall consist of fifteen members appointed by the Secretary of State, of whom one shall be so appointed as chairman.

(3) Not less than six and not more than nine of the members shall be persons appearing to the Secretary of State—

(a) to have experience of, and to have shown capacity in, the provision of higher education; and

(b) to be currently engaged in the provision of higher education;

and in appointing the remaining members the Secretary of State shall have regard to the desirability of including persons who appear to him to have experience of, and to have shown capacity in local government, industrial, commercial or financial matters.

(4) The Council shall be responsible, subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, for administering funds made available to the Council by the Secretary of State for the purpose of providing financial support for activities eligible for funding under this section.

(5) Those activities are—

(a) the provision of education and the undertaking of research by universities; and

(b) the provision of facilities and the carrying on of other activities by universities in connection with education and research.

(6) The Council shall have power to make payments, subject to such terms and conditions as they think fit, to the governing body of any university in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them for the purposes of any activities eligible for funding under this section.

(7) The Council shall also have power—

(a) to keep under review activities eligible for funding under this section; and

(b) to undertake such other activities as the Council consider it necessary or expedient to undertake for the purposes of or in connection with the exercise of any of their functions under the preceeding provisions of this section.

(8) The governing body of any university shall give the Council such information as the Council may require for the purposes of the exercise of any of their functions under this section.

(9) In this section "governing body" means, in relation to a university, the executive governing body which has responsibility for the management and administration of its revenue and property and the conduct of its affairs, and "university" means a university in Scotland.'.

Amendment No. 40, in clause 110, page 106, line 23, at end insert

'and "university" means a university in England and Wales'

Amendment No. 41, in clause 112, page 107, line 40, leave out 'either of'.

Amendment No. 42, in page 107, line 43, at end insert—

'(aa) in the case of functions conferred or imposed on the Scottish Universities Funding Council, as functions under section (Scottish Universities Funding Council) of this Act;'.

Amendment No. 43, in page 108, line 1, leave out 'either of'.

Amendment No. 44, in page 108, line 14, leave out 'neither of'.

Amendment No. 45, in page 108, line 14, after 'shall', insert 'not'.

Amendment No. 46, in page 108, line 16, leave out 'either' and insert 'a'.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

Amendment No. 47, in page 108, line 20, leave out 'either of'.

Amendment No. 48, in page 108, line 24, after 'Universities Funding Council', insert 'Scottish Universities Funding Council'.

Amendment No. 50, in schedule 6, page 176, line 40, at end insert

'the Scottish Universities Funding Council'.

Amendment No. 51, in page 178, line 10, at end insert 'any member of the Scottish Universities Funding Council in receipt of remuneration'.

Amendment No. 52, in page 178, line 28, at end insert 'the Scottish Universities Funding Council'.

Amendment No. 49, in clause 186, page 161, line 16, leave out '110'.

Mr. Hogg: It is always deemed appropriate for the Scots to give advice on education to the Department of Education and Science. I would not make that point myself, because I realise that tonight we are discussing the Education Reform Bill which has massive implications for English and Welsh education, were it not for the fact that at the same time the Department of Education and Science has responsibility for universities, and that includes the universities in Scotland.

The Bill contains no provision for a Scottish sub-committee of the proposed Universities Funding Council, yet the White Paper, "Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge" presented to the House in April 1987 promised just that.

On that occasion, the Secretary of State for Scotland declared that the proposed Universities Funding Council should have a Scottish committee. He said that it would play an important part in planning higher education in Scotland and advise the UFC on the implications of the Scottish education system for the needs of the Scottish universities. He envisaged it taking an overview of the needs of the Scottish university sector and providing a new focus for looking at Scottish needs.

The new clause corrects the oversight which led to the omission of that provision from the Bill. It establishes within the Bill the requirement for such a committee, which will advise the UFC on its remit as far as it deals with Scotland, having special regard to the distinct traditions and academic structure of Scottish universities.

Traditionally, Scottish universities take a broad approach. Students enter at 17 a faculty where they can study a variety of subjects. Generally, those are four-year courses which contrast with the situation in England where courses take three years and are more specialised.

The new clause emphasises the need to heed the requirement of secondary education in Scotland. Again, I should mention the broad nature of teaching in schools. Pupils take five or six highers over one year for entry to Scottish universities. Those universities are geared, especially in the first year, to deal with Scottish pupils. It is a flexible system, and Scottish pupils do not tend to go to English universities.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): That is not true.

9 pm

Mr. Hogg: The hon. Gentleman should check his facts before he says that.

Because of the distinctive nature of Scottish education, the report of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council on the "Future strategy of higher education in Scotland" recommended the establishment of an over-arching body

"responsible for academic planning and the co-ordination of provision across the university and non-university sectors in Scotland."

The Government have ignored STEAC's report in that respect.

However, the Croham report, in its review of the University Grants Committee, was asked by the Secretary of State for Scotland to consider STEAC's recommendations and to review whether a devolved Scottish funding body would have adequate access to a United Kingdom-based peer review system. Croham had no doubt that an adequate peer review system would operate and recommended that at the very least the University Grants Committee should have a Scottish committee

"on the assumption that a separate Scottish planning and funding body is not established".

It was that absolute minimum solution that the Scottish Secretary of State accepted one year ago, ignoring the wider advice of STEAC and the full implications of Crohnam. Yet we find that even that minimum solution is not to have legislative standing. That does not inspire us with confidence. How permanent will it be? What is its remit? Does it have any teeth? All those questions and more remain unanswered without legislation to make the position explicit. I look forward to hearing the Minister's reply.

More than ever there is a need for a Scottish committee with real power and a real understanding of the unique nature of the Scottish education system. The UGC has often been charged with a lack of understanding of the Scottish university scene with allocating individual funding and few, in the light of recent developments, could dispute such a view.

The universities of Aberdeen and Dundee are to shed at least 330 academic posts. Dundee is to lose its modern languages department to Exeter and Lancaster, and its geology department is to be lost to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Those two universities, together with Stirling, are fighting for their lives, while the long-term future of the rest of the eight is far from certain. *[Interruption.]* I cannot quite hear what the Under-Secretary is saying; perhaps he will intervene later.

Such cuts penalise the Scottish universities. Inadequate funding leads to the loss of highly regarded staff, and, increasingly, to the loss of whole departments. It ignores the need of Scottish universities to provide a broad framework for their students. The loss of departments undermines that, and moves universities away from the multi-discipline approach that they have always enjoyed. It also ignores the extent to which Scottish universities are an essential part of the towns to which they belong. Their loss is their towns' loss, to a much greater extent than in England, where many universities are more campus-based. That was certainly my experience when I lived in Aberdeen, where there was a distinct "town and gown" relationship, and it is the case in more than one Scottish university.

It is little wonder that senior members of the Scottish universities are calling for separate funding. The new rector of Aberdeen university—a very particular post in the Scottish universities — is Mr. Willis Pickhard, a distinguished educationist and editor of *The Times*

Educational Supplement in Scotland. A couple of weeks ago, he described Scottish university education as working in

"a straitjacket cut to English specifications".

That sentiment has been echoed by the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), who I see in his place this evening. At a conference in Dundee of the Association of University Teachers—perhaps he will recall the occasion, and I hope that I quote him correctly—the right hon. Gentleman said:

"I have become increasingly persuaded in recent months that Scottish considerations have been overlooked by the UGC".

For that reason, a Scottish Committee of the UFC is essential. But it must be said that this is just the beginning: more and more of us in Scotland believe that a devolved Scottish assembly will eventually plan for the whole of Scottish education.

Mr. Pawsey: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will be aware that there are a number of important clauses to come in this batch, notably new clauses 30 and 31, which refer to discipline in schools. You will further be aware, Mr. Speaker, that this matter has been highlighted both by the Professional Association of Teachers and, indeed, by the *Daily Express*. Is there any possibility of our reaching those new clauses before the guillotine at 10 pm?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I can deal with this. Let me say to the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends that that will depend on the rate of progress on this group of amendments and the next group. To allow further points of order will only waste time and I think that it is unhelpful.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I know how strongly the hon. Gentleman feels, but I cannot help him.

Mr. Greenway *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that I cannot help him. I have already said all that I am able to say on the subject.

Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith (Kincardine and Deeside): It is useful to have this new clause before us, as it provides the opportunity for a debate on further education in Scotland, which is highly regarded in that country and about which there is deep concern. I am certain that tonight's debate will be constructive and useful.

In moving the new clause, the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) referred to me, and I am glad to say that he quoted me entirely correctly. He quoted a view about which I have become more convinced and felt more strongly over recent months.

There are differences between universities in Scotland and those south of the border. They are differences of history, convention and a host of other factors that I wish to mention. My main point was made in the Croham committee report in its review of university grants. The committee recommended a Scottish committee of the University Grants Committee.

Paragraph 8.19 of the Croham report states:

"It is clear to us from the STEAC report"—

to which the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth referred—

"however that, more than elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the Scottish universities do operate in a distinctive environment and serve Scottish needs, and that this needs explicit recognition."

That was the recommendation of a Committee set up by the Government. New clause 10 tries to achieve that explicit recognition. The hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth and I are both worried about whether the recognition that exists so far is sufficiently explicit.

As I have said, Scottish universities differ from those in England and Wales to a great extent. A far higher proportion of Scottish universities are older, multi-discipline universities. That means that we have a far wider range of faculties and departments, but we also have far less scope for categorising universities, as now seems to be the fashion, into teaching and research.

A far higher proportion of Scottish universities have medical schools. Those medical schools are among the most expensive areas of university expenditure. The university medical school in Aberdeen is large in comparison to the whole of the university and its needs must be met. The tragedy is that it acts as a drain on the rest of the university because it is recognised as a good medical school and its needs are expensive. I believe that the Croham report recognised that point explicitly.

There is also a different school system in Scotland. Young people leave school earlier and enter university earlier than in the rest of the United Kingdom. They spend longer at university than students elsewhere in the United Kingdom. The normal time in Scotland is four years. There is also a different teacher training structure in Scotland and a different proportion of postgraduate students. I believe that that factor was not taken into account in the University Grants Committee assessment that has been carried out over the past year or so into postgraduate work.

Another enormously important difference is that we are proud of our educational standards and educational history in Scotland. That point was made by the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth and was acknowledged by my hon. Friend the Minister. One of our strengths in the face of some of the modern traditions is that our education is broadly based. It has been traditionally broadly based because of the nature and history of our universities. We give students attending university in Scotland a range of choice. They enter a faculty rather than a department. Instead of creating a straitjacket for the student throughout university life, a student can more easily change from one subject to another or receive a broad range of education that is much more suited to modern living than the form of education perhaps provided elsewhere. I would be reluctant to give up the kind of flexibility and opportunity to change that exist in the Scottish university system.

Those are the differences. We are all aware of them and we acknowledge them. However, we must pay more than lip-service to them. I am sometimes worried about whether people do more than pay that lip-service to them. One has only to consider what happened recently at Aberdeen university and the treatment that it received from the University Grants Committee. I shall not go into the wider issues, because my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), knows my views and I shall not repeat them yet again tonight.

[Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith]

The geology school at Aberdeen received a good rating from the University Grants Committee in its assessment. However, the Oxburgh committee on earth sciences suggested dismantling that geology department. That would make no sense at all for a university on the edge of the North sea. On one hand there was recognition, and on the other hand there was no recognition at all.

9.15 pm

My other specific example concerns the university of Dundee, where again a double standard was applied. Dundee dental school has a very good teaching record. The review working party suggested that dental schools should draw their students from a 50-mile radius of the dental school. That committee appears to have overlooked the fact that 30 per cent. of that radius is in the North sea. That kind of nonsense makes many people in Scotland very cynical about some of the decisions from the UGC and others.

So what should we do? There is nothing in the Bill that shows that we are going to do anything about it. We have received a commitment from my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland that they will set up a Scottish committee. That is a good thing. The Croham committee recommended it, and I support it. My real worry is whether the Scottish committee will work in a reactive and advisory role, or whether it will have an initiating role.

Before I decide how I will vote tonight, I want to know my hon. Friend's view. If he sees the committee in a reactive, advisory, rather neutral, and perhaps negative role, I am unlikely to be persuaded to vote against the new clause. If, however, my hon. Friend can assure me that the committee will have an initiating, positive and constructive role, in the light of what I have said, I believe that hon. Members on both sides of the House will realise that I support that and believe it to be absolutely necessary.

I believe strongly in the community of universities throughout the United Kingdom and that that is in the best interests of academic learning and research. Many people in Scottish universities also believe in that. However, unless in some way we ensure that the Scottish dimension, which I have mentioned particularly tonight, and which I believe is presently being ignored, is positively, properly and constructively taken into account in the new funding arrangements, my credulity will be stretched.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): I agree with virtually every word that was said by the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith). It is deplorable that such an important debate should be under the time constraints of a guillotine.

I support new clause 10, but it would only put into the Bill what the Secretary of State for Scotland announced on 1 April 1987. Most hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside, consider that that is a completely inadequate response to the particular needs of Scottish universities. For those of us who want to go much further, the trouble has been new clause 39, on which I wish to speak. The problem has been to get new clause 39 within the money resolution of the Bill. It is only because the money resolution was extended yesterday that new clause 39 is in order. That is a wholly unsatisfactory way of dealing with such an important consideration.

New clause 39 goes further and, with the consequential amendments, would set up a separate universities funding council for Scotland. Again, I understand that for technical procedural reasons in connection with the guillotine, it may not be possible to have a separate division on new clause 39. I hope that that is not so. If it is, it is deplorable that Scottish Members will be unable to express their strongly held views on the future of Scottish universities.

My hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) referred to the fact that the background to this problem goes back to the recommendations of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council committee that reported in December 1985. Paragraph 8.29 of that report said:

> "We are convinced of the need to establish in Scotland, at the earliest opportunity, an appropriate mechanism for the planning and co-ordination of higher education provision across the university and non-university sectors and for the formulation of advice in respect of both sectors to the Government."

I agree. STEAC did not make a specific recommendation at that time because it wanted certain assurances about a satisfactory, United Kingdom-based pay review system for teaching and research in Scottish universities. It had reservations about funding.

In particular, it wanted assurances about adequate research council funding. The subsequent Croham report said that those assurances could easily be given and that there was no reason why, if it were subject to the Secretary of State for Scotland instead of the Department of Education and Science, there should not be for Scotland what STEAC described as an over-arching body to take account of both university and non-university higher education.

On 1 April 1987, the Secretary of State for Education and Science simply announced that it would be a sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council. It would have no executive powers, it would be purely advisory and it would be subject to guidance from the Secretary of State for Scotland. That is inadequate. Even if new clause 10 were to be written into the Bill, that is a completely inadequate response to the needs of Scottish universities. We object to the way in which the Universities Funding Council is to be established. We regret that it is to be subject to undue ministerial influence.

In his statement in April 1987, the Secretary of State said that Scottish universities were not in favour of being separated from the rest of the universities in the United Kingdom. Insofar as that represents the views of the Scottish universities, I consider that it is deplorable and a great mistake. However, the Croham report pointed out in paragraph 8.17 that at the very least, seven out of eight of the Scottish universities wanted a planning body to look at the Scottish higher education sector as a whole.

The Bill contains no such provision. It will not be provided either, by the sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council. The only satisfactory solution for Scottish universities is that they should be dealt with together with the rest of the education sector in Scotland and that they should be responsible to the Scottish Office and to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Another difficulty is to get the STEAC recommendations written into the Bill by means of a new clause. My new clause 39 would be a step towards the only

satisfactory solution for dealing with Scottish universities. It would be properly responsive to Scottish needs on the basis of the STEAC recommendations.

So even my clause—and I admit it right away—is a second best, for these technical procedural reasons. But at least it would establish the Scottish universities separate from the UFC and enable us to have a system of funding that would properly take account of Scottish circumstances. It would enable us to respond to the particular problems of Aberdeen and other universities that are suffering very badly under the UGC system at the moment and are likely to suffer even more under the UFC system provided for in the Bill.

If we are not able, for technical reasons, to vote on new clause 39 as well as on new clause 10, I shall consider that absolutely outrageous and an offence to Scottish opinion in the House.

Mr. Bill Walker: I welcome the opportunity to speak on what I consider to be a very important matter. It is important to us Scots that every Member of the House should understand very clearly the differences between our universities and universities south of the border, and the differences in the preparation of our schoolchildren for our universities. There is a feeling within Scotland—it would be quite wrong if my hon. Friends on the Front Bench were not aware of this—that somehow this has not been understood or appreciated.

It is important that we Scots put our case properly and effectively. It is important to recognise that we wish to retain the historical background to our schools and universities. We wish to continue with the system that allows our children to have different opportunities from those available south of the border.

I interrupted the speech made by the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) when he said that Scottish children did not go to universities south of the border, or words to that effect. Of course that is not true; many Scottish children go to such universities.

Mr. Norman Hogg *rose*——

Mr. Walker: If I have in any way misinterpreted what the hon. Gentleman said, I apologise, but I want to make it quite clear that many children from Scotland take the opportunity to attend universities south of the border, and that we wish this to continue. We do not desire any interruption to that, and it should not be confused with the fact that we wish to retain in Scotland our separate way of doing things. I am sure that there is no difference of opinion anywhere on that.

The other important point is that it be understood south of the border that we have specialist schools, such as the dental school at Dundee, that have a reputation that certainly we on Tayside are very proud of. I was astonished when I read that the dental hospital in Dundee was one of the establishments that it had been decided to axe, and I can assure my hon. Friend that it is clear that no one could have attempted to study in depth what has been achieved over a long period by that dental school.

I am not opposed to change or to rationalising the nation's resources. I want to see the nation's resources rationalised to the benefit of the whole nation. If we Scots appear to be making a very special, narrow Scottish case, I want my hon. Friends on the Front Bench to understand that that is not the position at all. We are not debating the Scottish matter in a narrow, purely Scottish sense. We are talking about a system of education that has evolved over a long period and has its unique differences. Unless these unique differences are understood sympathetically, one ought not to be surprised if from time to time one comes up with the wrong answers.

I imagine that it is because of this that Opposition Members have tabled the amendments, because they believe that this aspect of the Scottish dimension is not being taken care of.

If my hon. Friend can assure me that the Scottish committee of the Universities Funding Council is going to be capable of giving the very proper, specialist advice that is necessary for our universities, I shall certainly be tempted to take a different view from the one that I hold at the moment. I do not mean by that that my views are hostile, because they are not. I just want an assurance from the Front Bench that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will be able to continue to ensure that the very special Scottish dimension within our universities and our schools will be taken properly and fully into account in any future policy on funding.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): I am glad to have the opportunity to speak in this debate and to speak as a co-chairman of the defence committee of the university of Aberdeen, along with the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), and the hon. Members for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) and for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond). I am also the elected rector of the university of Dundee. Therefore, the Minister will not be surprised to hear that I am especially concerned about those two universities, although the general principle of the Scottish universities and the separate identity of Scottish university education is of fundamental importance.

The behaviour of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, who presumes to have responsibility for Scottish universities, has been less than inspiring during the past half-hour. He seems to think that the opportunity granted by his monstrous Bill to debate the future of Scottish universities is some kind of Scottish hijack of his Bill, rather than our only opportunity to express how strongly we feel about the disgraceful way in which our universities are treated by a Minister who has demonstrated that he neither knows nor cares about the separate and distinctive character of Scottish university education. We must show him that on this issue we have the support of all political parties in Scotland, which agree that the Government's attitude is unacceptable and deeply resented by the Scottish people.

9.30 pm

I give examples from the two universities with which I am most closely associated. The university of Aberdeen has faced severe cuts throughout the duration of this Administration. In the first round it was cut by 24 per cent., which meant that it had to shed 172 staff—one quarter of its total staff. It is now being cut by a further 13 per cent. and is required to shed another 245 staff and to close at least four departments and possibly as many as seven. How a university can be expected to cope with such draconian behaviour and the slippery exchanges that we have to put up with from the chairman of the University Grants Committee, who clearly speaks with forked tongue when he is representing his views to the university of Aberdeen, leaves people utterly demoralised as to what is expected of them.

[Mr. Malcolm Bruce]

The right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside mentioned the department of geology. It is worth elaborating that the university was invited by the UGC to bid for additional funding for the department of geology. Aberdeen is the offshore oil capital of Europe and the administrative centre for offshore exploration and development. The department of geology has responded to that situation over the years and developed relevant courses. The Scottish sub-committee of the University Grants Committee recommended that the department should not only continue in full, but that it should be considered for expansion. The main body of the UGC not only did not accept that; it came up with a proposal recommending its virtual closure.

Frankly, new clause 10 would not go anything like far enough to protect the interests of the Scottish universities. I very much hope that it will be possible to have a separate vote on new clause 39 because it is much closer to the core of what the Scottish universities need. If the Scottish universities did not know that they needed such a body a few years ago, the conduct of the Government and the UGC has convinced them now that that is definitely the right way forward.

The university of Dundee, of which I have the honour to be rector, faced a 20 per cent. cut in the first round. It is now facing a further 17 per cent. cut, in spite of the fact that it is a small university. I do not think that you, Mr. Speaker, will fail to grasp that the smaller the university, the harder it is to impose cuts—hard as it is to do so in all universities.

The attitude adopted towards the dental hospital has astonished and appalled anybody and everybody who has any knowledge of it. We are talking about a dental hospital that is less than 20 years old. Without necessarily revealing my age, may I say that it was built after I graduated from that university. It has a record of attracting more research funding that any other dental school. It is also the cheapest per student of any in Scotland to operate, but it is being recommended for closure.

I think you will understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why people in Scotland realise increasingly that the Government are launching a vicious assault on the entire university system. The University Grants Committee is predominantly English and I do not quarrel with that as it is an inevitable fact concerning the population of the United Kingdom, but it will look after its own. That is exactly what is happening. Scotland is seen to be expendable by those who neither know nor care about or understand our position.

I do not wish to be too emotional, but it is worth reminding the House that four of these universities predate the Act of Union. I believe that the effrontery of the Government in attacking universities some of which were in operation when England had only two universities is particularly disgraceful. Indeed, there was a time when the city of Aberdeen had two universities and the whole of England had only two. I have no doubt that the Secretary of State and his cronies resent this fact, and that explains why they show such savage hostility to the Scottish university system.

The logic behind the related policies that the Government are pursuing in education, for example in relation to university grants, is an attack upon the integrity and distinctiveness of the Scottish university system for which we are absolutely determined to fight. Therefore, I hope that it will be possible to vote on new clause 39. I believe very strongly that the new clause would create the sort of organisation whereby Scottish universities would at least know that decisions about their future would be taken by Scots, accountable to Scottish people, in Scotland, by people who knew and understood what the Scottish university system was about. So long as those decisions are taken in the UGC by people who do not know or care, we shall have no confidence in the future of our universities or the Government's approach to them.

Mr. Rowe: Having lived for 12 years in Scotland and having spend seven of them teaching at a Scottish university—*[Interruption.]*—I may perhaps be allowed to intervene briefly in a debate that seems to be becoming a sad example of Scottish chauvinism—[HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] — defeating an important argument. The point is that for hon. Members opposite to assault the Secretary of State verbally on the basis of a lack of interest in or knowledge of the system is to do no benefit to the cause of Scottish universities, or indeed the course of this debate.

The Scottish universities indeed occupy an unusual position in the education system that is quite different from that occupied by English universities. Scottish universities take many of their students when they are a year younger than students at English universities. Therefore, any decisions that are taken affecting the Scottish university system must have very clear and different effects on the school system there. Therefore, it is important to have a system of controlling the funds that go to Scottish universities to take account of that factor; and it should be seen and recognised by those working in the Scottish university system.

The reason that I am particularly concerned that there should not be an absurdly separatist and chauvinistic assault on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is because I believe that there is a kind of schizophrenia running through the Scottish university system. They are extremely proud, and rightly so, of the very large number of students that they attract from south of the border. They are also proud of the very high standards, for example within their medical schools.

But it has to be said that a consequence of that success is that Edinburgh, for example, is the most over-doctored city in the United Kingdom. If we are considering the distribution of public money in the National Health Service on either side of the border, we have to take into account that insular performance.

I believe strongly that one of the great difficulties which we suffered from when I worked in the Scottish Office was that there was the ineradicable belief in London that the journey from London to Edinburgh was twice as long as the journey from Edinburgh to London, so that it was much easier for people to discuss Scottish affairs in London than in Edinburgh. Because that is the case, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State can give an assurance that the arrangements under which the money for universities will be distributed in Scotland and in the United Kingdom as a whole take full account of real differences in the system. I do not believe that it is reasonable or helpful to the Scottish case to assault my right hon. Friend on the basis of an ignorance which he does not possess.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): It is tragic that we have only one hour to debate this vital subject. It is clear from the large number of members of all parties from Scotland who are rising how seriously they treat the subject.

Much emphasis has been placed on the traditions of Scottish universities and the fact that we have a broad-based education system, flexibility within the faculties and so on. We have consumer choice, and graduates who emerge from Scottish universities have benefited from a wide education. It would be wrong to leave the Secretary of State with the impression that we are fighting only for the traditions of our universities, vital though they may be. It might be well to remind the House of some of the innovations by Scottish universities to show that they are rising to the challenge of modern society not only in Scotland but in the wider world.

For example, we think of Strathclyde university where people without formal educational qualifications from the deprived peripheral estates of Glasgow are encouraged to attend classes and are benefiting from them. We think, for example, of how the department of geology at Aberdeen university has responded to the developments of the oil industry in north-east Scotland. We think, for example, of how the department of tropical medicine within the faculty of veterinary medicine at Glasgow university has developed tropical medicine to a great extent and has contributed much to many of the developing nations. It has taken on the overall responsibility of trying to assist nations throughout the world. Therefore, it would be foolish of the Secretary of State to think that we are arguing solely for the traditions of Scottish universities.

Like the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) I believe that new clause 39 would be much more effective. New clause 10 reflects in some ways the commitments given earlier by the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Education and Science, but verbal commitments in themselves are not enough. While new clause 10 will insert a written commitment into the Bill, new clause 39 would spell out much more effectively the powers which are being sought by those who are genuinely concerned about the future of education in Scotland. Our universities desperately need their own funding committee and their own voice to safeguard their traditions and to ensue that their future is secure for all our people.

Mr. Frank Doran (Aberdeen, South): I do not want to intimidate you, Mr. Speaker, with the sheaf of notes in my hand. I think that enough has been said to establish the special and unique position of Scottish universities. I have a constituency interest, and the words spoken from all sides of the House about the special position of Aberdeen university should establish beyond doubt the need for a Scottish funding committee. Like my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) I take the maximalist approach and support new clause 39.

In 1981, Aberdeen university suffered a crisis when it faced funding cuts of 24 per cent. with a loss of 250 jobs. The university never recovered from that, but in 1986 it faced further cuts imposed by the UGC and a further 250 jobs are now at stake.

9.45 pm

For the past three or four days I have watched Conservative Members gloat—I use that word advisedly —at the problems created in Dundee by the unfortunate withdrawal of Ford, although I hope that that is not the final position. As a direct result of Government action —or inaction—my constituency has been faced with the loss of 500 jobs from Aberdeen university in the past couple of years, yet Conservative Members have the effrontery to gloat instead of getting up off their backsides and doing what they can to help matters in Dundee. That is appalling; it is hypocritical.

The expression "Scottish chauvinism" has been used. People in Aberdeen are worried not only about the future of education but about the very existence of the university in future, so savage have been the cuts over the past six years. The university is gearing itself up for its 500th anniversary. When the university was a mere stripling of 220, the Act of Union, which has already been referred to by the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce), was passed. That Act specifically guaranteed the future of the Scottish universities, including Aberdeen, "for ever". That was the phrase used.

As a direct consequence of the Government's approach to higher education and their failure to adopt a coherent and consistent strategy, that future is put at risk. My constituents and I fear for the 500th anniversary. Will we still have a university in 1997?

As I said, I support the maximalist approach, and I would encourage you, Mr. Speaker, to give us the opportunity to vote on new clause 39 if it is at all possible.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): This has been a brisk and useful debate, and I am happy to join the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) in paying tribute to the strength and quality of Scottish education and particularly Scottish higher education, which I have seen for myself. The Scots run our professions; they used to run the Empire, and Scottish——

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Given that this is a one-hour debate on a subject of vital importance to Scotland, especially to hon. Members with constituency interests, are we seriously expected to believe that the Minister is proposing to wind up the debate at 9.46 pm?

Mr. Speaker: The Minister stood up. I do not know how long he will take. Perhaps there will be an opportunity for the Opposition Front Bench to respond.

Mr. Galloway: But this is an outrage. The whole process of——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot help the hon. Gentleman. It is the Minister's turn.

Mr. Jackson: I was certainly hoping to leave some time for other speeches to be made, and perhaps the hon. Gentleman will permit me.

I was paying tribute to the strength of Scottish higher education and to the considerable influence that Scottish intellectual traditions have in the Government. I am happy to join my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) in recognising the distinctive characteristics and traditions of Scottish higher education — notably the four-year degree course to which he referred.

Mr. Galloway *rose*——

Mr. Jackson: I must press on, because we are operating against a guillotine motion.

What is the Government's approach to higher education in Scotland? We start from the principle that higher education in Britain is national rather than

[Mr. Jackson]

territorial or regional. That is not just the view of the Government; it was the view of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council, which spoke of an appropriate mechanism being required to reflect the special characteristics of Scottish universities. That is precisely what we are providing in the Bill. Furthermore, it is the view of the large majority of Scottish universities and Scottish academics, who wish to see themselves as part of the British, European and world main stream. That is why they take the view that they should remain within a national system of funding.

I must say, I am very surprised that the Labour party should be taking this line. The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) reminded us all that when the Labour party was proposing devolution for Scotland, it did not at that stage propose the separate funding council that it now suggests.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We cannot have three hon. Members on their feet at the same time.

Mr. Jackson: I will not give way, because I am hoping to leave time for the hon. Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg).

If there is to be a national approach and a national planning framework for higher education, the same principles of public funding must apply to all institutions in the system. There must be the same unit of resource for teaching and the same standards of research evaluation. That is the approach of the University Grants Committee. The hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce) used extraordinarily exaggerated language when talking about the UGC and its distinguished chairman. The UGC applies the same criteria to the rating of all universities. The result has been that three of the eight Scottish universities have above average rating and that is an impressive fact. It is for the UGC to decide whether any special factors should be applied. It does, of course, apply special factors.

Some reference was made to particular institutions by my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith), my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and the hon. Member for Gordon. The current debate about university autonomy and the arm's-length relationship between the Government and institutions has emphasised the importance of respecting that principle and the sensitivity of it. The Government do not wish to intervene, and cannot do so, in the relationship between the UGC and individual universities.

We are anxious not to over-prescribe as to the structures of the Universities Funding Council and the procedures that it will be following. However, having said all that, and having emphasised a national policy and the implications of that, it is also important to recognise the characteristics and ethos of Scottish universities and of the universities in Wales and Northern Ireland. My right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside and my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North set those out powerfully. It is on that basis that the Croham committee recommended — the Government accepted the recommendation — that there should be three territorial committees for the Universities Funding Council and a medical committee. The Education Reform Bill implements that commitment, which is our commitment to Scotland.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside and my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North asked a relevant question about how effective the territorial committees will be. The answer is quite straightforward. It will depend on them. The Government's intention, along with the Croham committee, is that the funding council will not be a representative body. Therefore, we are not talking about a representative from Scotland or from any other branch of the country. [HON. MEMBERS: "Branch?"] I was referring to particular academic interests being represented. The funding council is not a representative body, nor is it a lobbying body. Its functions will be to advise Government and to manage the university system on the basis of the large amounts of public funds provided for it.

I am trying to reassure my right hon. Friend the Member for Kincardine and Deeside that it will be for the territorial committees to do their own job, to argue their own case and to be successful and effective. That will be in the context of a Government vision of how the funding councils should work, which is that they should be powerful, pro-active and dynamic bodies. I am sure that the Scots will not be among the least powerful, least pro-active or least dynamic elements in the new funding council.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am one of the two hon. Members representing the city of Dundee, whose university is one of those worst affected by UGC cuts in recent years. Is it right that the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who have no constituency interest in the university, should be called when I have not been called?

Mr. Speaker: That is absolutely fair.

Mr. Galloway: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. How can you permit this mockery and insult to Scottish education and to Scotland? We have been given one hour to discuss matters of vital importance to the Scottish education community. That time has been taken up by hon. Members with no interest, either constituency or otherwise, and we have been insulted by the Minister rising to wind up the debate with 16 minutes to go out of 60. It is a mockery and an insult to Scotland and I ask you to rule against it and give us more time.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman knows that I am bound by the motion passed earlier this afternoon on the distribution of time.

Mr. Norman Hogg: It may be for the convenience of the House if I respond quickly so that one of my Back-Bench colleagues can be called to make a point about a university in his constituency.

I listened carefully to what the Minister said, but I do not feel sufficiently reassured to advise my hon. Friends to withdraw their new clause. I shall be asking them to vote in support of what we are proposing. I hope that the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) and the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) will be able to join us. They both made speeches that were broadly supportive of our case and I was

impressed by their arguments. I hope they will follow up what they said in the Lobby; that would be the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances.

I also listened carefully to the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe), which was tonight's mistake. He said that he had been in Scotland for 24 years. The only conclusion that I could draw from that was that he at least gathered some respect for our education but did not learn a great deal about us. What he alleged that we were saying about the Secretary of State was not true. I have heard no one insult or, as the hon. Gentleman strangely said, assault him.

I very much approve of new clause 39, which is stronger than our proposal, as the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) said. However, it was the Labour party that tabled both new clauses. I hope that in future she and her hon. Friends, who belong to a party whose name I have forgotten, will feel able to put their names to our new clause.

Mr. McAllion: The Minister showed complacency and a complete lack of understanding of Scottish universities and the academics and others who work in them. He said that, in 1979, they showed no awareness of the need for devolution of control over Scottish universities to Scotland, but in 1979 they had no way of knowing how the Government would perform over these past three years. They ken now.

The case for the independence of Scottish universities is clearly made by the example of Dundee university and the way in which it has been treated over the past two or three years by the University Grants Committee. In a letter that accompanied the academic plan that the university returned to the UGC, its principal spelt out clearly that the university faced substantial financial problems arising directly from the changes introduced by the Government.

Those changes included finance being given in accordance with research ratings which took no account of departmental size. The UGC admitted that it was openly hostile to the idea of small academic departments, which it regards as vulnerable. That was a severe blow to a university the size of Dundee, with its tradition of providing a broad subject choice to its students.

The UGC has insisted since 1986 on Dundee university cutting student numbers and closing departments such as those of geology and modern languages which, we are told, are to be exported to other universities in Scotland. In all, the university is set to lose five departments.

Now, the committee is threatening Dundee with closure of its dental school, which anyone who knows anything about the subject knows is the best in Scotland. Someone, somewhere, took the decision that Scotland should have two, rather than three, dental schools on the basis of a vulgar idea of population statistics. That someone took no account of the fact that Dundee dental college serves the whole north-east of Scotland and has within its radius a population of about a million people, who look to that school for excellence.

At stake is the independence of Scottish universities, which has been put at risk by the powers given to the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Anyone with the interests of those universities at heart should vote for new clauses 39 and 10, in that order.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): The Minister's reply showed crass ignorance of Scottish university education. That same ignorant view from London makes the academic community in Scotland want a Scottish universities funding committee. If we do not get that, we fear that the view from London will prevail and that Scottish education will lose out. For that reason, we shall support the new clause.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 209, Noes 265.

Division No. 226] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice

Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Adam Ingram and
Mr. Allen Adams.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hawkins, Christopher
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman

Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Mr. Millan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have heard from the previous debate that there was a strong feeling on the Opposition Benches that a Division should be allowed on new clause 39. Do I take it that it is not possible to have a Division on new clause 39 as a direct result of the guillotine motion? If that is the case, Opposition Members consider that to be outrageous.

Mr. Speaker: Sadly, I have to confirm that that is so. We would have had to go quite a long way down the Amendment Paper to reach new clause 39.

Income Support

10.13 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I beg to move,

That the draft Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 16th March, be approved.

It may be for the convenience of the House if we consider also the following motion:

That the draft Family Credit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 16th March, be approved.

Mr. Speaker: If the Minister has the agreement of the House, so be it.

Mr. Portillo: The regulations make a number of changes to regulations that were debated and approved by the House in November last year. Taken together with the original sets, they complete the detailed framework for two of the major strands of the Government's reform of the income-related benefit system that is to take effect next month.

I shall not delay tonight's proceedings with a detailed exposition of the background to the social security reforms and the reasons underlying the changes. They have been debated by the House on numerous occasions. The majority of the changes are necessary to correct minor or technical defects in the original regulations. Work has been going on since November of last year to convert existing supplementary benefit cases to income support and, since January of this year, to transfer claimants from family income supplement to family credit. During this time the regulations have been subjected to very close scrutiny, and it is inevitable that questions have arisen about the interpretation of particular provisions. Amendments are therefore needed at this stage to clarify the drafting and to put the original policy intention beyond doubt.

In a number of instances, similar provisions are included in both the income support and the family credit amending regulations. The most important are the provisions concerning payments from the Macfarlane trust. This charitable trust, which is to be administered by the Haemophilia Society, has been established to provide grants for haemophiliacs who contracted the HIV antibody-positive virus through contaminated blood products. The Government, as hon. Members will recall, have provided £10 million for the trust.

By virtue of the provisions in the amending regulations, any income or capital received from the trust will be ignored completely in the assessment of a claimant's entitlement to income support or family credit. I am sure that the House will particularly welcome that. I should add that, through an administrative arrangement, beneficiaries will not be required to inform the Department that they have received payments. The arrangement has been introduced, exceptionally, to keep confidential the individual's condition. Similar provisions on disregards and confidentiality are in the Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations, to be debated tomorrow.

A number of amendments in the income support and family credit regulations are consequential on provisions in the Social Security Act 1988, which received royal assent last week. For example, regulation 27 clarifies the basis on which payment for odd days' entitlement to income

[Mr. Portillo]

support is to be calculated. The new regulation provides a simple method of calculating part-week payments of income support by apportioning weekly entitlement. Without this amendment, weekly applicable amounts and weekly income would have to be apportioned separately. The change will bring a small but welcome simplification for local offices, and the calculation will be more easily understood by claimants.

The effect of provisions in the 1988 Act is to leave it for regulations to prescribe the date from which entitlement to family credit is to commence. This is covered in the Claims and Payments (Amendment) Regulations, which provide for circumstances in which entitlement to family credit needs to start from a date that is different from the date of claim. As a corollary, the Family Credit (Amendment) Regulations 11 and 12 provide for the benefit rates to be used in calculating entitlement to be those applying at the date when entitlement is to commence. This will ensure that those who claim in advance are assessed at the higher rates if there is any relevant change in the rates — including a child's birthday which takes them into a higher age band, or an uprating—between the date of claim and the date from which the award is payable.

The House will recall that on 1 March we debated the Unemployment Benefit (Disqualification Period) Order 1988, which extended the maximum disqualification period for unemployment benefit from 13 to 26 weeks in cases of voluntary unemployment. Regulations 7 and 11B of the Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations provide for an equivalent period to apply to income support. Like supplementary benefit, income support will be payable at a reduced rate where a claimant has been disqualified from receiving unemployment benefit because of voluntary unemployment.

There are a number of amendments concerning the payment of income support to claimants involved in trade disputes. The amendments are consequential upon the replacement of section 23(8) of the Social Security Act 1986 by section 23A, which has been added to the Social Security Act 1988. The new section 23A, like its predecessor, provides that income support can be paid for up to 15 days when a person who has been involved in a trade dispute returns to work with the same employer, and that any benefit paid is recoverable from either the claimant or his employer. The regulations generally preserve the position as it was under section 23(8). The exception is that payments in kind made during this 15-day period will not be taken into account when calculating entitlement.

Regulations 4 and 5 provide for the seven-day exclusion period still to count where the dispute lasts for less than a week and that a person is not treated as in remunerative work from the end of the exclusion period until the 15th day following his return to work. The other regulations provide for the treatment of income during the 15 days following the person's return to work.

Regulations 6 and 11(a) concern the payment of income support where the claimant fails the availability for work test. These regulations carry forward from the supplementary benefits scheme provision to meet hardship in certain circumstances where the claimant does not satisfy the requirement to be available and is not exempt from that condition.

The new provision is not so rigid as the previous one, when the claimant had to satisfy the adjudicating authorities that the only way to prevent serious risk or damage to the health or safety of the claimant or his family was by way of a benefit payment. Now the claimant will have to show only that he will suffer hardship if payment of income support is not made. The chief adjudication officer will be issuing guidance on the criteria to be used in these cases. Obviously, if a person had some other means of preventing hardship available to him he would be expected to use those resources first; otherwise, it would be difficult to accept that hardship would exist.

The calculation of a person's entitlement under this provision will be based upon the reduced personal allowances used in "voluntary unemployment" cases. It is right to use this level, because the claimant has not satisfied a basic requirement of the scheme. It would be inequitable to make a higher payment. This calculation will be used until either the claimant makes himself available or the risk of hardship ceases.

Regulation 8(b) deals with membership of the family where a person has been in hospital for more than 52 weeks. The effect of the regulation is to provide that children and parents who have been in hospital for more than 52 weeks will be treated as members of the family for income support purposes. This provision is needed for these groups; otherwise, there would be children in hospital for whom benefit could not be claimed and children whose parents were in hospital who would have no access to income support, as children are unable to claim in their own right.

Regulation 9 makes it clear that, in line with existing policy, a home can be treated as a registered residential care home for benefit purposes only if the Registered Homes Act 1984 requires that it be registered.

The regulations before us tonight complete the detailed preparations for introducing a simpler, more coherent, approach to benefit provision for people on low income, whether in or out of work. Much work has gone on behind the scenes, in local offices and in North Fylde, where family credit is administered.

Dr. Norman Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Before the Minister finishes, will he provide the House with his latest estimate of the take-up rate for family credit and tell us how that compares and contrasts with the take-up rate for family income supplement? Might not many children in Strathclyde be denied free school meals?

Mr. Portillo: The answer to the hon. Gentleman's later point is that family credit families will not receive free school meals; they will receive cash. The amount of cash averaged over the year is more than the average cost of school meals. One hundred thousand more children across the country will receive the cash than currently receive free school meals, through both family credit and local authority discretionary schemes.

The answer to the hon. Gentleman's first point is that we believe that the take-up of family credit will be 10 percentage points higher than the take-up of family income supplement. However, the number of people involved is much higher. The contrast is between about 200,000 families who presently qualify for family income supplement and about 470,000 whom we believe will take up family credit. That is why the new benefit will cost about £220 million more than the old benefit.

As the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) raised the question of school meals, I remind him that every family claiming family credit will automatically get £2·55 a week for school meals, whereas before, under family income supplement, over and above the family income supplement, there was an unsatisfactory low take-up rate. Only 70 per cent. of the children on family income supplement took up the free school meals. The new system is superior in all sorts of ways.

Dr. Godman: Will the Minister give the House an assurance that no child will suffer because of the changes by the withdrawal of free school meals?

Mr. Portillo: I cannot guarantee that no child currently getting free school meals will not receive the cash in future. It ought to be of interest to the hon. Gentleman to know that 100,000 more children will get the cash than are getting free school meals under the combination of discretionary local authority schemes and family income supplement. The hon. Gentleman really should be concerned about the 100,000 more children.

Dr. Godman: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Portillo: Why does the hon. Gentleman not stay in the Chamber and make a speech on the subject?

Dr. Godman: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Portillo: No. I have given way twice already.

The exercise to convert more than 6 million supplementary benefit cases to income support which began last November is well on the way to completion, as is the work to transfer claimants from family income supplement to family credit. I wish to express my gratitude to the Department's staff for their efforts and for their remarkable achievement in converting all those cases.

The changes have produced a violent reaction from the Opposition, and no doubt we will hear a great deal more this evening about the alleged inequity of what is proposed. I ask the Opposition one question: what would they have done with the supplementary benefit scheme?

Much of the argument that we have heard during the past two years has been for the status quo. Indeed, on a number of occasions we have heard the case put for adding yet another complicating provision to an already excessively complex scheme. However, we have not heard about the enormous difficulties that people have had in working out what they are entitled to under the supplementary benefit scheme, or of the embarrassment that they may have felt in having to answer questions about their medical condition in order to justify extra payments for laundry, diet or heating.

The most recent complaint concerns the effect of the Budget on those on family credit and housing benefit, on the grounds that they have received only small increases in their incomes instead of tax cuts. This criticism ignores the fact that family credit will cost £200 million more than family income supplement, and suggests that Labour would like to return to a calculation based on gross income so that marginal tax rates of more than 100 per cent. would once again be a feature of the system. The abolition of that absurd situation was a major achievement in the reforms.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): The Minister is right to point out that at times it has been very confusing for people to work out their benefit rights. That was one reason why so many Labour local authorities set up welfare rights teams, which pointed out to people what they were entitled to receive with regard to single payments. Ministers then came to the Dispatch Box and said that they would change the system because people were suddenly claiming what was theirs by right.

Mr. Portillo: If that is the example that the hon. Gentleman wishes to take, I must tell him that single payments were supposed to be paid for exceptional needs. Increasingly, they have become part and parcel of day-to-day affairs, because the amount of money spent on single payments has risen rapidly. Indeed, it was doubling every two years. If the hon. Gentleman is concerned about the take-up campaign and people getting that to which they are entitled—which is an important concern—he should welcome the reforms, because they will make the benefit scheme much simpler and make it clear to welfare rights officers and to claimants what they are entitled to, because the new basis is so much simpler.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Will the Minister follow the logic of his argument? If single payments for extreme need are doubling, the need is probably doubling. Will he accept that that is a valid point?

Mr. Portillo: No, I will not, because there is no evidence for that. Single payments have been doubling every two years, but for the entire period between 1979 and 1985 the number of people on supplementary benefit rose by only three fifths. Therefore, I cannot accept that point.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): The Minister is not suggesting, is he, that his Department has been making single payments to people who did not meet the criteria in the regulations? If those payments were made to people who fulfilled the criteria, surely the rising trend shows that more people are becoming aware of their entitlement. His Department ought to take pride in the increased uptake, instead of changing the rules so that fewer people receive what they deserve.

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Gentleman cannot get away from the fact that the purpose for which the single payments system was established was to meet exceptional need. The take-up was such that it became almost part and parcel of the daily requirements of some people on supplementary benefit. Those payments went to a minority of claimants and it was a cause for concern and a reason for reform.

The greater clarity that is involved in the reformed system is another important step forward, and it is one of the reasons for commending the regulations to the House.

10.30 pm

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): I listened with my usual disbelief to the Minister's extraordinary observations about how grateful we ought to be to the Government for their wonderful scheme. They were shot through with inaccuracies and amounted to downright rubbish.

I remind the Minister that his right hon. Friend the Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) said clearly to the Standing Committee that considered the Social Security Bill in 1985 that the reason for cutting the single payments scheme was that it was being taken up to too great a degree. We hope that family credit will reach a larger number of families than family income supplement, but if it does I wonder how soon it will be before the

[Mrs. Margaret Beckett]

Government decide to cut it. The extent of the take-up was their justification for the cuts that they made in social security payments.

It is particularly disgusting that the Minister should use such an argument in the case of single payments. The Government have refused on a number of occasions to make the change. They are well aware that the shortfall in benefit for the families of the long-term unemployed is a minimum of £500 million a year. The shortfall in the day-to-day incomes of those families — never mind the pensioners, or the sick and the disabled—is a minimum of £500 million. It is quite disgraceful to suggest that because single payments began to rise towards £400 million there was some element of fraud.

I recall the incredulity of my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who, sadly, is not here this evening, when the right hon. Member for Braintree appeared in all honesty and sincerity to suggest in 1985 that claimants would prefer a streamlined and simplified scheme, even if it meant that they had less money, because they would be able to understand it. There is no greater measure of the gulf between this Government and those who are forced to live on pensions and benefits than the assumption that they would prefer to have less money, provided that they understand the system.

My hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) led the Minister down a path along which he might have preferred not to travel. The Minister made exaggerated claims about the increase in the amount of money that is to be spent on family credit. He knows that it is only the assumptions about the increased take-up of family credit that justify the Government's exaggerated claims concerning the increase in the amount of money that is being devoted to family credit.

The Family Credit (General) Amendment Regulations are comparatively minor amendments. However, almost at the eleventh hour — perhaps I should not say that; there may be another set of income support and family credit amendment regulations before 11 April — the Government have come to the House yet again with another set of regulations to correct yet another set of omissions.

From what the Minister said this evening, one would not have gathered that the regulations that are being amended tonight were published in draft for some time — although clearly not for long enough — before they came before the House in what was then said to be their final form. It was clearly not their final form, because tonight we are yet again seeing their final form—that is, unless my worst fears are fulfilled and yet another final form appears in a couple of days' time when the Department has got round to writing another set of regulations.

I should like the Minister to reply to and to give us some information if he can on one point about the proposals to which he referred with regard to the fund for haemophiliacs. He drew attention to the fact that the income support regulations and the family credit regulations will mean that haemophiliacs who receive payment from the Macfarlane trust will not have that offset against any benefit entitlement that they might have. Of course we welcome that.

However, the Minister did not refer to payments from the independent living fund. While we welcome the decision that the Government have made — a little belatedly — about the treatment of payments from the Macfarlane trust, can the Minister say whether it is expected that payments from the independent living fund will be treated similarly? Again, the Government set that up at literally the last minute to try to meet the extra needs of severely disabled people that will not be met from the schemes that the Government are putting before us.

As those payments are intended to cover at least part of the losses that severely disabled people are liable to suffer from April, surely they should be disregarded. It may be that that is an oversight on the part of the Department, but the Minister did not refer to that. Perhaps it is something that the Government intend to do in the future.

The House must forgive me if I do not go through the regulations in numerical order as the Minister did. When we are landed with huge batches of regulations, as we have been, it is not always easy to sort them into the clear and logical order that one would wish. I propose to go through the regulations in terms of the subjects as they appear to me, rather than by their numbering.

Regulation 10(2) of the 1987 regulations provides that if benefit is refused on the ground of non-availability for work, it can be denied, not merely for six weeks but for a full 26 weeks. My understanding is that, under supplementary benefit, the rule is applied only where a specific job is available, or in the case of a single person under 45 years, where short-term work is available locally, and that in future the potential six-month disqualification under regulation 10(1)(b) of the 1987 regulations will also apply to a person who has

"neglected to avail himself of a reasonable opportunity of suitable employment".

That is in the income support regulations.

I should like the Minister to clarify two things. First, is it the case that if, under that provision, someone is ruled not to be available for work, and on that ground a deduction is made from his benefit, that deduction will then run for the full 26-week period and there is no provision for such a person to get off the merry-go-round as might be possible if that person was ruled, for example, to have made himself voluntarily unemployed? That appears to us to be the case from the regulations. That seems undesirable, but I would welcome the Minister's answer as to whether that is the way in which the regulations will work.

Secondly, it appears that one way in which the regulations might be used — we believe, is misused — if they were applied to someone who is, in the regulations, ruled to have

"neglected to avail himself of a reasonable opportunity of suitable employment".

It seems that it might be possible for an adjudication officer, an unemployment officer, a restart officer or whoever is the person involved, to use that provision in these regulations — it was not in the supplementary benefit regulations—to force someone off supplementary benefit even though his supplementary benefit might be being paid at a cash-protected level, into perhaps short-term work, if he is a single person under 45 years. When the short-term work ends, that person might end up going

back on to income support, which might be — and certainly will be if it is a cash-protected payment—paid at a lower level.

If the regulations could work as I have described—it seems clear to me that they could—the Government's weasel words about how everybody, as was said the other evening, will be no worse off, or certainly the majority of people will be no worse off because they will be cash-protected, are yet again shown to have little worth. The interaction between employment and benefit legislation seems to mean that someone could be pushed into circumstances when he or she gives up the very cash protection for which the Government have been making substantial claims.

Another question for the Minister which I have not had the opportunity to pursue since this and many other regulations were published is how, if at all, the provisions for availability for benefit will tie in with the change made in the Social Security Act 1988, following an assurance given in the Employment Bill Committee. A question was raised there about someone being ruled to be not available for work but not having benefit withdrawn immediately while the question was settled. It is not clear how, if at all, the provisions for deductions from benefit or payment of benefit at a reduced rate or for non-payment of benefit tie up with the provisions made in relation to the withdrawal of unemployment benefit, and following discussions in the Employment Bill Committee.

A further question for the Minister in this general area of concern relates to the way in which hardship provisions will operate—for example, in relation to regulation 8(3). In that case, income support is payable, less a 40 per cent. deduction on hardship grounds, to someone who would not otherwise be entitled to it because he or she was ruled to be not available for work.

Again, that broadly reflects existing rules, but in those circumstances we believe that the question whether someone should receive benefit because of hardship should be subject to a right of appeal if benefit is refused by an adjudication officer. The Government have made so much in their discussions generally about the simplicity of what they are doing, and the attempt to have rules that are the same across the board, so that people will always know where they stand.

In these circumstances and some others, it seems strange that whether or not hardship exists is subject to appeal. In the board and lodging regulations, which might disappear in the near future and, more pertinently, under section 4 of the Social Security Act 1988 where 16 and 17-year-olds lose all right to benefits, the question whether hardship exists is subject not to any right of appeal, but only to a decision to the Secretary of State.

It is hard for us to see why rights of appeal should be denied in those cases, especially to the young and vulnerable, when the Government are maintaining such rights generally. Can the Minister justify that exemption?

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Is it not of some relevance that we are dealing with curbs and restrictions of the incomes of the poorest in the country, together with changes in the Social Security Act, almost exactly a week after a Budget that has given the richest 5 per cent. of the community 40 per cent. of all the tax cuts and benefits? What a contrast that is between the way in which this Government treat the rich and the poorest in the land.

Mrs. Beckett: My hon. Friend is entirely right, and he has raised early a pertinent matter to which I intended to turn in my closing remarks. There is no question but that the regulations and the legislation to which they relate are thrown into even harsher relief by the decisions that were made, as my hon. Friend says, almost exactly a week ago.

I want to return to the circumstances in which a 40 per cent. reduction to these already minuscule benefits can be made under regulation 8(2). There are, as many hon. Members will know, circumstances in which someone is ruled by perhaps an adjudication officer to need his incapacity for work reviewed. The case may go to a review authority or to a review medical authority which may decide that the person is capable of some work, or some light work, in the often-used phrase.

Members of the medical profession have drawn attention to the fact that in more and more circumstances the medical judgment of one doctor is being set, deliberately by the Government, against that of another. A GP wrote to me protesting that, while he may decide that a patient of long standing, with whose case he is familiar, is not fit to work, an RMO may decided that he is fit—either fully fit or fit for light work—and that that decision could result in his patient suffering a loss of benefit. He said that he regarded that as a direct infringement of the doctor-patient relationship. He particularly drew attention to the unreasonableness of the circumstances in which a doctor who advised his patient not to work might have that advice countermanded by an RMO after spending, if the patient was lucky, only 20 or 30 minutes on one occasion with the patient.

In another place the Minister attempted to represent the status quo as being the same as that enshrined in these regulations, but we do not understand it to be the status quo. At present, if an RMO pronounces someone capable of light work, that person may continue to produce evidence of incapacity, in the form of certificates, from his own doctor and that may be taken into account. Generally it is felt that, because he knows the case, the view of the doctor should prevail while the decision is being reviewed. I gather that such leeway will not prevail under these regulations and that a 40 per cent. deduction will be made from benefit automatically, even though the person may have made himself available for work pending an appeal.

It appears that when a person's own doctor says he is not fit for work and the RMO says he is fit for work, if that person decides not to appeal—because of feeling discouraged or worried—and says he is available for work he will receive benefit. But if he decides to exercise his right in law and to make an appeal, then for that reason alone he may lose 40 per cent. of benefit. Not only is that harsh and unjust, but it is liable to deprive a person of a right which, in theory, should pertain to him in law. I come to the question of the extension of a deduction for voluntary unemployment when someone has left his place of work. Whereas at one time he might have lost some benefit for six weeks and whereas, as recently as a year ago, he might have lost that benefit for 13 weeks, he may now be liable to lose entitlement to some or all of his benefit for six months.

These regulations deal in social security terms with the employment-facilitating regulations which we debated recently. On that occasion we identified the fact that 400,000 people a year would lose benefit under these provisions. On that occasion the Minister said — his remarks were received almost with disbelief by my hon.

[Mrs. Beckett]

Friends—that it had been found necessary to double the period for which a deduction from benefit could be made because the number of initial decisions on disqualification appeared to have gone up by just under 2 per cent. He added that that benefit would be suspended immediately pending a decision.

Did I understand the Minister correctly on that occasion? Did he say that the rise that he claimed to identify represented an increase in the number of initial decisions to suspend people from receipt of benefit? We must bear in mind that the automatic decision to suspend on an initial basis is made without regard to the facts and without any inquiry; it is an automatic decision, meaning that the person is guilty until proven innocent. It is an automatic suspension of benefit even before the facts are investigated. It is a contrast to the provision in the Employment Bill, to which I referred a few moments ago, where, much more sensibly, payment of benefit may be allowed to continue until a proper decision has been reached about whether someone is falling foul of the employment regulations. In this case the benefit is suspended first and the investigation takes place afterwards.

The Minister will also recall that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) was able to draw attention to the fact that, although the Minister had given a parliamentary reply which indicated that no information was available to enable the Government to reach a decision one way or the other on the justification for doubling the period for which benefit should be lost, a survey had been carried out. The Minister said that he would not have regarded that as a scientific basis for the decision, which is not usually a bar to the Government quoting anything in parliamentary answers or debates. But we take it as a precedent.

Now that we have found out that the report exists and the Minister has put it in the Library, we have had an opportunity to glance at it. We must bear in mind that the report is based on a period when the likelihood of benefit suspension could still apply only for 13 weeks and not the full six months. It is interesting to note that the report showed that 75 per cent. of the periods of disqualification imposed were for the full 13 weeks. Since it also indicated that the average time for disqualifications was over 11 weeks, it appears that of the 25 per cent. remaining, in only a tiny minority of cases was disqualification for less than 13 weeks.

The report shows also that the average time for someone to place a claim, once that person had left his employment, was about 12 days. That appears to counter totally the impression which the Government seemed to be trying to give in that debate—that the country was full of people rushing to the benefit office to demand benefit which they knew they were not entitled to because they had wantonly deprived themselves of the opportunity to work.

The fact that it has taken people some 12 days to get round to going along to sort out their position and to claim their rights appears to indicate, as was suggested at length by a number of my hon. Friends, not that they decided not to bother working, but that often there was distress or difficulty. The loss of the job may be due to other members of the family moving. Yet often those circumstances are used to deny people their right to benefit.

The report shows too that, after the 12 days taken for the initial claim to be made, on average 42 days are taken to decide the claim. So it is six weeks before a formal decision is made on most claims, although for all that period benefit will be lost to some extent. Since we know that it takes an average of 17 weeks to decide an appeal, we are talking about a substantial period, getting on for six months in itself, during which benefit is lost before any proper decision is made, never mind when that decision is confirmed. Again the Minister will recall from the previous debate that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston pointed out that about two thirds of the decisions are reviewed or overturned.

The implication of what the Government have said is that they made the decision to double the period so as to encourage people to go back to work or not to give up work. In fact, in paragraph 7 of the report which the Minister did not want to quote and preferred us not to know about, there is this observation:

"there is no indication that either the reason for leaving or the time taken to decide a case has any bearing on the length of disqualification imposed."

Later in the report we discover that there is little evidence to suggest that people are less willing to leave work, or find it easier to return to work, as a result of the application of the voluntary unemployment deduction. The authors of the report comment that they had thought that the data would show that those disqualified were unemployed for shorter periods than others, but that that turned out not to be the case, although it is pointed out that that may be due partly—perhaps even largely—to the fact that those disqualified under the extended period tend to be the young, the less skilled and those who may be expected to have the greatest difficulty in returning to work.

I should have thought it particularly relevant to the Government that the authors of the report point out that, once people understand how the system of voluntary unemployment deductions works, far from being encouraged back into work—as the Government claim—they may well be so concerned about the harshness of the penalty imposed on those who make a mistake when seeking a suitable work placement or whose placement is not of long duration that they will find it easier to continue to receive benefit than to look for work. The authors of the survey suggest that the Government may actually be encouraging people to stay on benefit rather than encouraging them to look for work.

Whatever conclusions one might draw from the survey, and however much one might question its scientific nature, the size of the sample or whether answers were given to all the questions asked, one thing is crystal clear. No one could possibly conclude that it offered any grounds for the extension of the period of unemployment deduction—let alone for the doubling of that period. Perhaps it is not surprising, given that the period was doubled not very long ago, but there is simply no information available to sustain or support the case that the Government sought to make to the House—not very well—a short time ago.

As one might expect of amended regulations following on general regulations passed by the House so recently, the provisions are on the whole minor compared with what we have discussed in recent weeks. However, there is no question but that to consider the detail of the regulations and to listen to the questions asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman)

and note the absolute complacency of the Minister's replies is to be reminded more and more forcefully that most of the regulations are as unnecessary as they are invidious. They are part and parcel of a series of changes for which the Government's justification has been tenuous from the beginning. It has now been proven to be utterly untrue.

From start to finish, the Government have said that the work of which the regulations form part was necessary because the system had to be simplified — the simplification of the system is one thing, perhaps the only thing, on which we do not disagree—and that was not possible without changes and cuts, without making major savings and without literally millions of people losing as a result. That was never true. To anyone who has followed our debates since the introduction of the review — through the Green Paper, the White Paper, the 1985, 1986 and 1988 Acts and all the regulations, some of which have still, unfortunately, to come before us — it will have become more and more clear that it has never been true that the Government had no choice about the course that they are pursuing.

Anyone unwise enough to believe the plethora of justifications that we have heard from the Government over the past three years and who listened to the Chancellor last Tuesday will now know that the case was simply untrue from start to finish. It has never been true that the Government needed to save hundreds of millions of pounds at the expense of pensioners, the sick, the disabled and the unemployed. It has been true merely that they chose to do so because, like all Governments, they have their priorities. Their priority is those who have and not those who need.

11 pm

Mrs. Audrey Wise (Preston): I rise to make two points. First, when we discussed the unemployment benefit regulations recently, the Minister saw fit to ignore the point I made. I am asking him to be so courteous as to deal with that point now and I will draw it to his attention again.

Income support is reduced if unemployment benefit regulations cause the main claimant to lose benefit. Income support regulations cause a reduction of 40 per cent. in the entitlement of the main claimant. This becomes a 20 per cent. reduction if a pregnant woman is involved. I want to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that pregnant women on income support are acknowledged on soundly based medical evidence to have insufficient diets. A woman on supplementary benefit cannot buy an adequate diet to maintain her properly during pregnancy. Therefore, how much less can she buy an adequate diet if her income is reduced by 20 per cent.? When I raised that question before, the Minister ignored it. I ask him to deal with it on this occasion if he can, if there is an answer and if he can advise a woman on 20 per cent. less than income support how to buy an adequate diet.

My second point relates to the treatment of capital. We are all pleased about the sensible attitude shown to capital in relation to the Macfarlane trust and haemophiliacs. However, I have to draw attention to the fact that capital is not always dealt with in such a sensible manner. I want to draw the Minister's attention to the adjudication officers' guide and the instructions given on dealing with matrimonial assets on breakdown of marriage. As I understand it, that guide applies to the treatment of capital wherever capital is taken into account.

The fact is that the adjudication officers' guide gives an odd instruction. If there is a matrimonial breakdown and there is any capital involved, that capital is almost certain to take the form of a house in most families. If it is accepted that there is some joint ownership or joint beneficial interest in that matrimonial home, the adjudication officer must treat the wife as having half that property, even if it is by no means certain that ultimately she will be deemed to have half. In fact, the adjudication officers' guide goes so far as to say that, when it is not in dispute that the property is still jointly owned,

"the extent of the claimant's interest (for example whether 5 per cent., 50 per cent. or 95 per cent.) is irrelevant and half the value of the property should be taken into account as her capital."

That can have a serious effect on a claimant's position and the amount deemed to be her capital. It is a nonsensical instruction. I should like to draw the Minister's attention to it and ask him whether he has any answer. If he has no answer, can he bring before the House, if necessary something to alter those instructions? Or perhaps he can do it by administrative action. If the adjudication officer treats a person as owning 50 per cent. of a house when she may really own only 5 per cent., that cannot be irrelevant.

I admit that I am not familiar with the rest of the adjudication officers' guide, but I hope that it is of better quality than the part that I have just read out.

11.5 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): Most people, especially employers, would agree that the new rules for voluntary unemployment were long overdue, but how will they mesh with the rules on seasonal employment? As my hon. Friend the Minister will appreciate, in areas such as my constituency people rely on seasonal employment. The regulations governing that are not dissimilar from those for voluntary unemployment, except that, when the employment has been seasonal for three consecutive years there is an automatic ban on the receipt of benefit. That creates some discouragement from taking jobs that are available in an area in which, although it has been falling, unemployment is still 13 per cent. in the winter months.

11.6 pm

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): In the context of the introduction of income support, will someone who applies for an essential needs payment between now and 11 April and whose application is turned down by the local adjudication officer have the right to appeal against that decision within the framework of the appeals procedure of pre-11 April 1988, no matter how long that appeal takes to be heard by the extant social security appeals tribunal?

The Minister has been given some notice of the second issue I want to raise with him in a letter sent to him by my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field). Will the applications for 13 weeks' arrears of supplementary benefit made by former employees of British Shipbuilders Ltd., some of which have yet to be processed, be assessed under the existing system, even if 11 April overtakes us before they have been heard? The local office of the DHSS in Port Glasgow has received more than 500 applications from former British Shipbuilders employees and the manager has informed me that about 206 applicants have been paid the 13 weeks' arrears of supplementary benefit. That leaves an outstanding backlog of more than 300 of my constituents.

Similar circumstances surround the applicants to the local DHSS office in Greenock. Natural justice demands that they should be treated in the same way as the successful applicants have been, despite the profound changes to come on 11 April.

I represent about 34,000 men, women and children who depend on social welfare payments. The issue of single payments looms large in their lives. In the financial year 1986-87, the Greenock and Port Glasgow offices paid out about £2·5 million in single payments. The budget which the local managers have been given for the social fund for 1988-89 is about £1·5 million, a third of which is designated for the grants part of the social fund. Those of my constituents who, unfortunately, are in receipt of social welfare payments are seeing public provision for moneylending. For those people the local DHSS offices become the moneylending offices.

The only comment one can make in fairness in crediting the Government with anything is that, if my constituents who are on income supplement go to the DHSS offices in Greenock or Port Glasgow after 11 April, they may obtain a loan. Repayments on that loan will be deducted at source but no interest will be charged. That stands in stark and welcome contrast to the interest charged by the loan sharks who, unfortunately, infest some of the council schemes in the communities that I represent.

For almost a third of the people whom I represent, 11 April will be a bleak day. Perhaps that goes some way

towards explaining why the Tories in my constituency are notable by their absence at every level of elected representation.

11.12 pm

Mr. Ronnie Fearn (Southport): Every hon. Member will welcome the setting up of the Macfarlane trust to administer the money given by the Secretary of State to the Haemophilia Society to help those sufferers who have contacted AIDS as a result of treatment with infected blood products. I am delighted that payments made from the fund will be disregarded for the purpose of income support and family credit. It is almost impossible for us to imagine the heartbreak facing haemophiliacs who already face a great burden without the addition of the misery of AIDS, so I am glad to hear that their problems will be relieved in this small way. I am afraid that the sum made available by the Secretary of State, which works out at just over £8,000 per head, is pitifully small considering the difficulties that are faced by those victims, but I nevertheless congratulate the right hon. Gentleman on this sensible and fair decision.

I wish that the Secretary of State would employ the same standards of fairness and generosity when he turns his mind to the disqualification of benefit for people who are classed as voluntarily unemployed. On 1 March we debated this issue and the Government tried, I believe not convincingly, to argue a case for extending the disqualification period from 13 to 26 weeks. They clearly lost the argument in the House but, as so often, won the vote on the night. Tonight we are debating the same question of the reduction of income support for people judged to be voluntarily unemployed.

As many hon. Members, including myself, have said before, there is no convincing argument for extending the period of disqualification. The Government argued that because the number of voluntarily unemployed people was rising, increased sanctions were required. There is no evidence that people are greatly aware that such a sanction exists and that it works. In the previous debate, the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled said:

> "Following the 1986 change one would have expected the percentage of unemployed people claiming benefit in situations of 'voluntary unemployment' to have fallen. On the contrary, the absolute number of instances where a disqualification or deduction was imposed rose".—[*Official Report*, 1 March 1988; Vol. 128, c. 834.]

The Minister appeared to have made a fairly convincing argument against sanctions on the grounds that they did not work, but instead he drew the conclusion that the problem was that sanctions were not tough enough and should therefore be extended to six months.

The Government have decided on this extension despite considerable evidence that, in many cases, the decision to view a person as voluntarily unemployed and to remove his right to unemployment benefit and reduce his supplementary benefit is wrong.

In his 1986 report, the chief adjudication officer concluded that a staggering one in three cases were defective. While that situation prevails, whereby many people are quite unjustifiably facing hardship, it is incredibly irresponsible to extend the maximum period of disqualification to six months. We are not discussing a small group of people. On the Government's own figures, of the 420,000 people a year who are disqualified, about 180,000 also have their supplementary benefit reduced. Most of the remaining 240,000 are not entitled to benefit at all.

In the debate on unemployment benefit, I said that many mistakes are being made and that often people are not even repaid money owing to them when errors are discovered. The survey of citizens advice bureaux commissioned by the Low Pay Unit found an alarming catalogue of fears about the way in which the system is currently conducted. In particular, the survey concluded that people are being automatically disqualified in all cases, except redundancy.

In a previous debate, we heard about a number of terrible cases of people being forced to give up work because of unreasonable conditions, such as over-long hours, poor pay or harassment while at work. None of those accounts was able to move Ministers, but there is little doubt that large numbers of people are forced to leave work through no fault of their own and in circumstances that reasonable people would accept. They should not suffer further by having their benefit reduced for six months as well.

The citizens advice bureaux survey also showed that the maximum disqualification period is automatically imposed in virtually all cases, with no proper evaluation of the circumstances. Poor decisions are being made on a regular basis, and the Minister knows that. Despite that, he is determined to push through the extension of the disqualification period, and I urge him to think again, even at this late hour.

I should like to take this opportunity of raising another matter with the Minister. I have recently seen a copy of the application for family credit. We are used to official literature being difficult to understand, but this form is incredibly complicated. It is no less than 17 pages long. Given that statistics clearly show that many of the people applying will be semi-literate, or even illiterate, and that the Government have estimated that take-up of family credit will be at least 60 per cent., is the Minister satisfied with this situation? Finally, perhaps the Minister will explain the determination of the amounts, which I find it very hard to understand.

11.18 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): When the Minister introduced the regulations, he correctly said that, in the past, it had been difficult for people to understand the nature of their entitlement to claim under the various benefit headings. That is why I intervened and said that a number of Labour local authorities had set up welfare rights teams to go into the communities showing people what they were entitled to claim. That created a great deal of extra demand at the various DHSS offices, particularly in London.

The Government did not applaud those Labour local authorities for rightly pointing out people's entitlement. They did not commend and support such activities. Instead, they condemned authorities such as the Greater London council, saying that that was not their business and they were not social service authorities.

When Labour authorities continued to act in that way, the Government said that, since there was such a large take-up of the various benefits, they would change the nature of the system by removing the entitlement to benefit. I found that a perverse way of dealing with the matter, given that people were only claiming what they

[Mr. Tony Banks]

were entitled to receive. It was not as if they were fiddling or deceiving; they were simply claiming what was theirs by right.

But the Government relied on the fact that there was widespread ignorance of people's entitlement. Instead of trying to alleviate that, they decided to take away people's rights. Of course the Minister was correct to say that he has made the matter much simpler. He has made it simpler because he has taken away a lot of entitlement. Before, people had very little; now they have nothing. That makes it simple and it can be well understood by everyone.

I have been looking at the regulations. This is intended to be a simple system so that people will get that they are entitled to. I have been trying to understand part VII, entitled "Calculation of income support for part-weeks". I shall read it for the record and for the purpose of illustrating my point. It says:

"Amount of income support payable

73. — (1) Subject to regulations 75 (modifications in income) and 76 (reduction in certain cases), where a claimant is entitled to income support for a period (referred to in this Part as a part-week) to which subsection (1A) of section 21 of the Act (amount etc. of income-related benefit **(a)**) applies, the amount of income support payable shall, except where paragraph (2) applies, be calculated in accordance with the following formulae—

(a) if the claimant has no income, $\frac{N \times A}{7}$;

10(b) if the claimant has income, $\left(\frac{N \times (A - I)}{7}\right) - B$."

The Minister, being a new young Member, may understand that entirely, but I suspect that my constituents in the London borough of Newham will find it very difficult to understand. That really is not surprising. I doubt whether at this time of night any hon. Member understands precisely what that means.

If the Minister is serious, and determined that matters will be made much more explicable, will he tell us when he replies exactly what the Government are doing to alert people in boroughs such as the London borough of Newham, which has between 32,000 and 33,000 people claiming supplementary benefit, to their exact entitlement? The Government have changed the rules to make it much more difficult for Labour local authorities to inform people of their rights. What are the Government doing to explain in simple terms what people will be entitled to out of this much smaller pot that is now on offer?

While I am talking about smaller pots, let me refer the Minister to the situation in the various DHSS offices in my borough of Newham. In Canning Town, single payments in 1986-87 amounted to £808,392 and in 1988-89 the social fund total will be £408,556. In Plaistow in 1986-87 single payments amounted to £817,146 and in 1988-89 the social fund total will be £540,718. In Woodgrange park in 1986-87 single payments amounted to £1,312,132 and in 1988-89 the social fund total will be £889,186.

Social fund allocations as a percentage of single payment awards based on the 1986-87 figures will be 51 per cent. in Canning Town, 66 per cent. in Plaistow, and 68 per cent. in Woodgrange Park. Social fund allocations — grants only — as a percentage of single payment awards based on figures for the same period will be 15 per cent. in Canning Town, 20 per cent. in Plaistow and 20 per cent. in Woodgrange Park.

That is very easy to understand. It simply means that that much less money will be available to service the needs of the London borough of Newham and some of our poorest people. Mine is the second most deprived local authority area in the country.

We do not need the Minister to come here and tell us that the regulations are so complicated that we cannot understand them, and that therefore they will be changed to a point at which there will be nothing to claim. We want him to recognise the depth of poverty in boroughs like Newham, and to do something about it. All the fiddling, the fancy language and the civil servant jargon — and they are not paid pennies for this sort of rubbish — amounts to nothing. What we want is extra resources to deal with the poverty in boroughs such as mine.

The regulations—like everthing else that comes from the Government—amount to nothing but taking from the poorest in our country. The Government are a disgrace, and I am surprised that the Minister has the face and the gall to come to the House, even at this hour, and try to put these measures forward.

11.26 pm

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Hon. Members — Conservative Members, certainly — will realise that an orchestrated campaign is in progress against the social fund. Many of us welcome the fund, however. I have found that single payments to those on income support — or supplementary benefit, as it is now — create considerable jealousy between those on supplementary benefit and working people on low incomes.

Recently, a working widow in my constituency called me to her home because she was facing a compulsory purchase order. She lived on a poor estate, all of which was being pulled down. She said, "Mr. Favell, I have worked since I lost my husband 10 years ago. I have brought up two daughters, who have been properly educated, and I am extremely proud of them. I am now being removed from my home. I have no savings, and I shall receive virtually nothing to furnish my new home because I have always worked. Next door is a family of five. Both husband and wife have never worked, but they will scoop the pool. I consider that desperately unfair."

I quite agree with her. But now the family next door will —or rather would—be given a loan, which would have to be repaid. That I consider justice; the present system is injustice.

Mrs. Alice Mahon (Halifax): Did the hon. Gentleman put that to the Chancellor before he gave billions away to the wealthy in our society? It would have been a very proper proposition to make to him then. Now, he proposes to take all this money away from the poorest people.

Mr. Favell: I do not follow the hon. Lady's point. I am saying that here is a widow who has worked all her life and who is bound to furnish her own home, having no savings, because she happens to be working; whereas the family next door scooped the pool, and have a new home permit. She sees no justice in that.

At present, a 24-hour-a-week rule applies to the claiming of family credit. Many women who are separated from their husbands work only 20 hours a week—half the normal working week—and will not be eligible for family credit. Normally, it will not affect a woman who is separated from her husband if she happens to live in rented accommodation. However, if she remains in the family

home, as is normally the case if she has young children, she will be adversely affected if she works only 20 hours a week as opposed to 24 hours. Many women with young children want to work only 20 hours a week so that they can take their children to school and collect them afterwards. However, they will not be eligible for family credit if they work for only 20 hours a week. That is an injustice and I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will look into that point.

11.29 pm

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): There is really something obscene in the fact that we are expected to debate one set of regulations after another about social security late at night. The Minister moved the regulations in such a technical way that one would have thought that he was describing the repair manual of a car. In fact, he has put the flesh onto all the cuts and misery that have already been imposed by successive Social Security Bills that he and his colleagues have brought to the House.

I sat through both Committee stages of the Bills that brought this wretched process into operation. At every stage, the Government have tried to find someone who is allegedly fiddling the social security system and they have allegedly tried to simplify the system. However, all this is actually a cloak for the most massive cut in social security spending that has been imposed in the past two years.

Last week the Government introduced a Budget that gave £4 billion to those people who already have a great deal of money. They are now trying to further curtail the incomes of those who are already living on the breadline in the capital and elsewhere in the country.

The way in which the Government have introduced these regulations is discreditable. The way in which the Government have introduced a concept of cash-limiting benefits by sleight of hand — so that, instead of measuring the real needs of people, they cash-limit that need so that those people will suffer — is also discreditable.

The Government have also privatised the charitable system by establishing charities themselves. It is offensive that part 2 of the Family Credit (General) Amendment Regulations — the amendment of regulation 2 — deals with the Macfarlane trust. I am not condemning people who have set up trusts to look after people whom the welfare state has forgotten—for example, haemophiliacs. However, it is wrong and discreditable for the Government to seek to use that charitable money to bail themselves out because they have spent all the money that should have been spent on supporting those people on tax cuts for those who can already afford them.

I do not favour a social security system that relies on the poor box and charity, which is what the Government are introducing; I favour a system that guarantees the elimination of poverty and degradation that the Government's social security system has imposed on so many people.

We will debate other regulations later in the week and in future. The Minister will find that, come 11 April, when the full horror of the hardship, chaos and misery hits the poorest and the monitoring begins to take effect of the unfairness, lack of regulation and arbitrary nature of the cash limits that have been imposed and poverty that has been caused in the inner-city areas, he will be brought back to the House, forced to introduce regulations and to admit that the Government's legislation is unfair and unworkable. One day, the Minister will be driven out of office and we will have a Government committed to eliminating poverty from society rather than creating two nations, which is all that Conservative Members understand.

11.33 pm

Mr. Portillo: With the leave of the House, I will reply.

I want first to deal with some points of detail. My hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) asked about seasonal workers. There is no relationship between the regulations and seasonal workers. The Social Security Advisory Committee is considering the whole issue of seasonal workers at the moment and is due to report soon. It would be best if my hon. Friend waited for the Committee's recommendations.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): That committee has been considering the problems of seasonal workers for well over 15 months now. The Minister said that it will report soon. When will it report?

Mr. Portillo: I am not responsible for those deliberations, but I take the point that the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) would like to see the result of those deliberations soon.

My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) is obviously worried about people who are working fewer than 24 hours and are not eligible for family credit. One of the important points in the reform is that the maximum number of hours that a person can work and still qualify for income support has been aligned with the minimum number of hours to qualify for family credit. Therefore, a person working only a few hours a week is eligible for income support, and a single parent would have the advantage of the £15 disregard in earnings.

Mrs. Beckett: I am sure that the Minister would not wish to mislead the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell). I remind him that single parents may have that advantage, but they will have the disadvantage of not being able to offset their work expenses against their earnings, and that would probably lose them £25.

Mr. Portillo: That would depend on the case. Not many single parents have that level of expenses. The £15 disregard will apply no matter what their previous expenses in earnings were.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Does not the Minister want to congratulate the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) on saying bluntly what the Minister cannot say from the Dispatch Box? Clearly, the hon. Member for Stockport had only contempt for the poorest in our community who have to apply for single payments. He said bluntly what the Tory party really believes.

Mr. Portillo: My hon. Friend the Member for Stockport expressed no contempt whatsoever. He said that people living just above the supplementary benefit level who do not qualify for single payments are resentful and find it difficult to understand why people who happen to have an income of a few pounds less qualify for single payments. That is a very serious point and is widely felt around the country. The hon. Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick) would do well to acknowledge that that is the case.

The hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) was concerned to know whether the disregard of payments in

[Mr. Portillo]

the case of the MacFarlane trust would be extended to the independent living fund. The answer to that is in due course we will introduce regulations to that effect. That was announced by my hon. Friend the Minister of State in a recent written answer.

The hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) said that the family credit form was incredibly complex. I would ask him to distinguish between two different things. I do not believe that it is incredibly complex. It is a very long form because it explains about the benefit at the same time as it asks the questions. It is designed in such a way that, in plain English, it invites claimants to skip those sections of the form which do not apply to them. The average claimant will not have to fill in all 17 pages of the form.

The hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) was worried about how claims made under the supplementary benefit regulation would be treated. I can reassure the hon. Gentleman that any claim made under those regulations will continue to be treated under those regulations until the matter is resolved. That includes whatever level of appeal a claim might reach.

There was enormous talk about cuts, but I can tell the hon. Members for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) and for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) that the family credit system will have £200 million more than family income supplement. In the case of family income support, £100 million extra is being put in. The public expenditure involved in income support is £400 million more than would have been involved in continuing the supplementary benefit system. Those are the relevant figures.

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): What about single payments?

Mr. Portillo: The hon. Lady says, "What about single payments?" What about the sums of money which I have just told her about?

The Opposition wish to compare the level of single payments in 1986-87 with the level of the social fund, but they disregard entirely the extra money being put into the basic benefits on which people are being asked to live. They cannot leave that out of consideration. If Opposition Members wish to argue that money is being sucked out of the community and that less money is available for the poor, they have to take into account the extra money that is being put into the basic rate of benefit. They ignore that. I am telling them that £400 million over and above what is required for supplementary benefit is going into income support. That cannot be ignored.

Mr. Tony Banks: Can the Minister guarantee that everybody who is in receipt of some form of state benefit, particularly if it is supplementary benefit, will be better off after 1 April than he is now?

Mr. Portillo: According to our figures, nearly nine out of 10 claimants will be no worse off, or will be better off, in cash terms, after the change in April. In real terms, nearly two thirds will be the same, or better off, taking into account all the changes in benefit.

The figures are well known to the Opposition, yet they are ignored time and time again. The social security reforms are not about cuts. They are about the better directing of benefits to the people who are most in need. The Opposition ought to welcome the fact that they remove some benefits from people who have either relatively high incomes or relatively high amounts of capital and that they direct extra benefit towards particular priority groups, including families with children —they are highly represented among the poorest groups in society—and the sick and the disabled. Both groups will do well by these reforms.

Mr. Robin Cook: The Minister has just made a very important revision of the Government's figures. He said that two thirds of the claimants will be better off, in real terms, as a result of the changes. How does he reconcile that statement with the Government's published figures that show that 500,000 more people will be worse off as a result of the changes? Almost 4 million people will be losers, compared with just over 3 million people who will gain from the changes. That cannot be reconciled with the Minister's extravagant claim that two thirds of the claimants will gain from the changes.

Mr. Portillo: I said that nearly two thirds would suffer no loss, or would be better off in real terms. I stand by that statement.

The hon. Member for Preston (Mrs. Wise) referred to a pregnant lady in a family whose benefit is reduced and asked what her position will be. The hon. Lady knows that we are dealing with a reduction of benefit for the claimant, not for the claimant's family. The rate for the claimant's family will continue to be the full rate.

In the event of there being a pregnant woman in the family, the male claimant's rate is reduced by 20 per cent. rather than by 40 per cent. The total effect on the benefit received by the family, taking into account average rent and rates and the receipt of housing benefit, could be as little as 5 per cent. The explanation for that is to be found in the words that I uttered when we debated the voluntary unemployment deductions.

Mrs. Wise: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Portillo: No, because only one minute is left to me. I have given way on a number of occasions.

The Opposition have compared the Budget proposals with social security payments. Since 1978-79, social security benefit expenditure has increased in real terms by £12 billion.

Mrs. Wise: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Portillo: No.

Of that figure, one third — that is £4 billion — is estimated to be on account of real increases in the average amount of benefit that is paid. No family on supplementary benefit is worse off now than it was in 1978. We should not forget that these social security reforms will add £420 million to public expenditure in 1988-89——

Mrs. Wise *rose*——

Mr. Portillo: —and that the social security programme as a whole will——

It being one and a half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business).*

The House divided: Ayes 212, Noes 141.

Division No. 227] **[11.43 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert

Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fallon, Michael
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grist, Ian
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hawkins, Christopher
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Richard Ryder.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Haynes, Frank
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ilisley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
Patchett, Terry

Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Redmond, Martin
Reid, Dr John
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Noes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Alun Michael.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 16th March, be approved.

Family Credit

Resolved,

That the draft Family Credit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 16th March, be approved.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

11.54 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do not wish to detain the House, but you will be aware that earlier today the Prime Minister relaunched her anti-litter campaign and that some fetching pictures of her were to be seen in St. James's park picking up pieces of litter that had been dropped by people in the park.

If we are to have a serious anti-litter drive, this House should set an example. One need only look around the Chamber to see how filthy it is. Quite honestly, the House should set an example, and I therefore ask, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that hon. Members should take seriously what the Prime Minister suggests — that we should keep Britain tidy and that we should start by keeping the Chamber tidy, unless hon. Members wish to invite the Prime Minister to come here and earn a bit of pin money by clearing it up tonight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Paul Dean): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. His point has been noted.

Tree Preservation Orders

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Boscawen.]*

11.56 pm

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): This is the first time that I have applied for an Adjournment debate, and I am grateful to Mr. Speaker for granting me one immediately. I am particularly grateful to the Department of the Environment, from which I have received a speedier and greater level of co-operation in this matter than I have received from any Government Department on any issue since I was elected to this place. That co-operation has come from all concerned, from the Secretary of State downwards, and particularly from the Minister for Sport, who will reply to this debate, and those working in his private office, who have been working overtime on the urgent matter that I raise tonight.

The House will be aware of the devastation which occurred in south-east England as a result of the storm. But some hon. Members may not be aware of an event which took place 11 days ago and which potentially in the long run could do more damage to the woodlands of England even than the storm.

That event was a judgment in the Court of Appeal on two small woods, Quilters and Featherly, in my constituency. They are composed of sweet chestnuts which were planted certainly no later than 1600 and which lie next to a site of special scientific value. They are situated in a valley—in my view, the loveliest valley in east Kent —which has the rather evocative name of Pett Bottom.

On March 11—I will not go through the chronology since the owner began trying to grub up the trees in these woods five years ago — a ruling was given that Canterbury council should pay almost £50,000 in compensation to the owner of the woods so that they should be preserved from being ploughed up as farmland.

Before going into the detail of this matter, it is worth considering why we should preserve woodland other than for commercial forestry. There are four additional reasons. The first is the landscape value, and these two woods are situated in one of the last three major areas of outstanding natural beauty left in the three south-east counties of Surrey, Sussex and Kent. The second is the amenity value for people who want to walk their dogs, take their kids for a picnic, or whatever. These woods have a perimeter path round them which makes them accessible to the public. The third is the ecological value which, for example, applies in shelter belts in protecting top soil. Finally, there is the wildlife aspect. All these are reasons why it is important to preserve woodland in the countryside.

Let us consider what the judgment of 11 March means. It applies to all coppice woodland with a diameter at chest height of under 15 cm. It says that if any council anywhere chooses to slap a tree preservation order on a coppice to prevent its owner ploughing it up or using it for any other purpose not covered by the town and country planning Acts the council is bound to pay him the full difference between the value of the land for the purpose for which he wants to use it and its value as forestry. Perhaps I should explain that coppice has nothing to do with acreage or the species of tree involved; it is a form of forestry management. All coppice woods, if properly managed, are below the requisite size.

Coppice woodlands are important in the country as a whole. They form quite a large proportion of our woodlands. They are important in the south-east counties. They are especially important in Kent where they form 60 per cent. of all the county's woodlands. Of course, there is a supreme irony in that the Farm Land and Rural Development Bill which is now in Committee is trying hard to divert land away from farming towards woodland because of the CAP. Yet as a result of this judgment owners will be entitled to convert woodlands back for "farming the CAP" or be compensated handsomely for not doing so. In other words, the wood owner can "farm the CAP" at the taxpayers' expense with all the subsidies which are involved in farming today.

The result is that developers are closing in. A developer who wants to buy a wood and plough it up for five times its value as a woodland knows that if a council steps in his way he can claim compensation. Unless there is rapid change, most councils will be unable to put on tree preservation orders to protect woodlands.

Before suggesting a way forward, I should like to touch on the nature of tree preservation orders. They can involve single trees or woods. In the latter case, with which I am concerned, they involve a careful survey to determine exactly the extent of the trees on which the order is based and a fairly complicated legal process involving the sealing of documents, which takes time. The result is that the owner is prevented from destroying the trees. I say "destroying" because it is not only a case of felling them but of perhaps allowing animals to graze among them, which kills young trees.

Tree preservation orders are not entirely negative. When a TPO is made, an owner is automatically put in touch with a considerable body of forestry expertise to enable him to understand how to look after the trees and at what point they are due for felling. In a coppice site in a typical period of 15 to 20 years a small proportion will need to be felled and replanted. The owner will also be advised on tree surgery.

The only weakness of the TPO system is that it is cumbersome. When the Minister is considering the whole picture, he should think about extending the concept of the conservation area to cover woodlands. We have one small group of woods in my constituency protected in this way because they form part of an estate around a house, Broome park, which is designated a conservation area.

What is the way forward? I stress that I am not trying to teach the Department of the Environment how to do its job, but I should like to make a couple of constructive suggestions as to what might be the best way to solve this serious and urgent problem.

The first, and perhaps the simplest, option involves no change in the law. Article 5(b) of the tree preservation order says that there is no need for an authority to pay any compensation

"in the case of trees other than trees comprised in woodlands"

where

"the trees have an outstanding or special amenity value."

The deletion of the words

"other than trees comprised in woodlands"

would go quite a long way to filling the loophole.

The second option would be to allow the Forestry Commission to extend its felling licence requirements to cover trees far below the present diameter of 15 cm.

I hope that you will forgive me Mr. Deputy Speaker; I realise that I am not supposed to call for a change in the law. However, I know that on Thursday my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir. J. Farr) hopes to table an amendment to the Farm Land and Rural Development Bill in Committee which would limit any possible compensation payments to the forestry value of the land, and thus effectively eliminate the problem from a financial angle.

In summary, the test case was fought over two small and beautiful woods in a very beautiful valley, only about five miles from my home and in one of the last three remaining substantial areas of outstanding natural beauty in the south-east of England. The woods have been there for a least 400 years. To keep those two small woods, the council will have to pay almost £50,000 in compensation. If that sum had not been arrived at in relation to the prices of several years ago, it would be much greater. Councils do not have that sort of money to throw around. Unless changes are made, every privately owned piece of coppice land in the country will be at risk — from a threat greater than the so-called hurricane.

I stress again my gratitude for the tremendous co-operation of the Minister and his staff on this matter, and I look forward to hearing his response.

Mr. Ian Taylor (Esher) *rose*——

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I trust that the hon. Members for Esher (Mr. Taylor) and for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) have the permission of the hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) and the Minister to speak.

12.7 am

Mr. Taylor: I shall make a short intervention in support of my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier). This is a very serious matter and I was most disturbed that the Court of Appeal ruling gave landowners the ability to cash in on the difference between the value of land for the use to which they wish to put it and its value as forestry.

I represent Esher, in the county of Surrey, and I know the devastation that the ruling could cause if it were taken to its logical conclusion by owners of coppice woodland. We must consider the matter urgently. My hon. Friend has put the case clearly in his thoughtful speech, and I entirely endorse what he said.

12.8 am

Mr. Rowe: I do not remember an Adjournment debate that has been as well-attended as this one, although it is perhaps surprising that the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), who takes such an interest in the affairs of Kent, is not present.

This is a matter of the utmost gravity. Part of my constituency falls within the district of Maidstone borough council — I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Maidstone (Miss Widdecombe) is also here — which made representations on this matter early in the hearings before the courts.

My constituency contains an area of outstanding natural beauty, and within that area we have a farmer who is unique in Britain in that he has been to prison for his cavalier treatment of woodlands, trees and hedges. He is but one example of the sort of farmer who believes passionately that the only purpose of agriculture is to

[Mr. Rowe]

produce the maximum number of crops possible and views all woodland, or nearly all woodland, as some sort of obstruction to that purpose.

I believe that there are many such farmers, although, fortunately, they are not a majority. It would be dreadful if farmers of that ilk were given an open passport to threaten to destroy woodlands, knowing that the only way in which they could be stopped would be by the payment of large sums of ratepayers' money. It would be impossible for the rates to carry that sort of charge, so there would be an agonising choice as to which coppice woodlands would be saved and which one would allow to be destroyed. It would totally undermine the whole purpose of the diversification of farming, as my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) has already described so well.

It is a matter of the utmost urgency. I know that there are already several applications for the freedom to destroy valuable coppice woods. That is but the beginning of what will be a torrent of applications if urgent action is not taken.

I have spoken to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, who has expressed considerable sympathy with our point. I have asked whether there is any possibility of the matter coming within the terms of the long title of the Farm Land and Rural Development Bill—I sit on the Committee of that Bill—but I believe that the matter is still to be resolved. If, as I suspect, it would be difficult to do that, it is a matter of the utmost urgency that legislative action is taken to prevent what would be the most damaging attack, certainly on the countryside of Kent, that it would be possible to imagine.

12.12 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Colin Moynihan): I should first place on record my thanks to my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Brazier) for his kind comments addressed to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, my private office and the officials, who have done a great deal of work on this matter. I should like to couple with that the view that, having looked at this in great detail, I and my colleagues at the Department of the Environment regard this as a very serious issue. We echo the strength of opinion that has been put to the House this evening by my hon. Friend the Member Canterbury and by my other hon. Friends.

If I am not in a position to go as far as answering the specific points and the various issues that have been brought to the attention of the House, I hope my hon. Friends will understand that that in no way diminishes the seriousness with which we are addressing the issue as one of importance requiring a speedy decision. It is merely a reflection of the need to take into account consultations with other colleagues and other Departments. Nevertheless, I hope to be able to address some of the points that have been raised by my hon. Friends and to satisfy the House of the commitment that I have expressed in general terms.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury on his dedication to detail, his commitment to this constituency matter and his recognition of the far broader perspective of this issue in terms of its national implications. I believe that that point was echoed by my other hon. Friends during their interventions.

Following the storm of 16 October and the havoc that it wrought on the landscape of southern England, all of us are now even more conscious of the vital importance of our heritage trees and woodlands. Tree preservation orders have long been available to local authorities to assist in making provision for the preservation of trees and woodlands. They are widely used and have the effect of prohibiting felling and other work on the trees concerned, unless the local planning authority gives its consent. Such orders apply in a variety of situations, from individual trees in private gardens to whole woodlands. The case involving Canterbury city council, which was the subject of the recent High Court decision, is in the latter category.

As we have heard, in 1983, a local farmer, Mr. Bell, sought the consent of Canterbury city council to grub out some 39 acres of coppice woodland for conversion to agricultural use. The application was refused and an appeal to the Secretary of State was turned down in September 1984. In June 1986, the tribunal awarded substantial compensation to Mr. Bell, based on the increase in value of the land that would have occurred had it been converted, as he wished, to arable use. Subsequently, Canterbury city council lodged an appeal with the High Court and the case was heard last month, when judgment was reserved. It has now been given and the court has, as the House knows, rejected the appeal.

The Government recognise the concern that this outcome has caused among local authorities and environmental organisations. There is a feeling that, faced with the prospect of sizeable claims for compensation, it might be difficult for local authorities to contemplate making tree preservation orders in such cases, or to refuse applications for consent under the terms of existing orders that apply to woodlands.

Against that background there is a need, as hon. Members have accordingly emphasised, to ensure that there should be no reduction in the general effectiveness of such orders, made or applied in these circumstances, particularly when they involve ancient woodland of great conservation significance. We are therefore urgently consulting colleagues in interested Departments to explore appropriate means of achieving this. Our intention is to take prompt action to remedy the situation, and while I cannot anticipate tonight—for the reasons I have given—the precise way in which we shall do so, or the precise legal form that it will take, we hope to be able to inform the House of our proposals shortly.

I must emphasise that this action will be an interim initiative, following the court's decision. The wider picture is that the legislation—both primary and secondary—relating to tree preservation orders and procedures is generally complex and dates back in its origins some considerable time. We therefore believe that the time has come to look more basically at the scope and detail of the various statutory provisions.

We shall therefore be undertaking a wide-ranging review of the various provisions to identify whether any further legislative changes may be necessary to clarify and improve the statutory framework. In mounting such a review, we shall consult widely with various interested bodies, and in that process will consider any further

representations which may be made about the basis and application of compensation to tree preservation order legislation.

My hon. Friend raised a number of points, and I want to answer one or two of them. He acknowledged the need, in his view, to amend article 5 of the tree preservation order to exclude reference to

"other than trees in woodlands".

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the thought he has clearly given to this matter. I cannot comment on his particular proposal, but I will ensure that it is given appropriate consideration in our determination of the various options that may be available.

My hon. Friend went on to comment on the possibility of extending the scope of Forestry Commission felling licence controls to cover all coppice trees. I understand that a felling licence is not required in the case of coppice or underwood below 15 cm in diameter, measured at chest height. To extend controls would clearly be an additional administrative burden, involving increased costs. It might also inhibit, to some extent, the particular requirements of coppicing. However, again we will give due consideration to my hon. Friend's suggestion.

It is appropriate to underline some of the broader points which have not been raised in the debate but which come within the ambit of this subject and to show the Government's awareness of the place that trees occupy in all our affections and in the rural economy. I assure the House of the great importance that the Government attach to conservation of the countryside. I know that hon. Members share our concern about the continued safeguarding of landscape and amenity, not least in those areas of south-east England which were so cruelly ravaged in the great storm last October. That storm was, of course, the greatest storm disaster to hit the south-east of England for more than 200 years. Sixteen counties were affected in whole or in part, south-east of a line from Poole to King's Lynn. Woodlands were flattened and familiar landscapes laid bare. The impact was borne by that part of England where native broadleaved woodlands are most abundant.

Exceptional winds caused significant damage to trees in the United Kingdom in 1953, 1968 and 1976. However, not since 1703 has a storm caused such severe damage in England. Faced with that disaster, the Government amply demonstrated their commitment to trees. Within days of the storm my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced that special aid would be made available for the replacement of amenity trees which were lost. Of this, £2·75 million was provided as grants by building on the Countryside Commission's existing grant schemes, which were extended on a temporary basis to cover London and other urban areas. A further allocation of £250,000 for 1987-88 was announced earlier this year and the provision of an additional sum of almost £800,000 to supplement the commission's regular tree-planting programme for 1988-89.

To undertake these responsibilities, the Countryside Commission set up a special unit—Task Force Trees. Hon. Members will recall the publication by Task Force Trees earlier this month of a helpful action pack which was launched by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The pack is aimed at householders and small landowners, and is available free of charge from the commission. It contains a range of valuable advice about the repair of damaged trees, the availability, planting and aftercare of new ones and ways in which people can help the efforts of volunteer groups, such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, and others in the huge job of restoring tree losses. For the longer term, the Government are considering the need for a continuation of the commission's programme and assessing how that will fit in with the efforts of local authorities, landowners and voluntary bodies. We have promised a statement of our intentions in good time for the start of the next planting season.

The response to the storm was, however, only one recent example of the significance that the Government attach to trees. Another initiative—the farm woodland scheme—is currently the subject of legislation before the House and is aimed at encouraging farmers to plant small woodlands both as valuable alternative use of agricultural land and to enhance the landscape. The aim of the scheme is to promote the planting of some 36,000 hectares in the first three years, which represents some 30 million trees a year, and farmers will receive special payments to defray the income forgone while the timber is growing. In some cases these payments will be available for as long as 40 years. Environmental considerations have played a major part in helping shape the scheme. For example, the aim is to achieve a high proportion of broadleaved planting and it should play a major role in diversifying the landscape and aiding the creation of new habitats.

I have used those two examples to underline the Government's awareness of the place that trees occupy in all our affections. I hope that by doing so I have managed to reinforce the importance of the main principles that underpin the background scene that has been brought to our attention in detail by my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury. I again assure the House that the comments on tree preservation orders will be considered in detail. We shall act with all the urgency that we can muster after due and proper consultation with our colleagues in other Departments. I give an undertaking that we shall take the fullest account of all the points made.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty-four minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 23 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL

Mr. Secretary Rifkind presented a Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, relating to British Railways; And the same was read the First Time; and ordered to be considered on Tuesday next and to be printed. [Bill 132.]

ELECTION EXPENSES

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, That she will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, a Return of the expenses of each candidate at the General Election of June 1987 in the United Kingdom as transmitted to the returning officers pursuant to the Representation of the People Act 1983, and of the number of votes polled by each candidate, the description of each candidate, the number of polling districts and stations, the numbers of electors, the number of postal votes and the number of rejected ballot papers.—*[Mr. Hurd.]*

Oral Answers to Questions

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

1. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will seek to amend the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 so as to leave out section 13(1)(d) which requires that the register shall specify, in relation to each natural person registered in the register, his date of birth.

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): No, Sir. Dates of birth are to be included in the community charges register in order to assist registration officers in clearly establishing the community charge liability of individuals.

Mrs. Fyfe: Will the Minister explain why there is to be one law for Scotland and another for England and Wales? Will he please explain why in Scotland there is to be a national identity number consisting of the name and date of birth, while in England that will not be required? Finally, what will he say to the people of Scotland when, in anger at such distinctive legislation being imposed on them, they send back their registration forms because they do not understand why such an imposition should be placed on them?

Mr. Lang: The use of dates of birth does not lead to a national registration process of any kind, although it may be used by individual local authorities to help identify individuals. The hon. Lady spoke about differences between Scotland and England. As they are usually to Scotland's advantage, I should have thought that the hon. Lady would be glad of them.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my hon. Friend agree that the Labour party is running dead scared about community charges in Scotland and that it is grossly exaggerating the projected figures of what the charge will be in a year's time? Does he accept that in, for instance, Dumfries and Galloway the projected figure is about £210, including regional, district and water charges, while the Labour party there is talking about a figure of over £300?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The same rules apply to ordinary questions as to Prime Minister's questions. There must be ministerial responsibility for the question asked.

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is right. I hope that the figures published yesterday will make it clear that the opportunity lies with individual authorities to decide the level of charge in their area.

Mr. Canavan: Would it not be fairer to scrap the entire Act, bearing in mind the recent MORI poll findings that 75 per cent. of Scots are opposed to the poll tax, including 40 per cent. of Tory supporters, and that 42 per cent. of Scots are saying that they will not pay the poll tax, including 14 per cent. of Tory supporters? What will these percentages have to rise to before the Minister realises that the Government had better scrap the poll tax, which is threatened by a Government who were rejected by 76 per cent. of Scots in the last election?

Mr. Lang: I would have more respect for the hon. Gentleman's comments if his party had come forward with

any alternative proposal on how to raise local government finance. He mentioned opinion polls. If he conducted an opinion poll among those who pay domestic rates he would find very many of them looking forward to the abolition of domestic rates that will take place in Scotland on 1 April next year.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Does the Minister recognise that there is a conflict, in that in Scotland education grants will be financed from this poll tax, while in Northern Ireland education grants are financed from the rates? Therefore, since very many Northern Ireland students attend universities in Scotland they will be penalised because they will have to contribute twice towards their education grants — once through the rates that they pay in Northern Ireland, and secondly through the poll tax that will be imposed on them in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: I am interested to hear the right hon. Gentleman's comments about the situation in Northern Ireland. No doubt he will pursue the matter through the appropriate channels. However, his comments do not have much to do with the appearance of dates of birth on the register in Scotland.

Mr. Andy Stewart: I am sure my hon. Friend will be delighted to know that my 78-year-old widowed mother is looking forward to the introduction of the community charge. At the moment she pays £790 for a little semi-detached cottage. If she lived in my constituency she would pay £300, and under the poll tax the amount payable in my constituency would be £190. There is no excuse for not welcoming the community charge and we look forward to it ever so much.

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend's comments are true and apply to very many people. Over 90 per cent. of single pensioners in Scotland will benefit from the introduction of the community charge.

Mr. Maxton: As the Joint Select Committee on Statutory Instruments says that one of the parts of the statutory instrument that the Government have laid before it is illegal and against the Act, and as the poll tax was rejected by the Scottish people at the last general election and has been rejected by them in every opinion poll since then by enormous amounts, including by most Tory supporters, why on earth do the Government continue to press ahead with this absurd, unfair, unwanted and unworkable tax?

Mr. Lang: The comments of the Joint Select Committee on Statutory Instruments refer to minor and technical matters and in no way undermine the validity of the regulations. As to the introduction of the community charge, we are determined to achieve greater accountability in local government so that the interests of residents can be more fully protected.

Medical Operations (Postponements)

2. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on what date he collected information concerning the number of operations postponed on 24 February.

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): On 25 and 26 February my Department collected health boards' preliminary estimates of operations postponed because of industrial action on 24 February. On 1 and 2 March the Department collected a detailed breakdown of the figures so that my hon. Friend could reply to the hon. Gentleman's written question for 3 March.

Mr. Galbraith: I am grateful to the Minister for that reply. I am also grateful for the fact that he has taken the responsibility for it and not passed it down to one of his junior Ministers. I am impressed by his ability to collect these figures and by the fact that he has made them public so rapidly. Why will he not do the same for the figures for leukaemia? Why is he keeping those figures from the research workers at the University of Newcastle, who are looking into the geographic distribution of leukaemia in Scotland? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman involved in yet another cover-up?

Mr. Rifkind: There is no cover-up and the hon. Gentleman, as usual, has his facts wrong. He might be interested to know that the latest figures for operations cancelled because of industrial action, which is what his question relates to—*[Interruption.]* No, his question is about the number of operations postponed on 24 February, which was the day of industrial action — *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We must be able to hear the answer.

Mr. Rifkind: I appreciate that the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) does not want an answer to the question that is on the Order Paper, but what is of primary concern at present is that 2,600 operations have been cancelled in Scotland because of industrial action. If the hon. Gentleman is concerned about operations in Scotland he might use his substantial influence in the National Health Service to persuade those taking industrial action to put the interests of their patients first.

Mr. Allan Stewart: With regard to the action on 24 February, does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if Labour Members were concerned about resources in the Health Service they would support competitive tendering, which has saved £100 million for the Health Service in England and Wales, rather than acting like a bunch of tape recorders for COHSE and NUPE?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend, in his usual eloquent fashion, has made a pungent point. Labour Members who say that they are concerned about the welfare of patients might like to reflect on the fact that, because of the industrial action that they supported, more than 80,000 meals to patients have been affected, to the detriment of those patients, and more than 40,000 disposable sheets have had to be used. If that is what Opposition Members regard as being action that should be supported, it shows that their real concern is certainly not for the welfare of patients.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Will the Secretary of State explain why it appears to be straightforward to collect statistics for one specific day, but impossible for the Government to collect centrally the misery league of people who are waiting for straightforward operations? Is he aware that on many occasions his hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has said that the Government do not collect centrally figures for cataract operations or joint replacement operations, but such operations are a measure

of the effectiveness of the Health Service in Scotland. When can we have those statistics and when will we reduce the waiting lists?

Mr. Rifkind: A major initiative is under way to try to improve the information that is available to us and the general public with regard to the performance of the Health Service. It is in everyone's interest that as much information as possible is available so that we can judge the way in which these massive amounts of resources are used and identify ways in which they can be used more effectively.

Mr. Bill Walker: When my right hon. and learned Friend is working out the statistics on operations cancelled, will he bear in mind that the hon. Member for Dundee, West (Mr. Ross) and I are here in the House largely due to the success of operations carried out at Nine Wells hospital and that the privileges that we enjoyed have been denied to others in the narrow interests of trade unions?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. I pay tribute to the Royal College of Nursing, which, despite any concern that it may have about the situation in the National Health Service, has always made it clear that those who have a real professional interest in the Health Service would never use patients as a means of bringing pressure to bear in a controversy of this kind.

Mr. Norman Hogg: Is the Secretary of State aware that the number of staffed beds in Scotland has fallen by more than 5 per cent. since 1979? What has been the effect of that on waiting lists? Is he further aware that in the next financial year funding of the NHS in real terms will fall by 1·2 per cent.? What effect will that have on waiting lists? Is not all this covering fire in relation to the day of action on 24 February intended to cover up the scandalous situation created by his policies?

Mr. Rifkind: On the contrary. First, I emphasise that more patients have been treated in Scotland in recent years than was possible in the past. If the hon. Gentleman is concerned about waiting lists, he will be interested to know that the additional resources announced by the Government some months ago have been used to reduce waiting lists in Scotland. The main effect of the industrial action that the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends support will be to lengthen waiting lists. The hon. Gentleman should identify his priorities and support Government policies directed towards those ends.

Home Confinements

4. **Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy towards home confinements; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth) *rose*——

Hon. Members: Where is Maclennan?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is always helpful if hon. Members alert the Chair to the fact that they cannot be present, as the hon. Member did today.

Mr. Forsyth: It is our policy to encourage hospital deliveries, but where a woman expresses a preference for home confinement it is the responsibility of the health board to arrange for a midwife to attend her and to make every effort to ensure that services are available for that confinement.

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: Is my hon. Friend aware of the work carried out by Nottingham university and supported by the World Health Organisation, showing that home confinements and confinements in general practitioner units are relatively safer than confinements in consultant hospitals? Does that not stand rather strangely with the proposals of Grampian health board to close the small rural units for which there is very strong support, and which have been shown to be safe?

Mr. Forsyth: I am slightly puzzled by the logic of my right hon. Friend's question. Home confinements would clearly be encouraged if the rural facilities were not there, as those facilities offer an alternative to home confinement. About 1 per cent. of deliveries take place at home, but in some 5 per cent. of cases women in labour need rapid intervention to save mother and baby. Professional advice and opinion is that hospital deliveries involve less risk and provide specialist assistance if complications occur.

Dr. Moonie: The Minister is famous for his open mind. Will he cast his mind across the English Channel towards Holland, which has had an effective home confinement system for many years? Will he examine the possibility of introducing a proper, effective and fully funded home confinement system in Scotland for the growing number of women who want it?

Mr. Forsyth: So far as I am aware, there is no problem in providing home confinement for women who wish it. They are able to obtain the services of a general practitioner or a midwife, but I am not aware of any considerable demand for this. As I have said, only 1 per cent. of deliveries take place in that way.

Local Authority Staffing

5. **Mr. Neil Hamilton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of full-time equivalent staff employed by Scottish local authorities as at 31 March 1979, 1984, 1985 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): The number of full-time equivalent staff employed by Scottish local authorities as at 31 March 1979, 1984, 1985 and 1987 was 253,000, 251,600, 251,400 and 247,000 respectively.

Mr. Hamilton: Does my hon. Friend agree that those figures will be something of a disappointment to us, as over the past eight years efficiency savings in the Scottish Office have resulted in a 20 per cent. decrease in the number of people employed, whereas in many local authorities in Scotland — especially those that are Labour-controlled—there have been significant increases in the numbers employed? Is my hon. Friend aware that in Dundee the local authority has increased the number of people it employs by 10 per cent. in the past four years? Will he recommend that if that authority is interested in achieving economies it could take some advice from the Transport and General Workers Union, which knows very well how to lose jobs?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We are very much in favour of the creation of jobs in the wealth-producing

sector of the economy. My hon. Friend is right in suggesting that the Scottish Office figures have been reduced by 19 per cent. since 1979. However, in relation to local authorities, if one takes out of consideration the creation of the local bus companies, which involved a large transfer of staff last year, the figure is a decrease of only 0·3 per cent. The overall staffing per head in Scotland is approximately 15 per cent. higher than in England and Wales.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Will the Minister take time today to congratulate Edinburgh City district council on its excellent work, and especially the former Conservative candidate for the Marchmont ward in my Edinburgh, South constituency, who today has resigned from the Conservative party because he said that £2 billion—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."]—according to page 3 of *The Scotsman*, has been given by the Chancellor to the super-rich at the expense of the Health Service, for which he works? Will the Minister congratulate that candidate for standing up for the Health Service, the Royal Edinburgh hospital and for the Bruntsfield hospital, which his hon. Friend seeks to close? Will he congratulate him today?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I personally congratulated a councillor who was a Labour councillor in Dundee and who has just become a Conservative——

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Name him.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will send the hon. Gentleman a photograph—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us hear the answer.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will send the hon. Gentleman a copy of a photograph of us together—*[Interruption.]* Local authorities should look carefully at their staffing levels to produce the best value for money for the ratepayers. We strongly support competitive tendering in that connection, and at present Edinburgh is opposing that.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: On the question of Minister's policies for reducing local government staff, is he aware that the Government's policies are producing the opposite effect, and for all the wrong reasons? Angus district council is a cost-effective and efficient council, but has had to take on extra staff purely to meet the bureaucracy and red tape of the Government's policies regarding council house sales, housing benefit, and now the poll tax? Will the Government get off the back of local government and allow elected councillors and officials to provide the staffing levels that are suitable for the needs of their people, rather than there being a central Government diktat?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I very much hope that local authorities will look closely at their manpower policies. We strongly believe that in many cases competitive tendering could result in much better value for the ratepayers, which could have an effect on the levels of manpower. However, if contracting-out takes place, it will mean increased employment in the private sector.

Mr. Fairbairn: Does my hon. Friend notice that there is a correlation between Labour authorities such as Edinburgh, which has increased its staffing totally unnecessarily, and the predicted amounts of the community charge to be paid, and that the Labour party is so against the community charge because the individual voter will be sent a bill for its extravagance?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The community charge will undoubtedly increase accountability. That is one of the reasons why it is so strongly opposed by Opposition Members.

Mr. Home Robertson: If the Government are so concerned about the administrative costs of local authorities, why on earth are they imposing the monstrous inefficiency of the poll tax on local government in Scotland? As we understand that the Prime Minister has at last noticed that Britain has become the midden of Europe, can we expect the Government to start encouraging Scottish local authorities to employ more manual staff to keep Scotland tidy? Have the Government yet grasped the fact that what people in Scotland want is job creation, better local services and no part in the fundamentally corrupt process of privatisation?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The policy of competitive tendering is directed, not at the creation of more jobs, but at getting value for money for the ratepayers, eventually the community charge payers. The reason why the community charge is being introduced is to bring about more accountability.

Cheese Manufacture

6. **Sir Hector Monro:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Milk Marketing Board relative to the provision of adequate supplies of milk for cheese manufacture in south-west Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Since last August my noble Friend the Minister of State has been in regular contact with the board over the problems of the cheese makers in the south-west of Scotland. The most recent of those discussions was on 9 March.

Sir Hector Monro: Can my hon. Friend tell me why it has taken more than nine months, despite ministerial pressure, to get the English and Scottish boards to come together and decide how to provide sufficient milk in the south-west of Scotland to enable cheese to be made for immediate sale? Is it not intolerable that we should drag our feet for that length of time?

Mr. Forsyth: I understand my hon. Friend's concern about the matter, but I understand that some milk is now being delivered from England to Scotland for cheese manufacture and that negotiations between the Scottish and English boards to secure the supply of milk for manufacture in Scotland are now in their final stages.

Mr. Foulkes: Does the Minister not realise that when my hon. Friends the Members for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson), for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) and for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) and I saw the Minister of State as long ago as November he promised immediate action, but there has been no action apart from the milk coming from England? We do not want more milk from England. We want more quotas to be allocated to Scottish farms because a great many jobs are in jeopardy. If we keep on taking the milk from England, we shall have to rename Scottish Cheddar Anglo-Scottish Cheddar.

Mr. Forsyth: The name "Scottish Cheddar" relates to its place of manufacture, not to the milk that goes into it. When the hon. Gentleman says that we do not want milk from England, he speaks for himself alone, and certainly not for the interests of the producers or the manufacturers.

Dr. Godman: I sincerely hope that the Scottish Milk Marketing Board will not issue redundancy notices to members of its work force in the near future because of these disastrous shortages in supply. Surely what is needed to meet the shortages is the creation of a quota reserve in each of the European Community countries and, failing that, the restoration, on a non-intervention basis, of at least some of the cuts in the milk supply.

Mr. Forsyth: It was always recognised that the advent of quotas would result in some rationalisation of the milk product sector, but it is not true to say that the shortfall in milk supplies is of such an order as to bring about the demise of the Scottish Cheddar industry. The hon. Gentleman suggested creating a reserve, but that could be done only by taking from the quotas that have been allocated, including those that have been allocated to the south-west of Scotland.

Rating Reform

7. **Mr. David Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many petitions he has received from individuals or groups in Scotland protesting about the introduction of the poll tax or community charge; and what response he intends to make to them.

15. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received about the implementation of the poll tax.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received 970 representations, including a number of petitions, since the enactment of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. Marshall: Will the Minister tell the House how he can justify ignoring the wishes of hundreds of thousands of Scottish people and treating with contempt the opinion of 75 per cent. of the Scottish population? Does he not realise that, far from needing expensive glossy booklets issued by him which try to dispel opposition to the poll tax, the people of Scotland understand only too well what that iniquitous tax means? For them it is unnecessary, unworkable and, like this Government, unwanted in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Far from being glossy, expensive and misleading, the information guide issued by the Scottish Office on the community charge costs less than the price of a second-class stamp per copy. It was badly needed to counter the misleading propaganda being put about by other parties, including, for example, those who suggest as a fact that

"The only way to avoid paying is to give up your right to vote!"

That was in a leaflet bearing the imprint of the Stop It campaign and the *Morning Star*.

Mr. McTaggart: Will the Minister and his right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State come to Glasgow this Saturday, where there is yet another petition against the poll tax? They will then see for themselves the opposition of ordinary people to this tax and hear for themselves their demands for it to be scrapped.

Mr. Lang: What would be more interesting would be to hear the hon. Gentleman putting forward the facts about the community charge.

Mr. Oppenheim: What does my hon. Friend think about those who claim to care about local services, but who are, none the less, urging people to avoid contributing to those local services by not paying the community charge or even not registering for that charge?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to draw attention to that fact. Indeed, the Labour party is in considerable disarray as to its reaction to the community charge. I hope that those who encourage breaking the law will be willing to pay for those who are fined as a result.

Mrs. Ray Michie: If visiting forces are to be exempt from paying the poll tax in Scotland, can the Minister give an assurance that local authorities, such as my authority of Argyll and Bute, where he is aware that many overseas service men are based, will not lose much vital income? If that is the case, can he give us any details as to how arrangements will proceed?

Mr. Lang: The position of members of the armed services is still under consideration. I assure the hon. Lady that I shall pass her comments to my hon. and learned Friend the Minister for Local Government.

Mr. Bill Walker: Has my hon. Friend received any representations from the Transport and General Workers Union, as it seems to be more concerned with preventing things happening, including jobs in Scotland and in Dundee—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman must— *[Interruption.]* Order. I think that there is a later question appropriate to that matter.

Mr. Bill Walker: It is to do with the community charge. As a former active member of the TGWU, I am concerned about the activities of that union and what it is up to. Would my hon. Friend care to comment?

Mr. Lang: I assure my hon. Friend that those members of trade unions who are also local authority employees are getting on with the implementation of the machinery for the collection of the community charge.

Mr. Douglas: Would the Minister care to tell the House what effect his and other Ministers' representations have had on the Scottish people in terms of propaganda about poll tax? Does he believe that support for the poll tax in Scotland has grown, or diminished?

Mr. Lang: I am not answerable for propaganda, since the Government have not put out any. What we have put out is a factual, step-by-step guide to help the public to understand the various processes for the implementation of the community charge. The registration process gets under way on 1 April, by which time the booklet will have been distributed to every household in Scotland.

Mr. Hind: My hon. Friend no doubt noted that, at the Scottish Labour party conference, there were arguments about how the community charge would be avoided, either overtly or by deliberate breach of the law. Will my hon. Friend confirm that he has received no alternative proposals from the Labour party to replace the community charge?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. There has been a deafening silence from the Labour party on this

as on so many other issues. We still wait, even at this late hour, for the Labour party to say whether it remains committed to the domestic rating system or whether it can offer a more constructive way of producing a fairer and more accountable system of paying for local government.

STUC (Discussions)

8. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had recently with the Scottish Trades Union Congress on the Scottish economy.

Mr. Rifkind: I have had no recent requests from the Scottish Trades Union Congress for discussions on the Scottish economy. My hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for industry and local government has, however, accepted an invitation to attend the STUC's annual congress next month. I met STUC representatives yesterday to discuss Ford.

Mr. Eadie: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that there is some concern in Scotland about the role that he is playing in furthering the Scottish economy? Why does he seem continually to denigrate the situation in Dundee? Why is it that every time he appears on the media he is destructive rather than constructive? Can he tell the House whether he was in touch with Ford yesterday, or whether he has been in touch with Ford today? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the Scottish people do not trust him because of the "sit on your hands, do nothing" attitude that he adopted in relation to the proposed murder of the Scottish deep mining industry, which will result in the loss of 10,000 jobs?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman should acknowledge that, following my comments, the SSEB and British Coal have resumed negotiations on deep mining. The prospects for progress are indeed more encouraging than they seemed to be. I must confess that I find myself both amazed at and interested in the hon. Gentleman's early remarks. Having taken part in the negotiations that led to Ford deciding to go to Dundee in the first place, I do not need any lectures from him about my interest in this matter.

Mr. Fallon: Does my right hon. and learned Friend think it likely that the senior management of Ford in America will to change its mind about its investment in my home town of Dundee on a vote of 11 to 10 by the TUC? Which does he find more surprising: the intransigence of the TUC, or the shameful silence of the eight transport union-sponsored Labour Members?

Mr. Rifkind: The failure of Labour Members who are sponsored by the TGWU to make their position known is doing a great disservice to the interests of the Scottish economy. As the House may be aware, today the TUC ratified by a significantly larger majority the position taken by one of its committees recently. That is an important step in the right direction. However, it is unfortunate that the TGWU appears to maintain its opposition to that proposal in the vote that took place today. It is important that we should obtain some clarification from the TGWU as to whether in the light of today's vote, it now accepts the policy of the TUC.

Mr. McAllion: I was pleased to hear the Secretary of State at least leave a little chink of light open by saying that he might respond to the pleas made to him to intervene in support of the workers and the unemployed in Dundee. Is he aware that yesterday TGWU shop stewards at the Dagenham plant, which is widely regarded as the most militant in the Ford network in Britain, decided not to black any components if, and only if, the plant were located in Dundee? *[Interruption.]* Given that the editorial in Scotland's leading national newspaper today pleaded with the Secretary of State to drop everything and go with Gavin Laird to plead with Ford, will he now respond to that plea and to the pleas of the people of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: Any evidence of real contact with the late 20th century by any elements in the TGWU is to be welcomed, and if Mr. Todd can repeat the views that we have been told are the views of the Dagenham members, that, too, would make an important contribution. Naturally, having been in part responsible for the original decision by Ford to come to Dundee, I have at least as much interest as the hon. Gentleman in doing anything within my power to ensure that the project still finds its way to Dundee. *[Interruption.]* Opposition Members will appreciate that I must use my best judgment about whether and in what way Ford could be asked to reconsider its decision. The TUC, somewhat belatedly, has now endorsed the agreement originally reached with Ford, and that is to be welcomed. On our present knowledge the TGWU, which is the main union which all along has been an obstacle to progress, has still not, so far as we are aware, changed its position in one significant way. If that is going to be altered, we must wait and hear what its view is. It is, indeed, necessary to find out whether Mr. Todd and his colleagues are now prepared to endorse the views of the TUC, the Government and of all who have spoken on this matter. I may say to hon. Gentlemen that if— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is a very important matter.

Mr. Rifkind: If Opposition Members are concerned about the matter, as I am sure they are, one contribution that could be made from the Opposition Benches would be for the Leader of the Opposition to give his support to the view that has now been endorsed by the TUC and by the Government.

Sir Hector Monro: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that this is one of the most miserable moments in trade union and Labour party history, in that we have lost 1,000 jobs in Scotland through a petty squabble? Will he say whether he has had any word from the Transport and General Workers Union that it is anxious to come to see him today to withdraw total opposition to its policy of the last week?

Mr. Rifkind: I have had no such notification. If the TUC and trade unions generally had, some weeks ago, adopted the position which they are reported as having adopted today, Ford would never have made the decision that was announced last Friday. We are now involved in an exercise to try to reverse the damage, which was totally unnecessary, and resulted solely from the most extraordinarily primitive attitudes still to be found in certain sections of the trade union movement.

Mr. Dewar: Yesterday in the House the Prime Minister quoted with great approval Mr. Gavin Laird of the AEU. Did the Secretary of State see Mr. Laird on the national news today saying that what happened this morning was a major breakthrough and that he was confident that the

agreement would hold? Is it not the height of irresponsibility for a Government Minister to give the impression that he does not believe that that is the position? It would be tantamount to encouraging the Ford Motor company to lock and bar the door, which we want to see open. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I say again that this is a very important matter.

Mr. Dewar: Will the Secretary of State take the opportunity to welcome unreservedly the TUC's decision to endorse the Ford/AEU agreement? As the company said as recently as last week that the key condition was the single union deal, with the provision that the new plant would be independent of current national agreements—this morning's vote seems to give exactly that—is it not important that he clarifies his position? He has talked about clarification. Should he not make it clear that he will join me and everyone else in Scotland in urging the company in the changed circumstances to reconsider and reinstate the project? Can he give an assurance that he is making it clear to the company that in the Government's view the essential conditions have been met and the plant should now be built?

Mr. Rifkind: First of all, I have given more public support to Gavin Laird than either the hon. Gentleman or the Leader of the Opposition. Secondly, I have already welcomed the decision taken by the TUC today and only wish that it had been taken some time in the last five months. Thirdly, I am saddened that even today the hon. Gentleman has not felt able to add his weight to representations to Mr. Ron Todd and the Transport and General Workers Union to withdraw their opposition and give full support to the TUC. The deafening silence of the Labour party and its refusal to make one iota of criticism of the position taken by the Transport and General Workers Union is a total and unqualified disgrace and refutes any assertion it makes to have the interests of the Scottish economy at heart.

Mr. Speaker: Question No. 9, Mr. Steel.

Mr. Harry Ewing: That is an absolute scandal. It is an absolute disgrace.

Mr. Steel: I had intended to ask a supplementary question on Question No. 8.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry, but I have called Question No. 9.

South of Scotland Electricity Board

9. **Mr. Steel:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board; and what matters were discussed.

11. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Rifkind: I last met the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board on 19 March on the occasion of an informal dinner in Edinburgh.

Mr. Steel: I hope that the Secretary of State will pay a deserved tribute to the Scottish TUC for the efforts that it has made to bring its brethren south of the border into line on this issue—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are now on Question No. 9.

Mr. Steel: That was by way of parenthesis, Mr. Speaker —[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] The Secretary of State should not be let off the hook on this.

On Question No. 9, will the Secretary of State give the House the assurances that have been sought several times on the privatisation proposals: first, that the new South of Scotland company cannot be taken over by a foreign company; and, secondly, that the legislation will provide for social obligations to rural areas analogous with those existing in the north of Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: The future ownership and acquisition of shares in the industry is still being considered. Information will be given to the House as soon as we reach conclusions on the matter.

As the right hon. Gentleman knows, the social clause was never applied in the south of Scotland. It has been a feature of the legislation governing the work of the hydro board, the most important aspect of which has always been perceived to be the installation of electricity for the rural communities in the remote islands and the maintenance of common tariffs throughout the area. In the White Paper the Government said that they remained committed to those objectives.

Dr. Reid: Just as the Secretary of State is prepared, apparently, to do nothing to protect jobs in Dundee—*[Interruption.]* If hon. Members will allow me to finish the sentence, they might realise that there is some sense in it.

Just as the Minister is prepared to do nothing to protect jobs in Dundee, is it not true that he did nothing to protect jobs in the coal industry? Did he not inadvertently mislead the House earlier today when he implied that the current negotiations were a result of his intervention? Is he aware that this morning the chairman of the SSEB was interviewed by the Select Committee on Energy and was explicitly asked, "Has the Secretary of State for Scotland ever discussed with you the social costs and consequences of the loss of the contract to the coal board?" He answered, "No."

Will the Secretary of State confirm that astounding and shocking answer, and will he explain to the House and the people of Scotland what sort of Secretary of State sits to one side doing nothing when 10,000 jobs in the Scottish coal industry are under threat?

Mr. Rifkind: On the earlier part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I said last week that I would be perfectly prepared to make representations to Ford if and when I believed that such representations would be appropriate — [HON. MEMBERS: "Now."] — and would have some prospect of producting the desired result. I was involved in the negotiations to bring Ford to Dundee, and I hope that the hon. Gentleman accepts that that is my clear intention and objective.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am well aware that the Ford issue is of major importance to the House—*[Interruption.]*—but we must stick to the Question on the Order Paper.

Mr. Rifkind: I was responding to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question.

On the second part of his question, I must tell the hon. Gentleman that my responsibility is to Scottish industry as a whole and to the jobs that are found in Scottish industry as a whole. Coming from the constituency that he does, the hon. Gentleman should know more clearly than most the implications for the steel industry in Scotland if

electricity tariffs are higher than they need to be—[HON. MEMBERS: "Tiny."] They are not tiny. Ravenscraig is the single largest purchaser of electricity from the SSEB, and if the hon. Gentleman does not take account of that fact he is doing a disservice to his constituents.

Mr. Allan Stewart: Will my right hon. and learned Friend make it crystal clear to the chairman of the SSEB that his job is to produce electricity as cheaply as possible for his consumers? Is it not the ultimate hypocrisy for an hon. Member representing a constituency in Lanarkshire —the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid)— to urge on the SSEB policies which might make Ravenscraig uncompetitive?

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is entirely correct. The House should bear in mind that the chairman of the SSEB has said that he wants to reach a satisfactory conclusion that will enable him to continue purchasing coal from British Coal. In the discussions that have taken place in the past few days both sides have reported progress, so there is a prospect of some satisfactory agreement being reached. That should be welcomed by the House.

Mr. Dewar: The right hon. and learned Gentleman has blatantly failed to answer the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid). Has he at any time discussed with the chairman of the SSEB the social costs or consequences of the massive loss of jobs that is possible in the deep mining industry as a result of current policies?

Mr. Rifkind: I have had a number of very general discussions with the chairman of the SSEB covering all the issues that are relevant to this matter.

Dr. Reid: He says no.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask hon. Members not to ask questions from a sedentary position, because that gazumps questions that are to be asked legitimately.

Electricity Privatisation

10. **Mr. Malcolm Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on the maintenance of the economic development role of the Scottish electricity supply industry after privatisation.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received a number of representations on this matter. The Government intend that the major contribution which the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board has made to the development of its area by providing secure supplies at an acceptable cost to remote consumers will be maintained after privatisation.

Mr. Bruce: I am grateful to the Minister for that assurance. Will he acknowledge that there is concern that the Government, either after, or in preparation for privatisation may force up electricity prices artificially? Will he give us an assurance that that will not be the case?

Secondly, will he assure us that the competitive prices that the North of Scotland board has been able to offer in the past will still be able to be offered in the future, so that industry in the north of Scotland can have one compensation for being remote from markets—having cheaper electricity than anywhere else in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Lang: I am happy to give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he sought in the first part of his question. Fixing prices is a matter for the boards, not the Government. As for the second part, my right hon. and learned Friend pointed out that common tariffs will apply under the legislation to the whole northern area.

Mr. McKelvey: Will the Minister or the Secretary of State please answer the question asked earlier about discussions between the Secretary of State and the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board? Did the Secretary of State at any time during those discussions raise the matter of the social and economic disaster that will take place after privatisation, or discuss whether a deal can be struck between the SSEB and the coal board? Did he at any time discuss the social costs to the whole Scottish community?

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has already answered that question. The electricity board has made it clear that it is willing to contemplate a phased reduction in prices for coal.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the best ways of helping the economic development of the Scottish electricity supply industry after privatisation would have occurred if Ford had been able to construct a plant at Dundee, which would have used far more electricity? What representations have been received from hon. Members on the Opposition Front Bench in support of the scheme?

Hon. Members: What scheme?

Mr. Lang: I am not certain to which scheme my hon. Friend refers, but it is true that the development of the economy and of enterprise in Scotland, leading to increased consumption of electricity, could only be of advantage to all consumers in Scotland.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Has the Minister, in his conversations about the development of the Scottish electricity system, discussed the possibility of a connector line with Northern Ireland, which would be in keeping with the EEC policy of interconnecting lines, and appropriate, as the Kilroot power station has contract with the Ayrshire mines?

Mr. Lang: That is an interesting matter, but the hon. Gentleman will have to pursue it with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy.

Scottish Health Education Group

12. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what reviews he is conducting into the structure and function of the Scottish Health Education Group.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: None.

Dr. Moonie: The Minister is, I hope, by now aware that there have been considerable problems in the Scottish Health Education Group, where there has been a 220 per cent. turnover in staff during the past five years. Will he make representations to the management board of the Common Services Agency to ensure that the reorganisation now taking place within that department, for which he is responsible, is both speedy and effective, so that morale at SHEG can be restored to its former levels?

Mr. Forsyth: There has been an internal review of the staffing structure at SHEG, and discussions on that have

been somewhat protracted. I understand that they are now reaching a conclusion. I shall certainly pass on the hon. Gentleman's remarks.

Mr. Wilson: When the Minister has discussions with SHEG, will he bear in mind that having 320,000 unemployed in Scotland is probably the largest single contributory factor to the poor health habits of a depressed people? Will he express the astonishment of the House at the revelation by Mr. Donald Miller today that the social and health consequences for 10,000 people and their families in the mining communities of Scotland have not even been discussed by a Secretary of State who, at other times, sheds crocodile tears and seeks to make political capital out of the difficulties of creating employment in Scotland?

Mr. Forsyth: The Scottish Health Education Group exists to provide information to the people of Scotland on how to prevent ill health. In view of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, I shall ensure that copies of its literature are sent to him for his education.

Employment and Training Measures

13. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people are currently involved in Government employment and training measures in Scotland; and what is the estimated figure for expenditure on YTS in Scotland in the current year.

Mr. Lang: At the end of January 1988, 85,204 people were participating in YTS, the community programme and the enterprise allowance scheme in Scotland. In addition, between April 1987 and the end of January 1988, 42,188 entered adult training programmes. Estimated expenditure on YTS in Scotland in 1987-88 is £91 million.

Mr. Greenway: Does my hon. Friend agree that the loss of the Dundee Ford project will mean not simply the loss of 1,000 hi-tech jobs, but the loss of hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs to the local economy of Dundee? Is the tragedy of this case not simply the exposure of the stupidity of the Opposition and the Transport and General Workers Union, but the fact that many young people who could have had training and work experience will not now have those opportunities?

Mr. Lang: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. Dundee is an area to which we have devoted considerable care and attention in employment and training measures. The job training scheme was pioneered there, as were restart and job clubs. With the recent announcement bringing, as it does, a chilling reminder of the winter of discontent, the chances for young people in Dundee are inevitably diminished. Nevertheless, we shall do our best to restore those opportunities.

Nursery Education

14. **Mr. Worthington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any proposals to encourage nursery education in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: For 1988-89, provision for expenditure by local authorities on nursery education is £31 million, representing an increase of 26½ per cent. in real terms over the level of expenditure in 1979-80, but it is for individual authorities to determine the priority given to this subject in their areas and the form of provision made for pre-school children.

Mr. Worthington: Is it not disgraceful that the Secretary of State has cancelled five years' work by members of his staff, who extolled the value of nursery education and called for more resources to be devoted to it? When will he give a lead in this matter?

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I am interested to note that the hon. Gentleman has given me the conclusions of a study that was never completed—[HON. MEMBERS: "Smile."] This is a serious subject. The Scottish Office has no responsibility for nursery education and pre-school provision. I am surprised that the hon. Gentleman, of all hon. Members, should seek to persuade the Scottish Office to interfere in a matter that we have left to local authority discretion.

New Hospital (Lanarkshire)

17. **Mr. Ingram:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has had any consultations with the Lanarkshire health board on the building of a new district general hospital within the Hamilton-East Kilbride unit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Any proposal for a new hospital would have to be supported by an option appraisal and would require approval in principle by my right hon. and learned Friend. The Scottish Home and Health Department and the health board's officials have discussed the matter briefly at a recent strategic planning meeting.

Mr. Ingram: Is the Minister aware that within the Hamilton-East Kilbride unit there are 190,000 people who are not served by a district general hospital? When the hon. Gentleman considers this matter further, will he take full account of the strong representations made by the community, the consultants and the GPs within the Hamilton-East Kilbride unit for the building of this district general hospital at an early date?

Mr. Forsyth: As the Government are involved in the biggest hospital building programme in the history of the National Health Service in Scotland, I can understand why the hon. Gentleman expects a new hospital in his constituency. Any proposal for a new hospital would have to be submitted to the Department for approval in principle and be backed by a full and detailed option appraisal, to which we would give careful consideration.

Mr. Harry Ewing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take the point of order after the Standing Order No. 20 applications.

Tin Mining (Cornwall)

3.30 pm

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the sale by Rio Tinto Zinc, with Government backing, of its Cornish tin mining interests, resulting in 200 redundancies, and its relation to the agreement established in 1986 with the Government to maintain jobs and investment on a five-year programme."

Yesterday, Rio Tinto Zinc and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster announced the sale of Carnon Consolidated Ltd., which currently runs RTZ's tin mines in Cornwall. This has resulted in the proposed redundancy of 200 of the present 720 staff and a compulsory wage cut of 8 per cent. for the remainder. The decision has been dressed up in terms of a management and worker buy-out. However, the reality is that the workers will have access to only 20 per cent. of the shares, which will be held in a trust and will not be freely available to the work force, and the terms of the agreements with RTZ and the Government remain unclear.

It is vital that we have an opportunity to debate this issue. The matter is urgent because there will be no obvious alternative employment for those 200 workers if the company and the Government do not change their minds. The matter is specific because, in 1986, the Government agreed to provide the RTZ Corporation with an interest-free loan of up to £15 million and guarantee of commercial loans of up to £10 million to assist a capital development programme covering the next five years. The Government recognised in the past that the low prices could not last in the long term and that jobs and the interests in tin should be saved, but now jobs are going, purely because of continued short-term price shortfalls.

The House should have an opportunity to discuss this issue now, especially since the original terms of the Government aid have been broken and further Government support is involved. The House should have an opportunity to ensure that Government money has been and is being properly used. I ask you for a debate, Mr. Speaker, especially on behalf of those 200 Cornish workers and their families who deserve better treatment, after their efforts in saving the industry, than weeks of speculation, no consultation and now the heavy blow of job losses.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the sale by Rio Tinto Zinc, with Government backing, of its Cornish tin mining interests, resulting in 200 redundancies, and its relation to the agreement established in 1986 with the Government to maintain jobs and investment on a five-year programme."

I have listened with concern to what the hon. Member has said on behalf of his constituents, but I regret that I do not think that the matter is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I therefore cannot submit his application to the House. However, I hope that the hon. Member will find other ways to raise the matter here.

Proposed Ford Plant (Dundee)

3.34 pm

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the likely loss to Scotland of the proposed new Ford plant at Dundee arising from the stated intention of the leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union to confound today's decision of the general council of the Trade Union Congress to allow a single union agreement to go ahead."

I do not believe that there is an hon. Member who does not wish and pray that Ford may reverse its decision and bring this development to Dundee, to Scotland and to Great Britain. We face the prospect of a cataclysmic catastrophe in the loss not of any out-of-date industry but of the industry of the future. My constituency has 15 per cent. unemployment and the site of the development is partly in my constituency. For five months, nothing has been done to remove the objection of the Transport and General Workers Union. Indeed, last week the Labour party held its Scottish conference in my constituency and the matter was not mentioned, despite the fact that the Leader of the Opposition, who is sponsored by that union was present, with eight Scottish Opposition Members sponsored by that union.

The statement that we heard today would inevitably mean that Ford would not come to Dundee. The catastrophe for Scotland—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fairbairn: —would be not only that we would lose Ford: we would lose an infinite number of other jobs; we would lose inward investment and we would regain our reputation as a bad place for industrial development. There has been silence from all Opposition Members, including the Leader of the Opposition. [HON. MEMBERS: "They do not care."]

My constituents in Scotland demand that the leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union now give an unequivocal statement that they will adhere to the recommendation of the Trade Union Congress. I do not believe that there has ever been a more important industrial matter in Scotland. It is critical. I ask for a debate on behalf of the whole of Scotland and I am sure that I speak for the whole House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the likely loss to Scotland of the proposed new Ford plant at Dundee arising from the stated intention of the leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union to confound today's decision of the General Council of the Trade Union Congress to allow a single union agreement to go ahead."

I listened with interest and concern to what the hon. and learned Gentleman said, as I did to today's exchanges at Question Time. I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20, and I therefore cannot submit his application to the House.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not question your decision but I, too, regret that you have not been able to grant the Standing

Order No. 20 application, because it would have given us the opportunity to expose the absolute and total hypocrisy with which the Secretary of State for Scotland has covered himself in relation to the Ford issue.

I have a point of order relating to the conduct of today's Question Time. When the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) sought to ask a question about Ford in Dundee on Question 6, you told him that there was a later question on the Order Paper relating to Ford. I put it to you, Sir, that there was no such later question. That conveys to me the distinct impression that someone—possibly someone on the Conservative Benches—had advised you that he intended to use Question 8 in relation to the Ford Motor Company at Dundee.

When you said that, those of us here on the Back Benches rightly or wrongly expected that Question 8 would be allowed to run. Tragically and unfortunately, you cut that question short and, on my behalf and on behalf of my Back Bench colleagues, I object most strongly to the fact that Question 8 was cut short because it was on an important issue. There is a distinct impression among my colleagues and myself that the Secretary of State was being protected today.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let me answer a question of that sort. The reason why I said what I did, I believe it was on Question 7, was that the question related to the poll tax and community charge. On the second point, I assure the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) that I seek to do my homework and assess what might be raised during Question Time. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will agree that it is appropriate for the Chair to do that. I anticipated that the issue of Ford would arise on Question 8. There has certainly been no collusion; I assure the hon. Gentleman of that absolutely.

On the matter of not allowing that question to run, we keep careful timing and that question ran for 11 minutes. That is much longer than I would normally allow any individual question.

Hon. Members: Withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the individual concerned, let me make it quite clear that I was perfectly satisfied with the way in which you presented it and the decision you made, and I hope that the rest of the House will accept that.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce (Gordon): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of your reply to the previous point of order—that you had judged that Question 8 was the appropriate question on which the Ford issue could be addressed — would it not have been appropriate, particularly given the time taken up by the Minister rather than by hon. Members seeking to question the Minister, for that question to be taken at the end of Question Time so as to allow for proper exchanges? You said that it was an important question. Therefore, why was it that you felt that that important question should be confined to a debate between the Labour party and the Conservative party, which have not covered themselves with glory in this matter and neither of which has done Scotland a service? Would it not have been appropriate to take that question at the end in order to allow all parties to participate?

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not decide whether questions are taken at the end. That is done at the request of a Minister. It happens occasionally and it may well be that that would have been appropriate today. It was not in my hands.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. From the large number of hon. Members rising from their seats, it was clear to see how important that issue was. Subsequently, many Conservative Members chose to abuse other questions on the Order Paper and, under spurious guises, attempted to make political capital out of a vital issue in Scotland.

Surely the protection of Back Benchers means that, when there is an opportunity to question a Minister on a vital issue, it should be extended to those who are genuine in their concern.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: All on the same matter?

Mr. Allan Stewart (Eastwood): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it on the same matter?

Mr. Stewart: It is related, Mr. Speaker. Is it not incumbent upon the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) to withdraw his criticism of your conduct during Scottish Question Time?

Mr. Harry Ewing: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not need any lectures from someone such as the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart). I did not say anything that I feel it is necessary to withdraw. If I am not sincere in what I say and if I did not think carefully before saying what I do, I would withdraw. However, I have sat here today angry at the way in which the people of Dundee and my colleagues on both sides of the House—the Liberal party and the Scottish National party make fair points — were treated. I am right, and I have no intention of withdrawing my comments. I am right to express that anger.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The business for today is under a timetable motion and this takes time out of that. I say to the hon. Member for Falkirk, East (Mr. Ewing) that I am the first to realise how frustrating it is if one is not called to ask a question at Question Time.

In relation to what the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) said, frequently after Question Time, specifically Scottish Question Time, I receive letters from hon. Members saying that we have not gone fast enough. Today we could have probably spent a great deal of time on Question 8. However, I have to bear in mind other opportunities and, indeed, they could arise later this week on the Easter Adjournment motion.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would you reconsider the request from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn)?

Mr. Speaker: I do not reconsider my decisions on such matters.

Mr. Favell: Mr. Speaker——

Mr. Speaker: No, I said that I do not reconsider my decisions on Standing Order 20 applications.

Mr. Neil Hamilton (Tatton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask how much longer you will tolerate continued attacks on your judgment and integrity under the guise of bogus points of order from the Opposition? Many Conservative Members are getting extremely tired of the time of the House being wasted in this way. Is it not clear from the attack upon you this afternoon that not only is the Labour party prepared to sacrifice 1,000 jobs in Dundee, but that it wants to add your job to the list?

Mr. Speaker: It is not a very easy job.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. If hon. Members take a copy of *Hansard* tomorrow morning and read what happened at Question Time, they will find that during the question involved there were a great many repetitive questions which caused the Minister to repeat his answer several times. That being the case, the time went very quickly. I did not catch your eye at all today, but I make no complaint whatever about that.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): On a point of order.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): On a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I will take two more points of order, but I say to both hon. Gentlemen that we are again to have a debate under a timetable motion and that many points of order take up the time of hon. Members who have a legitimate interest in the coming debate.

Dr. Reid: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hope that it is appropriate to Question Time, and it arises from the last point of order. I think that it is order to say that part of the reason for questions being repeated is that frequently they are not answered. For instance, the Secretary of State was asked three times today whether he had discussed the social cost consequences of the loss of the SSEB contract by British Coal. He has not yet given a straight answer to that question.

Mr. Speaker: We cannot have a continuation of Question Time. I shall allow one more point of order. Mr. Hind.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: No, I said that I would call the two hon. Gentlemen who have been rising.

Mr. Faulds: I will be the second.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure that that would be very helpful, but we must move on.

BILL PRESENTED

Local Authorities (General Powers)

Mr. Tony Benn, supported by Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Ms. Joan Ruddock, Mr. Ken Livingstone, Mr. Bernie Grant, Ms. Joan Walley, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Eric S. Heffer and Mr. Dennis Skinner presented a Bill to confer general powers on all local authorities; to restrict the powers of the District Auditor in relation to those authorities; and for purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 124.]

Hospital Consultants (Transfer and Revision of Contracts)

3.47 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to transfer the contracts of hospital consultants from the regional to the district health authorities: and to amend and redefine the contractual terms of hospital consultants.

I present this Bill because of my concern over a series of events that have led to an unfortunate reorganisation of hospitals in my constituency, and also because of an extensive catalogue of incidents in the constituencies of other hon. Members which suggest that we have our structure wrong. In my own case, local hospitals, including Gravesend hospital, were reorganised as a reaction to pressure from the Royal College of Surgeons of England. This was apparently in response to internal politics by certain local consultants. Under the threat of derecognition of junior posts, the district health authority caved in. The interests of the consultants were served at the expense of the public for whom the National Health Service exists.

Consultants' contracts are held in most cases by the regional health authorities, and by the teaching districts and the boards of governors of postgraduate hospitals in the minority of cases. It is the contracts with the regions that are of most concern. The whole thrust of modern-day management of the NHS depends on the effective use of resources at district level. The Select Committee on Social Services considered this very point. In its report on medical education, it said:

"Consultants are a most important resource. If DHAs are truly to exercise discretion in determining which problems should receive priority and which services should be developed, they should not have to rely on the regions, any more than is necessary to plan and manage this very basic resource."

It went on to recommend,

"that the DHAs should be the employing authority for consultants."

In their reply, the Government said:

"virtually no medical professional body was in favour of District employment."

Well, they would, wouldn't they? The Government said that they feared "an apprehensive and unhappy profession". They have settled for happy consultants at the expense of effective DHAs.

The reason why most DHAs provide effective local hospital services is that most consultants are dedicated, hard-working professionals. However, the DHAs are largely defenceless against a tiny minority of troublesome, under-performing or incompetent consultants. That must be changed.

Yet another sector for reform is that of merit awards. The average consultant earns £60,000 a year from the National Health Service. On top of that amount, he can receive up to a further £30,000 from distinction awards. In practice, they are awarded on the recommendation of a national committee of consultants meeting in secret conclave. The Committee advises the DHSS of its awards, which instructs the respective DHAs to pay ad infinitum.

One can imagine the qualifications for such awards. Studies have shown how they favour male consultants in the more glamorous faculties. Local district budgets have the costs unilaterally loaded on to them—a cost of £60 million nationwide in consultants' merit awards. If DHAs

have funds for merit awards, they should be paid for patient care, operations performed or other local service criteria.

Last, I raise the potential conflict of interest for consultants who work in the National Health Service and who operate in the private sector. The temptations are only too clear. It is absurd to make consultants the potential beneficiaries of National Health Service waiting lists that are under their own influence.

The Bill raises important matters that are vital to the National Health Service. It is a case of a minority of unscrupulous consultants versus the people. The only reason why our hospitals work as well as they do is that most consultants are a credit to our community.

I ask for the support of all hon. Members because there is nothing that those people would like better than for the politicians to squabble with each other rather than unitedly fight the abuses being committed against the patients of our National Health Service.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jacques Arnold, Mrs. Gillian Shephard, Mr. Michael Fallon, Miss Ann Widdecombe, Mr. Michael Brown, Mr. Jerry Hayes, Mr. Robert B. Jones, Mr. John Marshall, Mr. Andrew Rowe, Mr. Nicholas Bennett, Mr. Neil Thorne, and Mr. Malcolm Moss.

Mr. Jacques Arnold accordingly presented a Bill to transfer the contracts of hospital consultants from the regional to the district health authorities: and to amend and redefine the contractual terms of hospital consultants: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 29 April and to be printed. [Bill 131.]

Education Reform Bill (Allocation of Time)

Resolved,

That the Report [22nd March] from the Business Committee be now considered.—*[Mr. Maclean.]*

Question, That this House doth agree with the Committee in their resolution, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) — [Mr. Maclean.]—and agreed to.*

Following is the Report of the Business Committee:

Education Reform Bill (Business Committee), — The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means reported from the Business Committee, That it had come to a further Resolution in respect of the Education Reform Bill, which it had directed him to report to the House:

That—

(1) the order in which proceedings on consideration are taken shall be Government new Clauses; remaining new Clauses; Amendments to Clauses Nos. 1 to 7, Schedule No. 1, Clauses Nos. 8 to 33, Schedule No. 2, Clauses Nos. 34 to 57, Schedule No. 3, Clauses Nos. 58 to 99, Schedule No. 4, Clauses Nos. 100 to 102, Schedule No. 5, Clauses Nos. 103 to 112, Schedule No. 6, Clauses 113 to 134, Schedule No. 7, Clause No. 167, Schedule No. 9, Clauses Nos. 168 to 175 and 135 to 164, Schedule No. 8, Clauses Nos. 165, 166 and 176 to 186 and Schedules Nos. 10 and 11; and new Schedules;

(2) the allotted days which, under the Order of 1st February, as varied by the Order of 17th February, are given to the proceedings on consideration and Third Reading shall be allotted in the manner shown in the Table set out below and, subject to the provisions of that Order as so varied, each part of the proceedings shall be brought to a conclusion at the time specified in the third column of that Table.

Table

Allotted day	Proceedings	Time for conclusion of proceedings
First day	Government new Clauses	6 p.m.
	New Clauses Nos. 1 to 9	8.45 p.m.
	Remaining new Clauses	10 p.m.
Second day	Amendments to Clause No. 1	6 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 37	8.15 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 98	10 p.m.
Third day	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 109	6 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Schedule No. 7	8 p.m.
	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 175	10 p.m.
Fourth day	Amendments up to the end of Clause No. 166	7 p.m.
	Remaining proceedings on consideration	7.45 p.m.
	Third Reading	10 p.m.

3.53 pm

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that, as a consequence of the guillotine motion that the House agreed on 10 February as a result of Conservative Members voting in favour of it, although there are 31 separate debates scheduled to take place during this second day of consideration of the Report stage of the Education Reform Bill, it is extremely unlikely, even if short speeches are made, that more than three separate debates will take place?

Will you confirm, Sir, that that flows directly from the imposition of the guillotine and that if Conservative Members are concerned, as we are, that a number of important issues cannot be discussed they should have thought of that before voting for the guillotine motion?

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): Further to that point of order, Mr.

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

Speaker. I am surprised at the hon. Gentleman's complaints, as the Bill has already been debated for 200 hours in Committee. We now have four days of debate on the Floor of the House, of which three are still ahead of us. The hon. Gentleman is really complaining about the inept way in which the Opposition handled the Committee stage. They have muffed their chances, and all their thunder has been stolen by the minority parties. It is no use the hon. Gentleman blaming the guillotine for the ineffective lack-lustre methods adopted by his party in Committee.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before dealing with the point of order, I remind hon. Members that a motion has been passed on the order in which the amendments are to be taken. Points of order take up further time.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. The Secretary of State referred to the fact that the Bill had been considered in Standing Committee for 200 hours. There are hon. Members who, for good reasons, could not participate in the Second Reading debate and were not members of the Standing Committee. Will you confirm that Report stage is aimed especially at such Members, so the comments of the Secretary of State were a little off beam?

Mr. Speaker: The Chair will certainly bear in mind what the hon. Gentleman has said. Report stages provide an opportunity for Members who were not on the Standing Committee to make their contributions.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The matter has been raised because certain Conservative Members, having voted for the guillotine, complained that points that they wished to raise would not be reached. When I raised question about this, it was clear that they did not know what voting for the guillotine meant. They had brought the problem of which they complained upon themselves by voting for the guillotine. Perhaps they should have a lecture from the Secretary of State on what voting for a guillotine means. As I pointed out yesterday, it does not mean beheading anyone in New Palace Yard.

Orders of the Day

Education Reform Bill

[2ND ALLOTTED DAY]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

Clause 1

DUTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE CURRICULUM

3.58 pm

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I beg to move amendment No. 57, in page 1, line 11, leave out 'every maintained school' and insert

'as respects the education of all children of compulsory school age'.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 56, in page 1, line 11, leave out 'maintained school' and insert

'school with more than nineteen pupils'.

No. 58, in page 1, line 14, leave out from second 'of' to end of line 15 and insert

'every school with more than nineteen pupils'.

Mr. Fatchett: Yesterday, in what was to some extent a preliminary skirmish, we discussed a series of important issues. We now come to the heart of the Bill and of the Government's proposals. In many respects, the key to those proposals is the Government's submission of a national curriculum.

The Secretary of State, in his usual charming manner, has often tried to pretend that there is a national consensus on his proposal for a national curriculum. As we pointed out yesterday, no such consensus is apparent in the opinion polls. Despite, or perhaps because of, the right hon. Gentleman's advocacy of his own curriculum, support for a national curriculum has fallen by about 20 per cent. in the past four months. Some of us wish that the Secretary of State would spend even more time advocating his own cause, as all his proposals might then receive negative support.

There is no consensus among parents or among the Opposition, although the Secretary of State sometimes likes to pretend that there is. Anyone who has read the Committee *Hansards* knows that the Labour party and the minority parties tried time and again to amend the proposals for a whole series of reasons. That does not mean that we do not believe in an agreed core curriculum. It would be foolish and churlish to pretend otherwise. Conservative Members who have read our election manifesto—I am sure that they all have—will recognise that we went into the last election with a proposal for an agreed core curriculum.

It is difficult to describe what is before us as an agreed core curriculum. It is a curriculum that the Secretary of State has tried to impose without consultation with teacher organisations, without effective consultation with local authorities, and certainly without any meaningful consultation with parents or parent organisations.

Serious criticisms can be made of the Secretary of State's proposal for a national curriculum. First, the national curriculum is in danger of being too prescriptive, too restrictive and static. The best educational changes in recent years have taken place when teachers have brought

forward new ideas, such as the movement towards design and technology subjects. Such new ideas came from teachers but now figure centrally in terms of curriculum development.

Secondly, we have expressed concern time after time that the Government have no notion of what the national curriculum needs in terms of resources or the amount of time that it will demand of the school timetable. Indeed, we have had some fanciful notions in relation to the amount of time—from, I believe, one minute from the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), to 99 per cent. of school time.

The national curriculum is variable in terms of the Government's notion of what a national curriculum is. We feel strongly that in bringing his proposal to the House and the country the Government should have had a much clearer idea of what they meant by a "national curriculum".

Thirdly, in Committee we expressed our unease about the balance in the national curriculum. Some of that unease will be expressed in the later debate, which I shall not pre-empt. We tabled new clauses in Committee to deal with the question of the teaching of the arts and their role in the national curriculum. If my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will talk about development curriculum in his area. We still feel strongly that the arts provide an important part of school life and should be an important part of any agreed core curriculum. We feel that the Secretary of State's national curriculum does not fit our requirement to satisfy the needs of the arts and the potential for the development for individuals and subjects, through study of the arts.

We have expressed substantial reservations and concerns about the national curriculum, and it would be a total misinterpretation of the events in Standing Committee for the Secretary of State to pretend that there has been consensus for his version of the national curriculum. Indeed, the Secretary of State seems to have some difficulty in carrying sections of his own party with him.

Those of us who have had the opportunity of reading an article in *The Observer* on Sunday will have seen the headline over a story by Judith Judd, its education correspondent, entitled "Tories in school rift". It is yet another story of arguments between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State. Dr. Sheila Lawlor, who worked in Conservative Central Office until the last election is reported as arguing

"that the national curriculum should be confined to three core subjects: English, maths and science.

Her views are significant because they echo those of Mrs. Thatcher, who has been battling with Mr. Kenneth Baker, Education Secretary, over the national curriculum."

It does not need a very perceptive journalist to recognise that that battle has been taking place, because the Secretary of State carries the scars around with him for all of us to see. Some of us would like to have a slight gamble on the result of that battle, and if we were to have a slight gamble, it would be that the right hon. Lady will win. That will be yet another victory for matriarchy in the Cabinet. The Prime Minister will again be victorious.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow) *rose*——

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough) *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett: I shall give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) first.

Mr. Flannery: Does my hon. Friend agree that if the Secretary of State loses the battle, he is liable to be found in St. James's park collecting the refuse?

Mr. Fatchett: I do not know what fate will befall the Secretary of State, although we all take a keen interest in his future. Incidentally, my hon. Friend will be interested in the stories about how that rubbish arrived in St. James's park. It may well have been spread there for the Prime Minister to pick up at a later stage. I cannot imagine the Secretary of State getting into such an unprincipled position that he would want to be the man who put down the rubbish for the Prime Minister to pick up later.

Mr. Dalyell: What odds would my hon. Friend give me if I put my money on the Secretary of State to win?

Mr. Fatchett: My hon. Friend is trying to tempt me into strange paths. I know that he comes from a strictly puritanical background. In that respect it is dangerous to tempt me into gambling, and it is certainly against his moral code.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it not farcical that we should have to listen to this, as it has absolutely nothing to do with this selection of amendments? There is a real problem that, in the first time scale up to 6 o'clock, only one debate has been allocated and an enormous number of subjects relating to the national curriculum are extremely unlikely to be reached. Is it not odd that only one subject should have been chosen for the period up to 6 o'clock, and is it not a reproach that Opposition Members cannot think of anything relevant to say on the one subject that they have chosen?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall move on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, we are not responsible for the selection of amendments.

The amendments seek to do two things. First, they try to ensure that smaller schools, which may have reason to opt out of the national curriculum, may do so. Secondly, they try to ensure that the national curriculum covers all our children in all our schools.

I deal first with the point about smaller schools. I refer to the primary sector by definition of the numbers used in the amendment. Some smaller schools will have genuine difficulty in delivering the national curriculum. There has to be a balanced argument on this, because in many rural communities the small school is seen as being of great advantage to that community. Such smaller schools provide a good standard of education. There is much defence of the small primary schools that are at the heart of village life. I should have thought that the Government would want to find a means by which a particular school, which may have difficulty in delivering the national curriculum, can somehow exempt itself from that national curriculum, but have the ability to continue to deliver the good standard of education which is often associated with village schools.

I know that, in the role that he performs for the Government, the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Dartford often has to deal with the proposed closures of village schools. He will often find that the quality of education in such schools is of a high standard. In such cases, it may be difficult — technically and

[Mr. Fatchett]

literally—to deliver the national curriculum, if one takes a prescriptive and formal view of it. The amendment asks whether it will be possible to find a mechanism whereby the relationship of those schools to the national curriculum is not too formally restricted. Perhaps when the Minister of State replies, she could give us a response on that.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that in our part of the world where the standard of education in some very small schools is quite outstandingly good, those schools will have every opportunity to deliver the national curriculum, because they already do so automatically? It is what they regard as standard good practice, and they deliver it. Whether or not the Bill comes in, those schools will still deliver what is now known as the core curriculum.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Lady makes my argument. We are concerned about maintaining those schools and that good quality of education. If there is a good quality of education that is in line with the national curriculum, there is no problem. If there is a quality of education which may not be strictly in line with the national curriculum but which is still perceived by parents and teachers as being good, especially if, in a small school, it may be difficult to deliver the national curriculum and its demands in relation to resources—particularly in terms of science pre-11—it may be sensible for the Government to think about the possibility of those small schools having the right to opt out of the formal prescription of the national curriculum. That is all that the amendment seeks to do.

We are trying to be helpful. We are trying to help village schools and village life. If the national curriculum is too much of a dead hand, it could be too restrictive. We tabled the amendment to see how the Government reacted to the problem. I think that we share with the hon. Lady some interest in what the Minister of State says when she concludes the debate. I assure the hon. Lady that there is no attempt in this part of my speech to divide the House on party political grounds, because all of us are trying to secure the continuation of village schools. We do not want to see the national curriculum as a barrier in that respect.

The second part of the amendment refers to the application of the national curriculum to all our children. If there is an argument for a national curriculum, it must extend to each and every one of our children. We have still had no response from the Government on why the so-called national curriculum does not apply to the private sector. Why does the Cabinet not apply the national curriculum to its children? If it is good enough for children in the maintained sector, is it not good enough for the children of Members of the Cabinet? Is it not good enough for the children who go to private sector schools? The Government have not yet given an answer to that.

The Government have an obligation to give an answer to those of my constituents who come to me and say, "Mr. Fatchett, we understand that Mr. Baker has come up with another of his ideas." I always say to them, "Calm down, because the last of Mr. Baker's ideas was the poll tax." My constituents say, "This is a good idea. Mr. Baker says that he will have a national curriculum for all our children. We think that that is a wonderful idea. He will extend the national curriculum to every one of our children." But I say, "No, Mr. Baker will extend the national curriculum only to children who are taught in the maintained sector." Those who buy their education for their children will be able to opt out of the national curriculum, but that right does not apply to my constituents, who have to rely upon the maintained sector. Why does not the Secretary of State's idea apply to all our children?

One or two justifications were given for that in Committee. I re-read the debate with interest. At column 42, the hon. Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) said that the difference was that those who were in the private sector had "the freedom to move." That is an interesting argument. That freedom to move is restricted because, by definition, the private sector is restricted. That freedom to move does not apply to more than 90 per cent. of the population.

Let me use the words expressed by the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), in the Scottish Grand Committee on Monday—it is a freedom to move that can be exercised only "through the cheque book." That freedom does not apply to all our children. It allows some to opt out of the national curriculum, but the vast majority of parents, under what is supposedly a parents' charter, do not have that right.

There is a distortion in logic, because the Government tell us that the Bill is about giving all parents the freedom to choose the school they want for their child. If that is so, and if open enrolment is to provide that freedom, why should it not allow the national curriculum to apply to the independent schools or, by implication, why should it not allow the state sector to opt out of the national curriculum? Why cannot parents in the maintained sector exercise the same freedom as those in the private sector and say, "We do not want to go to maintained school A because it follows the national curriculum, but we want to go to maintained school B because its curriculum is biased more towards the arts, or towards the sciences."? Why cannot those parents make that choice, if it can be made in the private sector?

The second justification for not applying the national curriculum to the private sector was offered by the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) in a speech which I read this morning and which was, as usual, interesting and full of interventions. The hon. Gentleman always stimulated the Committee. He argued that the simple difference was that the private schools were subject to

"the ultimate sanction of the market place". — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 10 December 1987; c. 51.]

Therefore, all else falls and the market place predominates in our view of the values and priorities of education. Can society accept that? [AN HON. MEMBER: "Yes."] The hon. Gentleman can, but is there an absolute right and an absolute freedom for the market place?

I re-read what the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth said. He said that education had two purposes. One is the transmission of shared cultural values—education transmits from generation to generation what our society is about. If one holds that view, one cannot at the same time—because it is inconsistent—give absolute freedom to the market place because the market place may operate in divergence from, in conflict with, the values of the education system and the culture that one is trying to transmit from generation to generation. The hon.

Gentleman's support for the market place cannot run alongside the support of a national education system with a national curriculum.

4.15 pm

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I am listening with interest to the hon. Gentleman. He is making a meal of the argument. In my experience, in the private sector the schools are extremely sensitive to the expectations of the national education system. They tend to adopt the parts of the national education system that they see as an improvement remarkably rapidly and effectively.

There is a difference between schools that are wholly accountable to the Secretary of State, the Government and the public sector for their financing, and schools that are not. With regard to shared cultural values, the hon. Gentleman will find that over the centuries the private sector has consistently adopted the parts of the national education system that conduce towards such values.

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman comes to the third justification——

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): The hon. Gentleman referred to the independents and to "the freedom to move". This was the point that was made in Committee. That phrase means that, if a parent does not like the quality or standard of education that is being given to his child in an independent school, he can exercise the ultimate sanction. Either he does not send his child to that school or he removes his child from the school. With respect, that is the point that was made in Committee.

Mr. Fatchett: With respect, I have already dealt with that point. If the argument of the hon. Gentleman and the Government is that all parents will be given greater freedom, why does not that freedom extend all the way — why does it not extend, by analogy, to allowing parents to make a choice on the school curriculum and the provision that it will give?

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Fatchett: I shall not give way. We must make progress, because this is a short debate. I respect the point made earlier by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison).

The Government's third justification has been used by the Minister of State and by the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe). They say that this is not a problem, that the vast majority of schools in the independent sector already teach something that looks like the national curriculum. I congratulate the schools in the private sector on being so perceptive. If they teach something that is like the national curriculum, perhaps they should tell Ministers so that they can define what the national curriculum is, because after five months' debate on the Bill, it is clear that they have no idea.

Assuming that the private sector is so perceptive, the Minister argued that there is no justification for extending the legal requirement to the private sector, and the private sector should still be allowed to opt out. There are two faults in that argument. The first relates to the argument by the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth. I took the opportunity to look at the Education Act 1944, section 71 of which places a responsibility upon the Secretary of State's shoulders to oversee the standards and quality of education provided in the private sector.

With respect to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth, we are not discussing an absolute market because the Secretary of State has a regulating, statutory control over private sector education. Given that the Secretary of State already has that control, and if he is proud of his concept of a national curriculum, there is no legal difficulty in extending that statutory responsibility under section 71 of the 1944 Act to private and independent schools. The power is already there.

I am not embarrassed to repeat what I consider to be the second fault in the argument. It may be said that private and independent schools already provide a good education and therefore they should not be covered by the national curriculum. Conservative Members should consider that many local authority and maintained schools provide a good standard of education for our children— a standard of which they and we are proud. If it is considered that the private sector does a good job and does not need to be covered by the national curriculum, why does that principle not pertain to the maintained sector as well? That is another example of the characteristic double standards of the Government.

Mr. Greenway: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, until now, schools in the maintained sector have had the freedom that he has described as presently pertaining to independent schools? I have exercised that freedom by introducing new and desired subjects with the support of pupils and parents. Given that freedom, however, we have still produced children whose average attainment in most subjects at 16 is some two years behind some of our continental rivals. In mathematics, the average attainment of our children is the same as the average attainment of the bottom 50 per cent. of children in Germany. Something must be done.

Mr. Fatchett: I am always grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his interventions. Indeed, I believe that he has made my argument better than I have so far managed to do. He is arguing that the maintained sector has enjoyed freedom, but that that freedom should be taken away, yet the private sector should retain that freedom. That illustrates exactly what I said about double standards and hypocrisy. The hon. Gentleman has put forward that argument with conviction and has set it out naked for all to see.

There is a simple explanation of why the private sector will not be covered by the national curriculum—because the Government believe in privilege. They practise that privilege for themselves, and in last week's Budget they invested in privilege and further divided our society. Such are the double standards that are typical of the Government. We oppose such double standards. If there is to be a national curriculum, properly agreed, resourced and discussed with teachers and parents, it must apply to all our children, without favour and without privilege. In that way, each of our children will have the opportunity to benefit from that national curriculum. Until that happens, the Government stand condemned of hypocrisy and double standards.

Mr. Raison: I will be doubly brief because, this debate does not have to run until 6 o'clock. I accept that it could but I believe that there are many other worthwhile matters that we could move on to at a cracking rate.

I wish to refer to the latter part of the speech of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) regarding why

[Mr. Raison]

the national curriculum should not apply to the independent sector. Fundamentally, the answer has to do with who provides those schools. The schools in the state sector—if I may use that term—are provided by the state and by the local authorities. The schools in the independent sector are provided by other people. In a nutshell that expresses the essence of the argument.

The hon. Gentleman quoted the Education Act 1944 and he should consider section 1 of the Act because it sets the argument in context. That section states that it shall be the duty of the Secretary of State

"to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area."

That section is significant because of the change it contains. Halfway through, that section discusses specifically the role of the local education authority and states that the Secretary of State has the job of controlling and directing the fulfilment of national policy. There is a marked change of tone in that section and it corresponds exactly with my argument.

There is a general duty upon the Secretary of State to promote education. Certainly, he has a policing role in relation to the independent sector—to which the hon. Member for Leeds, Central valiantly referred—but he has greater power to control and direct the provision of state education, primarily provided by local education authorities. That is the justification—it is entirely logical—for the fact that the Secretary of State has decided that the national curriculum is to apply to the state sector, but not to the independent sector. Indeed, independence is the essence of that sector.

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): In common with my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) I was not a member of the Committee. Because of certain other Opposition Front Bench duties, I rarely get an opportunity to speak from the Back Benches, but I have felt it necessary to do so today because I have a keen interest in the national curriculum.

In common with my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) I have read—today I have listened to—the rather spurious justifications as to why the private sector should not be subjected to the national curriculum. The justifications that have been put forward by Consevative Members are defective and warped. I do not see any justification for the private sector not being subjected to the national curriculum as proposed by the Secretary of State. Perhaps if I pursue that line of argument, however, I might not wish such a curriculum to be imposed upon the private sector because I take strong objection to the curriculum that the Secretary of State is seeking to impose on the maintained sector.

The Secretary of State is aware that most of us would prefer some form of core curriculum—that is obvious and necessary. Having established that core curriculum, its development should be left to the local education authorities and they should ensure that they fulfil their functions under the Education Act 1944.

The Secretary of State is aware that I represent a small part of the metropolitan borough of Wigan. Some time ago the people who run the education services of Wigan took the view that education was extremely important and, as a consequence of local government reorganisation that occurred some 14 years ago, they prioritised expenditure on education. They did so to ensure that all our children got entitlements under the curriculum. The Secretary of State is aware of that because his inspectors were in Wigan about 18 months ago to draw up their report. If the Secretary of State has read that report—if he has not, he should—he will know, or at least his Department will know, that the HMI report was absolutely superb.

Mr. Fatchett: The Secretary of State does not know where Wigan is.

Mr. Stott: If the Secretary of State does not know where Wigan is, he should come and look.

Perhaps the Secretary of State saw a recent programme on BBC2. He must surely know that BBC2 is doing a series of programmes on education. One programme was about Wigan's educational policy. We are proud that we prioritise arts in education. I recommend that the Secretary of State gets a tape from his Department and watches the programme. We prioritise our expenditure and place the arts highly.

4.30 pm

My hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher) visited the Drumcroom arts centre in Wigan and he will confirm that it is one of the finest in Great Britain. We have artists in residence and perform a host of music from rock to classical. Lest Conservative Members think that because the curriculum is art-orientated, it is defective in ensuring that our students are properly educated, the inspectors' report states that in the whole of the United Kingdom Wigan comes ninth for passes in GCE O and A-levels. Bearing in mind that there is 18 per cent. unemployment and a great deal of council housing, and that many people are on social security and most people come from deprived backgrounds, that record is a shining example of local authority education.

The Secretary of State now seeks to impose on the metropolitan borough of Wigan a national curriculum which is wholly inferior to the one we have. I wish that he would come to Wigan and debate this with me, because there is interest in it. The Socialist Education Association with the assistance of the local authority has held two day schools for governors: one in Wigan and one in Leigh. On each occasion about 150 governors attended to examine the Secretary of State's proposals for a national curriculum. They came from all parties and included Church people, and not a single governor approved of or agreed with the Secretary of State's imposition of a national curriculum.

It is paradoxical that I support an amendment which seeks to foist on the private sector a national curriculum which I do not want foisted on the Wigan LEA. This debate at least gives some of us an opportunity to tell the Secretary of State that we have been around for a long time, developing curricula and entitling all our children, wherever they come from, to learning. This national curriculum does not allow LEAs to do that.

As I have said, some people may criticise us for prioritising the arts in education, but that has not stopped the vast majority of the children in my area attaining good academic qualifications and standards. Indeed, it has helped. The Secretary of State seeks to deny those children that opportunity.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker) *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Stott: It is no use the Secretary of State shaking his head. That will be the effect. For those reasons, although they may seem perverse, I shall support the amendment.

Mr. Michael Carttiss (Great Yarmouth): I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will ensure that any core curriculum that gives advantage to the arts will eliminate the use of words such as "prioritise". I can hardly pronounce such an inappropriate word. If that is the outcome of the core curriculum established in Wigan, I do not think much of it.

Yesterday and again this afternoon the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) remarked that my right hon. Friend was arguing incorrectly when he asserted that the Bill has gained in popularity and has become more widely accepted as it has gone through the House.

Mr. Fatchett: That is absolute nonsense.

Mr. Carttiss: The hon. Gentleman contradicted my right hon. Friend's statement that more people are coming to accept the Bill. There is no doubt about that. When it comes into effect, the public will wonder why on earth it was ever opposed and why it took the Committee 200 hours to debate it.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman is making wild statements. I have never received a single letter in support of the Bill. How many letters has he received? We have not received any.

Mr. Carttiss: I wonder how many letters the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) and his colleagues have received in favour of nationalisation and 101 other policies which they pretend are the answers to the ills of this nation. [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."] I do not allow myself the rather unsophisticated measurement of the popularity of a Bill as being how many letters people write in support of or against it. The volume of mail I had in favour of retaining dog licences far exceeded my mail on the Abortion (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): No doubt my hon. Friend has not received many letters about the Bill, but I am sure that he can reassure the House that during the general election he put these proposals in his election material. Can he tell the House how many votes he received on the strength of that?

Mr. Carttiss: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that intervention. We had the biggest share of the poll that has ever been cast in the Great Yarmouth constituency for a Conservative Government — over 51 per cent. *[Interruption.]* As a former chairman of the Norfolk education committee and as a person who earned his living as a teacher in the town that I now proudly represent, I do not need letters from people telling me that the Bill is right.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): Has the hon. Gentleman been to the Library and read the responses to the consultation documents from teachers, parents and local education authorities? [HON. MEMBERS: "Vested interests."] There are not many people who are not parents, teachers or connected with LEAs. Those people encompass a large section of the population. Has the hon. Gentleman looked at those responses? What support is in them for the Bill and, in particular, this clause?

Mr. Carttiss: I have not read the responses in the Library, nor do I intend to do so. My role is to judge and reflect the views of the people who have sent me here, and I have no doubt what they are.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman *rose*——

Mr. Carttiss: I shall give way once more, but I must make my point on the clause rather than on the popularity of the Bill.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: Is my hon. Friend aware of the regrettable fact that the Lancashire education committee failed properly to notify many of the schools in our area so that they did not have an opportunity to respond? Half my district were informed by a good district education officer and they responded positively; the other half did not. The ones that have responded have had many of their anxieties carefully dealt with by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Carttiss: As a member of governing bodies, I have met parents and teachers individually, away from the pressures of their union leaders. Some teachers in my constituency have become more sympathetic to the objectives which my right hon. Friend has brought before the House as they have read and come to understand the legislation.

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary made an intervention from a sedentary position about knee-jerk responses. That is very much the attitude of the educational establishment, from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals down to the smallest branch of the National Union of Teachers. If the Government bring in a proposal to change what has been going on in education for a long time, it is automatically seen as wrong.

I am conscious that there is a guillotine — incidentally, I did not support it—so I want to conclude by referring to the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central. As the Bill has progressed, it has been recognised that it addresses what is in the forefront of a better education service. I have become more impressed and more readily persuaded by the depth of understanding of the Government Front Bench team. As an ex-teacher and a former local authority member, I had considerable reservations about various aspects of the Bill. As I have studied the proceedings in Committee, I have been more convinced that the reform will be welcomed.

I am still in difficulty about the provision which the Opposition seek to amend. If we believe that a national core curriculum should be introduced — that has been accepted with varying emphasis by Opposition Members — it should apply to all schools. I do not accept the arguments advanced by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) or the interventions of my hon. Friends the Members for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) who attempted to justify the exclusion of the independent sector from the national core curriculum.

I understand the arguments which have been advanced and I note of the distinction drawn by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury between schools provided by the state and schools provided independently. However, the notion that all independent schools offer children a wonderful education is not completely accurate in my experience. A significant number of private schools

[Mr. Carttiss]

need a shake. The idea that parents can take their children away from a school or will send them to a school only if they are satisfied that they will get the best education there is not always an accurate reflection of the reality which dictates a decision. Sometimes the decision to opt for a private school results from the abysmal failure of nearby local authority comprehensive schools. Therefore, let us not imagine that the practices which we are putting forward as appropriate are not already in existence in many state-maintained schools.

Many local authority schools will welcome the core curriculum being a national requirement which will be judged to be in the best interests of pupils. For that reason, I wonder whether my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will in due time consider the argument that there is merit in a national core curriculum being applied to the independent sector as well as to the whole of the maintained sector.

I support 100 per cent. the offer—not imposition—of a national core curriculum. It is a long overdue reform which would have been welcomed by many teachers 20 years ago when I started to teach. If anything is wrong, it is that the proposal is late. I think of all the pupils who missed the chance of having a national core curriculum. I welcome all of this. I hope that as the Bill progresses, we will consider the possibility of extending the core curriculum to the independent sector as well as to the state sector.

4.45 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The House will have listened with interest to the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) and particularly to the latter part of his speech. We shall watch with interest to see whether he has the stomach to follow his speech in the Division.

One of the most revealing aspects of the hon. Gentleman's speech was the perhaps unintended answer to the intervention by the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), who asked whether he had received any letters of support from parents for the Bill. The hon. Gentleman's reply was to ask whether the Labour party had received any support for nationalisation. It was a fair retort. Of course, the two answers are connected. There was very little support for nationalisation, which is why there is very little support for the national curriculum, which is nationalisation, as was revealed clearly by the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison).

The right hon. Gentleman made a remarkable argument. He said that independent schools should not be subject to what the Government insist on calling a national curriculum because they are not state schools. He thus revealed immediately that we are not dealing with a national curriculum which will apply to the whole nation but with a state curriculum. That is why it is so offensive.

The right hon. Member for Aylesbury hoped that we would get through the debate quickly. He would have that hope, because this is a sorry and distasteful example of partiality and double standards. In wishing to pass over it quickly, the right hon. Gentleman at least recognises the justifiable embarrassment to Conservative Members.

The right hon. Gentleman's third point was about independence. He said that independent schools should not have to adhere to the national curriculum, because they are independent. But at the very centre of the Government's argument on the Bill is that they are seeking to give independence and freedom to schools and to parents. Nowhere in the Bill is this more nakedly revealed as a fraud than in the fact that the Government will not give parents in the maintained sector the right and the freedom which are being given to parents in the independent sector.

They argue freedom on the one hand but if parents in the maintained sector vote to remove the schools in whole or in part from the national curriculum — not at the wish of the teachers, the head teachers, the governors or the ILEA — the Government will not give them that freedom. The Government argue that the Bill is all about freedom, but they display clearly that that standard does not bear up to close examination.

Mr. Rowe: The presence of the hon. Gentleman in the House shows clearly that he comes from an untypical part of the country. In my part of the country I have held meetings with the heads and governors of schools and have also addressed the Kent Association of Parent-Teacher Associations. Support for the national curriculum is widespread and is tempered only by an anxiety that it may be too rigorously and rigidly enforced.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman makes a fair point, and I shall deal with it in a moment. There is support for the concept of a national curriculum. I support it, as does the Labour party. There is genuine consensus on the matter, but the hon. Gentleman should not believe that there is consensus for the restrictive and narrow national curriculum, fed by dogma, that would be imposed on us by the Bill.

After long hours of debate with the Secretary of State, for the first time I feel a little sorry for him. He is in a highly precarious position. He is doing his best to steer a course between the good sense to which I believe he subscribes and the dogma that drives him from behind. As the hon. Member for Leeds, Central said, only last weekend the Centre for Policy Studies—the voice of the Conservative party—said that the national curriculum should be much more restrictive than the Secretary of State wants. The Minister of State who will reply to the debate, the hon. Member for Mitcham and Morden (Mrs. Rumbold), is the Prime Minister's commissar, foisted upon the Secretary of State to ensure that he preserves his ideological purity. We all know that.

I feel sorry for the Secretary of State because I know that, during the next three or four months, the ground will be subtly cut away from under his feet on the issue of the national curriculum. He will scramble back — his footwork is fast enough to do it—from the edge of the precipice to keep his feet firmly on a route to Downing street. But we shall watch the ground being cut away little by little, just as it has been in relation to other aspects of the Bill. It has happened with testing and with the Inner London education authority, and it will happen with the national curriculum. The Centre for Policy Studies has voiced the views and wishes of the Prime Minister. She will have her way, and the Secretary of State will be in an increasingly precarious position.

There is consensus among parents for a national curriculum. Indeed, most people who comment on such matters believe that a de facto national curriculum already exists, at least up to the age of 14. In an interesting

intervention, the hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame Kellett-Bowman) said that such a national curriculum exists in schools in her constituency. If the Secretary of State said, "We want a structure which will allow us, by issuing Department guidelines or by the many other means at our disposal, to encourage good practice and ensure a strong system," I would fully support him, but to lay down a national curriculum which can be altered only by Parliament is bound to place an inflexible structure on education which will damage it.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): The hon. Gentleman said that it is generally agreed that, up to the age of 14, there is a national curriculum. That may be true for most pupils in secondary schools, but it is not true for many children in the remedial streams of secondary schools—not statemented children or those in special schools—who are given a mish-mash diet of English and maths and lose out on the distinctive subjects which their fellow students enjoy. The national curriculum will help those students.

Mr. Ashdown: Those are important exceptions, but I ask the hon. Gentleman whether we should introduce a mechanism to solve the problems of a recalcitrant minority in a way that disadvantages the whole. I would argue not. For example, a national curriculum as constructed in the Bill would damage primary education terribly. With good reason, our primary sector is renowned throughout the world. It is probably at the forefront of primary education and is regarded by other nations as a model. That is because of the experimentation, innovation and development that is going on. But most of that experimentation and innovation will be brought to a cluttering halt by the imposition of a series of inflexible standards.

As we approach a period of change even greater than that which we have experienced until now, we cannot predict what will be required of the British educational system in the mid-1990s. We should encourage innovation and experimentation. Instead, we have a framework for a national curriculum which, far from being responsive to the needs of the day, can be altered only by Parliament. That cannot be sensible for our future education, nor can it be good for democracy—which, in a way, worries me even more.

Is it a good idea to put in place a national curriculum to overcome some of the lunacies of extreme Left-wing councils which would give a future Government — perhaps a Labour one — the power to dictate what happens in our schools? We know that the Secretary of State will not abuse the powers, but can we say honestly that those who follow him will not abuse them? I cannot say that, and Conservative Members cannot, with good conscience, say it either.

We should not look only to the future and make predictions. We should also cast an eye on the past, because such things have happened before. In 1904, Robert Morant tried to prescribe a national curriculum for secondary schools. His timetable set aside seven and half hours a week for mathematics and science, four and half hours for English, geography and history, and three and half hours for a language. There is some resemblance between that and the present position. But the proposal was a complete fiasco, and Morant himself was dropped in 1911. In a memorandum on school teachers that could have come from this Government, he referred to school teachers as

"uncultured and imperfectly educated . . . creatures of tradition and routine."

Even further back, the Bryce report of 1895 came to this conclusion:

"Education is a thing too intimately concerned with individual preference and private life for it to be desirable to throw the whole of it under Government control. It needs organisation, but it would be destroyed by uniformity; it is stimulated by inspection, but it could be crushed by a code."

Even before that, in 1862, Robert Lowe tried to establish a code of teaching and payment by results, but it was highly discredited and it failed.

The proposed national curriculum will not only damage education in the future but is a threat to pluralism in our democracy.

Mr. Raison: The hon. Gentleman said that a national curriculum would be a threat to pluralism, but the essential point of the debate is that the ability of the independent sector to be independent is a mark of pluralism which the hon. Gentleman seems happy to destroy.

Mr. Ashdown: The right hon. Gentleman takes me nicely on to my next point. The independent sector will be free to opt out of the national curriculum, if parents wish it. I do not want the independent sector to be brought within the enforced national curriculum of the maintained sector. I want the maintained sector to have similar freedom. I want to encourage pluralism—not to crush the independent sector under the national curriculum, but to give the maintained sector the freedom, which the Government say is at the heart of the Bill, to opt out should parents wish it. How can the Government argue in favour of parental choice and power and deny parents in the maintained sector the right to take that route? The fact that they do so exposes their double standards.

The Government's underpinning motive is grubby and discreditable. It is to place a different standard on "our people" in the state sector. Here I return to the words of Robert Lowe, which are extremely interesting. In his booklet "Primary and Classical Education", published in 1867 shortly after publication of the revised code of 1862, he said:

"I do not think it is any part of the duty of the Government to prescribe what people should learn, except in the case of the poor, where time is so limited that we must fix upon a few elementary subjects to get anything done at all . . . . The lower classes ought to be educated to discharge the duties cast upon them. They should also be educated that they may appreciate and defer to a higher cultivation when they meet it, and the higher classes ought to be educated in a very different manner, in order that they may exhibit to the lower classes that higher education to which, if it were shown to them, they would bow down and defer".

Those words should ring in our ears as we understand the Government's motives for their squalid, distasteful double standards.

5 pm

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): I may not be right, but I think that the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) has just quoted a Minister in a Liberal or Whig-Liberal Government. To have to dredge 120 years into history to criticise what this Government are doing demonstrates the thinness of his argument.

I did not have the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee that considered the Bill, and I apologise in advance if I go over some old ground. The Committee proceedings went on for so long that some ground must have been gone over several times already. I am

[Mr. John Maples]

wholeheartedly in favour of the Government's proposals, not because they are intended to raise standards but because I believe that they will raise standards of education and achievement, because of the two planks that I perceive in the policy. The first is creating some diversity among schools, a subject that we shall deal with in a debate later this evening. The second directly affects standards by means of the curriculum and testing, which are vital if we are to achieve higher standards. I agree with those who say that we must not put education in a straitjacket. That is not what the proposals will do. However, the present system is too free. There may be good practices in some educational authorities, but there are weak ones in others.

I want to give a few examples of the evidence, many of which come from my education authority—ILEA. ILEA is Labour educational policy writ large and one is entitled to use examples from it to show why so many Conservative Members are concerned about what is happening. After attending 200 science lessons in ILEA, HMI rated 40 per cent. as less than satisfactory and 15 per cent. as unbelievably bad. That is in an authority that spends a great deal of money on providing education, yet the standard of its science classes, which are so vital to our future, is apparently weak.

A recent survey of mathematics standards showed that the performance of pupils between 1964 and the mid-1980s had fallen at a time when nothing could have been more important than the mathematical skills that we need in a computer age. In Germany, 90 per cent. of 16-year-olds leave school with a higher school certificate in mathematics, German, a foreign language and two other subjects—five subjects in all. In England, fewer than 40 per cent. of school leavers manage to achieve the same standards. More than 20 per cent. of 16-year-olds leave three of the seven secondary schools in my constituency without one exam pass at CSE or GCE. In only one school did more than 15 per cent. of the pupils obtain five CSEs or GCEs. That is a serious problem to face. One can make all sorts of excuses about difficulties in inner cities but the fact remains that in only one of the seven schools in my constituency did more than 15 per cent. of 16-year-olds get five passes at GCE or CSE.

I have one or two other pieces of evidence. Of band 1 children in ILEA—the 25 per cent. who are supposedly the most able—only a third end up getting five O-levels or CSEs at 16. Another recent survey showed that 6 million adults have literacy or numeracy problems in adult life, which is compelling evidence of the problem with the standards being achieved in education. Our system is failing far too many children.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): Will the hon. Gentleman accept that the CSE exam was introduced on the criterion that it should apply only to the top 70 per cent. of children and that it was not designed for the least able 30 per cent? It is therefore a little hard to criticise a local authority in which 20 per cent. get nothing, when the exam was not designed to cater for those children.

Mr. Maples: I understand that. My point was that in only one of the seven schools in my constituency did 15 per cent. get five passes. Only one third of band 1 children get passes. If 70 per cent. of children were obtaining 5 GCEs or CSEs there would be no problem, but fewer than 15 per cent. are getting them in most schools.

I offer one or two diagnoses of the problems. I do not pretend to know all the solutions, but there is some evidence that our education system has expectations that are too low in too many places. It fails to challenge or stretch enough children. I give an example from an article that appeared in a Sunday newspaper about a year and a half ago. It was written by Bel Mooney, who admits that the idea of sending her child to a private school would have been laughable before her experience:

"I write as someone who laughed at the idea that I (of all people) would pay for my own children's schooling. But, as always, experience catches up with ideals and overtakes them. You realise this for the first time when your five-year-old comes home from primary school in the third term of his first year and to your motherly question, 'What did you do in school today, dear?' replies cheerfully, yet again, 'Oh, we played about with the Lego.' Time after time during that"——

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): What nonsense.

Mr. Maples: The hon. Gentleman does not like this, but it is exactly the sort of thing parents are worried about. He should listen to them, rather than the prejudices of his union.

To continue the quotation:

"Time after time, during that year I went to his class teacher and even to the headmistress of that school in south London and asked why he was not learning to read. I was told, with earnest good will, that I must not seek to 'push' my son, and that (this said with great sadness) it was a common failing amongst achieving middle-class British parents."

She then decided to put her child into a private school that she admitted was not particularly good:

"They tested him and said that on the basis of what he produced they would have classified him as backward, yet would still take him after Easter. I was warned that he would probably have to stay down a year in September. And? At the end of that one term he had caught up with the other boys sufficiently to move up with them. There was nothing wrong with my son's ability. It was just that he had been taught by woolly-minded ladies who believed that he was in a school to play creatively. In other words—my son had never been taught the basics."

I am aware that this is anecdotal evidence and I hope that the experience is not widespread. However, it motivated one well-known journalist to write an article in a Sunday newspaper and it expresses exactly the sort of worries that parents have. The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) should not mock it.

Mr. Flannery: I am not mocking it. The hon. Gentleman reads out a letter and proceeds to generalise about the entire system on the basis of a five-year-old coming home from school and saying that he played with Lego. If the hon. Gentleman judges an education system, or life in general, on a single aspect such as that, heaven help us. That is prejudice gone wild.

Mr. Maples: It is one of about 10 pieces of evidence that I have given. It was not a letter—it was an article in a popular, widely read, quality Sunday newspaper, written by Bel Mooney, who is a well-respected English journalist and not a card-carrying Conservative, as far as I know. The hon. Gentleman did, indeed, mock it in the yah-booing fashion of Opposition Members. If he does not take the concerns of parents seriously, he is missing the point.

Mr. Flannery: I do not take the hon. Gentleman seriously.

Mr. Marples: The cause of all this is the weakness in trying to ensure that education is a meaningful experience for children. Education is not, to use my right hon. Friend's phrase, something that washes over one. It is not something to be experienced, like a swim or eating a good meal. It requires study, concentration and effort on the part of the pupils, and motivation and challenge on the part of their teachers. Too often, that has been missing. It is not the fault of teachers: we have a bad education system in England. For some reason one is a swot for working hard in school, and far too often parents take the attitude that it is not worth their children's while getting a good education. We must change that, too.

A great deal comes back to what is happening in schools. Targets, motivation, ensuring that children learn their basics, and the ability to discover which children are not reaching certain standards, so that they can then be helped, should all be greatly facilitated by the national curriculum and testing. The new system will also set standards for teachers. The end result should be that pupils leave school with the skills that they need in their working lives in a world that is increasingly demanding more skills.

One of the main criticisms of the Bill is that it will be bad for children because it will make those performing less well feel inferior. That is dangerous nonsense. Children in a school know who is and who is not working hard; they know who is and who is not achieving. It is not fair on those who work hard not to demonstrate their success, any more than it is fair on those who do not achieve not to discover that they either need to try harder or that they need additional help. Parents are entitled to know how well their children are doing and whether they are reaching the desired standards in reading, mathematics and science. If they are, that is fine, but if they are not we must help them to reach those standards.

Those who criticise the proposals should consider a few other points. For example, is not testing part of the way that music is taught? Grades in music are objective tests, and the pupil must pass one before he can move on to the next. I have heard no one criticise that on the ground that it would make a child who could not pass grade 2 on his flute or piano feel inferior to fellow pupils who passed that grade.

It is interesting to note that the Inner London education authority, which finds little that is good in the Government's proposals, recently put forward proposals for regular reading tests to monitor the reading performance of children in its schools. It is amazing that it has taken ILEA so long to recognise the importance of reading in the curriculum. The ILEA press release refers to regular reading tests and a regular record of a child's achievement, which is very much what the Government are proposing. The chairman of the schools sub-committee said:

"The new measures will do much to raise standards and improve quality in Inner London schools. They will ensure that the progress of every child is systematically charted and that no child's needs are overlooked."

It is extraordinary that such a statement should come from ILEA, although I could not agree with it more. It should have followed that line many years ago. Yet the same people who now propose that system for ILEA criticise the Government's proposals and say that they are a dangerous departure, and those sentiments are echoed from the Opposition Benches.

An article by John Rae in *The Independent* on Monday shows the weakness of our attitude and the need for more robustness in the standards that we expect from our children. He reports a conversation with an official in a Japanese teacher's union:

"'Slow learner?'. The official from the Japanese teachers' union looked puzzled. Then he thought he understood what his western visitor was driving at 'You mean child not try harder.'"

There appears to be an ethic in education that it is bad to push children who are not doing well, yet often that is exactly what they need. It is not that their education ability is any less than that of their fellow pupils. We use that excuse too often as an alibi for the failure of children. I am not concerned about what our education system provides for bright children—they do all right. However, I am concerned that far too many average children are not reaching standards that they could reach were a little more attention paid to them and a little more pressure put on them. We are failing too many such children, and that failure is dangerous for our economy because we live in an increasingly competitive world where higher and higher levels of technical skill and ability are needed and fewer and fewer unskilled jobs are available.

Above all, the present system fails children as individuals; it fails to help them to develop their abilities and talents to the maximum so that they can enjoy the full range of their intellectual abilities, whatever they may be, in their life and in their work. We need to develop an ethic in education among teachers, parents and pupils that motivates children and ensures achievement. I believe that the Government's proposals will do just that.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Marples) because, in many ways, he articulated very skilfully the great unease about education felt by people throughout the country. He quoted what I believe is an exceptional case of a Sunday newspaper columnist, and then suggested that that reflected a level of unease which justified the introduction of the Bill.

I had 14 years experience of the classroom before I came to the House. Unlike the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss), who is also a teacher, I did not have the opportunity to chair an education committee. I taught pupils of all levels of ability and with a variety of gifts. They were not entirely academic pupils, although I taught O-level. I was also responsible for the development of children throughout their school lives—something beyond the curriculum and the school syllabus. Education is a total experience that goes beyond testable knowledge, important though that may be. It covers not only the classroom, but extends to so-called out-of-school activities.

5.15 pm

The hon. Member for Lewisham, West spoke about ethos in schools, the general sense of team work and the cohesiveness of the staff rooms, but all that was destroyed by the noble Lord Joseph. Of course everything is not right in education. I was a geography teacher and I wanted to teach night and day. I criticised my mathematics colleagues because they did not provide a mathematical breakdown and I wanted them to do certain calculations. I accept that I might be a little trad in that sense. If these matters are to be dealt with effectively in the classrooms between professional teachers, the Secretary of State must not introduce laws telling us what to do.

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

I do not claim for a moment that this is a matter only for the professionals, because they are accountable to other teachers, to parents and to governors. The sort of instances related by the hon. Member for Lewisham, West, should have been taken up by the parentzgovernors, discussed with teachers and a reasonable solution found. I do not come down in favour of either side of the argument about trendy teaching, and I understand why some people are uneasy. Yet the Secretary of State, in a way typical of this Government, has focused on a particular concern and said, quite illogically, "We must legislate" — and how. He is introducing into law the most authoritarian structure of education that this country has ever experienced — something that, 20 years ago, people would not have thought possible.

Perhaps our education system has gone too far in the other direction. The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) referred to certain people who have passed into history, when the secret garden was the curriculum. The system opened out in the 1960s. The problem is that there was never a secondary rationale. GCSE is a hybrid born of O-level and CSE, which in themselves were inadequate. Difficulties are inbred in the educational system. However, the Government's proposals will not do the trick. They will not provide a consensus; they will not provide the sort of curriculum that our young people need.

Clause 5 provides, in effect, that no school can teach courses other than those laid down by bodies that the Secretary of State approves under clause 7. I do not wish to trespass too far into a later debate, but the national curriculum may be put into the shade by the content of the syllabuses for the examinations arbitrarily laid down under clause 7 by order of the Secretary of State.

I do not necessarily say that the old O-level examination, or any other examination, was the last word. I had grave arguments with London university about the O-level geography syllabus. The nabobs of London university, with whom I claim equality as a professional geographer, believed it right that a pupil taking the O-level geography examination should not have detailed original knowledge of those parts generally referred to as the Third world. The London university people believed that such a person could pass the course with knowledge of the regional geography of only north America and Europe. I said that that was educationally irresponsible. As a Member of Parliament, I thought that it was wrong. They took no notice and went blithely on their way, as they had a right to do.

If that attitude could be taken independently by a prestigious London university, in the light of all the debate that occurs in the educational world, what would happen if an equivalent decision arose, which was given the imprimatur of the Secretary of State? I should be in trouble with the law if my school were "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd" by the syllabus, pressure of time and need to provide certain courses for the less bright pupils and I, as a professional, thought that students should follow a course which I thought was necessary for world citizenship.

It is not long since a headmaster of an elementary school, even in the London county council, could have been breaking the law if he taught his pupils French. Until 1944, elementary education was confined by statute to ideas similar to those of Robert Lowe, who said of his revised code, that if it would not be cheap, it would be efficient and if it was not efficient, it would be cheap. That was a narrow form of education for the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Thirty years ago I did as all students do and took up the current issues. We were all concerned with the Bantu education Act. The Eiselen report of the South African Government introduced Bantu education for the hewers of wood and the drawers of water.

The Minister of State smiles. She would say that any comparison between that wretched Act and this Bill is not on. It might not be on in terms of content, but it is in terms of authority. The Conservative party is dedicated to the destruction of the state and the reduction of state interference in personal lives where that is thought unnecessary. The Education Reform Bill, with all its clauses, provides for detailed administrative intervention in the process of education which has evolved, albeit in fits and starts, since 1944. This is massive interventionism.

I fear that the imposition of the national curriculum, which is inadequately described — I have tabled an amendment on this point, which will not be called because it is not regarded as relevant, although I claim that it is — will create administrative difficulty in schools. There will be difficulties in terms of the activity of the new National Curriculum Council and the new School Examinations and Assessment Council. How they will match up, heaven only knows. I am not talking from lack of experience. I gave evidence on these matters to the Newsom inquiry. The issue was dodged then, and it is still being dodged.

The difficulties which will ensue from the national curriculum will be in addition to the difficulties that exist now due to the too-hurried imposition of the GCSE. How will the GCSE, which will take another five years to settle down, mix with the Bill? The Bill is not only an ineffective and dangerous hybrid but creates a difficulty in that we must try and match up the GCSE flowering plant. There will be problems in all schools that are subject to the national curriculum.

The Secretary of State says that the problems will not be great. I suggest that they will arise irrespective of finance, although there will not be much of that from this Government. The problems will be in addition to the shortage of teachers and skills, which will create even greater difficulty in the so-called state schools. Some people will have no difficulty in persuading parents and those with proper aspirations for their pupils that if children go to state schools which have state teachers who operate a state curriculum, ordered by the Secretary of State, that will somehow be second-rate.

Certain independent schools may, rightly or wrongly — mostly wrongly — be given a boost. This may be an unintended effect of the Bill, but it is almost inevitable. The only proper way out is for the Secretary of State to accept the amendment or — this is the much more constructive approach — to tackle properly and professionally the problems that have been articulated by Conservative Members, rightly or wrongly, with or without exaggeration.

We cannot make people learn. We cannot fill them up like pots and expect them to disgorge knowledge. Important though that is, it is only part of education. The Government want us to do that, but there will be complications and difficulties for the professional teachers in front of classes. We cannot get people to learn just because we want them to do so. It is not like the Prime Minister getting Conservative Members to vote. There

must be a sense of offering, motivation, great subtlety and care. The Bill will make all that much more difficult. That is why it fails and why the amendment should be passed.

Mr. Anthony Coombs (Wyre Forest): It is remarkable to hear the Opposition attack the concept of the national curriculum on the ground of pluralism and say how unpopular it was. I shall show of how popular it was. In reply to the Government, the Labour party in Birmingham —which, sadly, is in control there—said that it agreed that a national curriculum was necessary to lay down a framework within which children could learn.

Equally, the Opposition ignore the evidence from Her Majesty's inspectorate. HMI reports, especially those over the past 10 years, have referred to the low expectations of teachers for their pupils. The reports mention the 14 per cent. of children who leave school without any qualifications. They say that variations in standards in schools depend primarily not on socio-economic factors but on the fact that in many local education authorities there is no clearly laid down and defined curriculum for each subject.

The HMI has estimated that two thirds of LEAs do not have properly laid down curriculum guidelines for their schools. Therefore, there is a danger of teachers in certain schools reinventing the wheel. There is a lack of parental confidence in the schools' objectives. Difficulties are caused for the one quarter of schoolchildren who switch between schools during their school careers, and expectations are lowered.

One of the Sunday newspapers contained an update on an inquiry which has been going on for the past seven years into 50 schools within the Inner London education authority, taking into account 2,000 children. I understand that Professor Mortimore, who wrote the update, used to be an adviser in ILEA. */Interruption./* He was the head of statistics within ILEA. Professor Mortimore found that the quality of school was more significant than socio-economic factors, age or other background as an effective determinant of school performance. For example, in reading, it was four times as significant as socio-economic factors and in mathematics 10 times as significant.

Professor Mortimore quoted, with some approval, the comments of David Hargreaves, who I understand is ILEA's chief adviser. Referring to pupils, Professor Mortimore said:

"Too many teachers excuse lack of achievement by focusing on their problems."

He was referring to their home problems. The report said that what was needed was a sense of mission, laid down by the head teacher. It said that a clear and disciplined framework was needed within which children should be taught every subject in the schools. That may seem an old-fashioned teaching approach but, in practice, it was found in ILEA schools to be the most effective one. The national curriculum seeks to lay down such a framework on a national scale.

Secondly, the report of the task group on assessment and testing was cited approvingly by a number of hon. Members in Committee. That report says clearly that assessment is inevitably part of the national curriculum:

"When assessment and testing are carefully aligned to the curriculum, as in Graded Assessment Schemes, one of the outstanding benefits that teachers report is the enhanced motivation of pupils."

The report went on to say that such arrangements also increased teachers' confidence in their professional development. We cannot have a graded and sensible system of assessment as laid down in the TGAT report unless we set it in the framework of the national curriculum provided by the Bill.

Thirdly, every European country of any size or significance has a national curriculum. Moreover, other countries lay down a detailed timetable for each subject in that curriculum. I recently attended an education conference in Vienna, at which we talked about the various curricula of schools. Questions were asked about how much of the school timetable was taken by the mother tongue, mathematics or science.

I was the only person at conference who, much to the mirth of my fellow participants, had to keep saying, "It varies; it depends on where you are; it depends on the school to which you are referring." The other participants did not believe that a responsible Government——

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): The hon. Gentleman gives an interesting account of the conference that he attended and argues the case for a national curriculum. Does he intend to develop that argument by voting for our amendment to extend the provision to independent schools?

Mr. Coombs: Opposition Members seem to be moving away from the idea of supporting a national curriculum on the ground that it creates a straitjacket that should not be countenanced in a pluralist system of education. I argue that other countries throughout Europe lay down clearly not only a national curriculum but a timetable allocating time to each subject. As a result, many countries — particularly Germany and Japan — are achieving standards in science and mathematics on average equivalent to those achieved by only a quarter of our best pupils.

Another recent report on international scientific standards shows that Britain, which ought to be leading the field, comes 11th or 12th out of 15 countries in the standards achieved by 14-year-olds in scientific subjects. That is not satisfactory. Appalling standards such as that are not good enough for a country of our stature.

The national curriculum will lay down a framework in which teachers will know what is expected of them — they will know the objectives to which they are expected to teach. That will provide the certainty necessary to the achievement of a good set of standards for education.

Mr. Mark Fisher (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): I shall not follow the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) in his plea for greater rigidity in the curriculum, and I suspect that it will arouse little sympathy among parents around the country.

I propose to spend two minutes asking the Minister of State whether she will address herself to the position of the arts in the national curriculum. The Bill represents a real danger to arts education. The foundation subjects are described as "music and art" rather than "the arts". I suspect that the Minister will define "art" as fine art. Therefore, the foundation subjects include only two art subjects. I fear that that will endanger other art forms in schools, such as dance, drama, film, video, photography and media studies. It will also endanger the small but growing number of very fine creative arts departments that are beginning to be established in some high schools.

I am sure that the Minister of State is only too well aware of the impact that dance education has had in the

[Mr. Mark Fisher]

past 10 years. Fostered by the Arts Council and some very enlightened education authorities, it has been responsible for creating an entirely new audience for dance—a very young audience across the country. It has been fostered by experiments such as the Dance Umbrella and has created audiences for the work of the Janet Smith group and others. The process has been engendered by the work of dance animateurs such as Veronica Lewis of the Arts Council with her Gulbenkian fellowship.

5.30 pm

Dance has also done much for equality in education. Boys have been encouraged to dance with girls, and that has broken down some of the rigid gender patterns in education. I fear that such developments in dance—and indeed drama—will be put at risk by the Bill because the subjects are excluded from the national curriculum and will presumably have to take their chance in whatever percentage of the school week is not included in the national curriculum.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) mentioned the importance of experimentation in relation to primary schools. Nowhere is experimentation more important than in arts education. Because arts education is a new and young branch of education, it is growing and changing all the time. Many high schools hardly have any arts education at all; others have very developed creative arts departments. However, all of them are experimenting. New forms such as film, video and media studies often capture the imagination of young people and are extremely satisfying to teach. They allow a whole variety of skills, interests and relationships to be explored in a way that is often extremely difficult in the classroom. Such pluralism and variety in education, which is most important, will be put at risk by the rigid and limited definition of the arts in the national curriculum.

The Minister of State will recall the Gulbenkian report on the arts in schools. That report made a plea not only for a wide range of arts provision in schools but for interdisciplinary methods in arts education. The report recognised that arts education goes to the core of education as a whole because it encourages and stimulates young people to think for themselves, express themselves and find a voice for themselves. It helps them to have confidence in putting their point of view and in relating to others. Those are the things—difficult for teachers to achieve in the classroom—that arts education does so well. A rigid definition including music and fine art alone could mean that many of those things will be lost.

The tragedy is that arts education, which is developing so well, is not widespread. As I said, many high schools have very limited arts departments. The national curriculum, about which I have many reservations, could have given us a chance to ensure that arts education made its presence felt and could make its proper contribution. Sadly, the Government did not take that opportunity. Instead, I fear that they will actually limit arts education.

It is still not too late. In another place, the Government could substitute the words "the arts" for "music and art" and allow schools to find their own way of interpreting them. Indeed, I hope that the work of the inspector would encourage the growth of interdisciplinary creative arts departments, which are put at risk by the rigid definition in the Bill.

Alternatively, the Government could consider amendment No. 443 and establish an arts education council that could co-ordinate and set standards in arts education and disseminate the good practice already in evidence throughout the country. The Secretary of State has an interest in literature; indeed, he has published anthologies of poetry. It is sad to think that by this narrow and rigid view of the arts—ignoring so much of the work that is happening—he will be setting arts education back. That is a tragedy.

While the Secretary of State can list the subjects and establish a national curriculum, he cannot make that list of subjects into an education. An education is something more wide-ranging, more intangible, and more important than the list of subjects in the Bill. The Secretary of State knows that. He knows that the arts have an invaluable part to play in finding a wider range of education. By limiting the arts solely to fine arts and music, I am afraid he is missing a great opportunity and is setting back education, particularly arts education.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I reject the idea that the national curriculum is somehow an infliction or imposition on pupils in maintained schools. I agree entirely with my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) that the word "imposition" is an amazing one coming from Opposition Members who claim, among other things, that they are in favour of some form of national curriculum.

Several people who belong to parties other than my own have said that the national curriculum was inevitable and that it was something that the country needed in order to bring a sense of rigour and purpose into our education system. Therefore, it is a positive and not a negative innovation that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is bringing forward in his Education Reform Bill. Its objective is to guarantee all pupils in maintained schools a broadly based and balanced curriculum that will prepare them for adult life.

I had a growing concern as I listened to the debate being developed by Opposition Members. I began to feel that they were almost complacent with the position as it is now. They seem to believe that schools are delivering the things that my right hon. Friend and I are seeking to do in the Bill. They said, "We do not need to introduce a national curriculum because it is already there. There is a broad consensus of subjects being taught in schools, so why come along with this Bill and put the national curriculum into legislation?" The hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) got very excited about that and suggested that putting the provision for a national curriculum into legislation would somehow be deleterious to what happens within schools.

Mr. Spearing: I am not against a broadly based consensus for a national curriculum. I am concerned that the legislation might tie down the syllabuses of examinations and courses to be taken in schools, as laid down by the Secretary of State, so that they cannot be changed even by governors. It is the combination of the two that is so dangerous.

Mrs. Rumbold: I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. I have to explain that the syllabuses will be determined through the National Curriculum Council and the Schools Examinations and Assessment Council and

will be brought to Parliament for examination under the parliamentary processes. There could hardly be any more protection than that provided in the Bill.

Mr. Fisher: The Minister justifies her Bill by saying that the schools are not providing the curriculum that parents now want. Can she tell the House which of the core or foundation subjects are not being taught in our high schools now?

Mrs. Rumbold: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman did not hear the excellent contribution made by my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples). He pointed out that an HMI inspection in his constituency showed that science teaching, which is one of the three core subjects for secondary schools, was appalling.

It is extremely important that one levers up the standard and that one sets a clear curriculum and clear syllabuses so that teachers are able to ensure that the students cover the scientific courses and that they are tested at regular ages so that their standards can be levered up. That is the way in which the national curriculum, the core and foundation subjects, will help the youngsters in our schools. I am sure that the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central genuinely wants to see improvements in the standards in our schools.

5.45 pm

Mr. Fisher: The Minister of State answered the point by saying that clause 3(3) will address the quality of education which was referred to by the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples). Clause 3 simply specifies number and type of subjects. Nothing in clause 3 will improve the quality of education and there is no way in which she has answered the point I put to her about which of the subjects is not being taught in our high schools now.

Mrs. Rumbold: I have to continue to say to the hon. Gentleman that this is the first time that we have ever put together in a reform Bill a clear set of subjects that we want all children to study. I have to tell the hon. Gentleman that not all children study all subjects that are set down in our Education Reform Bill. There is a raft of evidence to show that large numbers of children leave school without having studied many of the foundation or core subjects. *[Interruption.]*

I have to tell the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central, who is intervening from a sedentary position, that the school that he attended may have offered all children the sort of curriculum that we are offering now to children in the maintained sector. I know that the hon. Gentleman attended a school in the independent sector, because it is well recorded. It is extremely important that we lift the opportunity for 93 per cent. of our children to have the broad education that he experienced.

Mr. Fatchett: The Minister has tried to shift the ground of the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central (Mr. Fisher). She talked about standards and appalling provision, and we are all concerned about that. My hon. Friend asked which local authorities and which secondary schools are not providing the subjects referred to in the Bill and in the national curriculum. If the Minister cannot answer that now, will she provide the list in a letter?

Mrs. Rumbold: No, I will certainly not provide any such list in a letter. The majority of local education authorities somewhere or other in the country will be providing some of those subjects. The point is that the children will not be studying them. That is one of the difficulties we have been experiencing within the curriculum. It is one of the reasons why, after a great deal of debate, we have come to the conclusion that it is important to set out some criteria and some curriculum, foundation and core subjects, that will offer all pupils the opportunity of raising their attainments and of performing to the best of their capability, thus levering up the standards in our maintained schools.

I believed, obviously wrongly, that Opposition Members shared those objectives with us. Therefore, I am surprised to hear them run the age-worn argument that we are inflicting something on maintained schools which their children attend but leaving alone the schools that some people—a small percentage—choose for their children in the independent sector.

Perhaps it is possible that Opposition Members do not want pupils in the schools to which they send their children to reach the highest attainments. I cannot believe that. I cannot believe that they do not want to improve standards across the whole spectrum in the maintained sector. I want to believe that they want all pupils in the maintained schools to be guaranteed a balanced and broadly based curriculum in order to equip them for the multiplicity of opportunities and challenges that they will face in adult life.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): The Minister knows very well from all the debates we have had that we entirely endorse those objectives. However, if it is a national curriculum and not a state curriculum, why should it apply to my children but not to Cabinet Ministers' children?

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall come to that in a moment. I want to answer the points raised by the hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central.

Mr. Fisher *rose*——

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall answer the points raised and then return to the subject of independent schools, because I am happy to answer that.

The hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, Central raised an important point about the teaching of arts. He was concerned that art and music were the two subjects mentioned in the Bill. He went on to explain how important it is that art and music and the arts concept should be broader.

In our national curriculum there will be ample room for all children to participate in the other arts that he described so well. The national curriculum is expected to take up to about 70 per cent. of a child's time, and the other 30 per cent. of time will enable children to pursue other things such as dance and drama. There is no intention of confining arts to the fine arts. That is because guidelines will be expected to cover the creative and the performing arts, including dance where that is appropriate. As I am sure the hon. Gentleman knows, dance is an important part of physical education.

The hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Scott) was rightly proud of what happens in the schools in his constituency. They have a fine record of arts bias. One of the great successes of our schools is the way in which art and music have been developed. The hon. Member for Wigan asked for a reassurance that they will be allowed to continue in that way. There is no reason why the schools that are successful in the arts should not be able to continue to pursue them.

Mr. Flannery: I should like to ask a question about special needs and the curriculum. The hon. Lady will tell us why the national curriculum will not extend to private education. In Committee we tabled amendment No. 66 to try to waive to some degree the national curriculum in relation to the 18 per cent. of children with special needs who were not statemented, but we made no headway with the amendment. We wanted it partially waived because, although it is totally waived for children in private schools, all head teachers would want to waive the curriculum in order to give some teaching in special subjects that are not in the curriculum.

Mrs. Rumbold: I am a little surprised at the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) raising this matter, because we spent some time yesterday discussing it. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said quite clearly that there would be considerable flexibility in relation to children with special needs and special schools. We are offering benefits to pupils in maintained schools because by not imposing penalties we are guaranteeing them the freedom of a broadly based education. That will enable them to make the most of their abilities and they will have real choices about the pattern of their adult lives. We are offering parents the information they need about the performance of schools in their area so that when it comes to choosing a school they will know how each school is doing by its pupils.

The Opposition and, in particular, the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) were concerned about primary education. The hon. Member for Yeovil said he thought that the national curriculum would constrain primary education. I do not agree. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) spoke about small schools in rural areas. He said that there would be some concern about whether it would be possible to deliver the national curriculum in those schools. I entirely agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman), who said that some of the very small rural schools provide the best of education. Certainly they will be quite capable from day one of providing from the national curriculum the education that pupils will need.

The hon. Member for Yeovil quoted the case of Sir Robert Morant. He was the permanent secretary to the Board of Education and his views on teachers were leaked in a brown envelope. Sadly, that led to his enforced resignation in 1911. I am sure that the House is happy that the hon. Member for Yeovil asked about that.

The Opposition ask why we do not offer the pupils of independent schools and their parents all the benefits that we are offering children in maintained schools. I am glad to see that the Opposition are now so solicitous about the quality of the education that is provided by independent schools. Sadly, that was not the case in 1978, when they withdrew the system of recognition as efficient.

That was a pity, because one of the protections for the independent schools is that we send our inspectorate into them. The main feature about independent schools is that they are independent. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) was right when he said that the Government's responsibility is to ensure that the schools that are maintained by public money offer the education that pupils need.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): May I be encouraged by my hon. Friend's last words to expect recognition to be restored?

Mrs. Rumbold: I note my hon. Friend's intervention. The discipline on independent schools is largely that of market forces. Parents are free to send their children to them if they wish, and that is a fundamental freedom. They will do so only if the education offered by independent schools is what they want for their children. That is the discipline of market forces, and it is a real discipline.

Mr. Straw: We understand the Minister's argument, even if we do not altogether agree with it—that parents should be free to choose the type of education they want for their children. What happens if they cannot afford to buy their way into education?

Mrs. Rumbold: That is exactly what the Bill is about. It is about introducing opportunities for choice within the state sector and for state schools to compete with each other and to offer children and parents the highest standards. That is an extremely worthy ambition, but there may well be a need and a place for an independent sector that people may choose if that is what they want for their children.

The benefits of the national curriculum are increasingly being achieved in maintained schools. Moreover, representatives of the independent schools have been to see me to say that they are very interested in what is happening under the national curriculum. They recognise that we frequently have cross-traffic between the independent sector and the maintained sector. Therefore, it is important for the independent schools to take that on board and note what is happening in the maintained schools so that this cross-traffic may continue.

Mr. Ashdown *rose*——

Mrs. Rumbold: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way, because I know that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central wishes to come in.

The less good independent schools will have to make changes if competition from the maintained schools is not to drive them out of business. That is the best guarantee that, when the Bill ultimately succeeds in making the maintained schools so good, the independent schools will be quick to spot it. They will then spur themselves to look not only at the content of the national curriculum, but also at the kind of competition that they will face because of improvements in the maintained sector.

That is not to say that any privately funded body should be compelled by my right hon. Friend to run its schools in a certain way. His only compulsion in that regard is where the education is deemed by his inspectorate not to be efficient and effective. I do not accept the amendment.

Mr. Fatchett: The reply by the Minister of State was confused, even by her normal standards. She tried to confuse and mislead the House by suggesting that the Labour party is against higher standards. Nothing could be further from the truth. She tried to suggest that the Labour party is not in favour of an agreed core curriculum, but it was Labour that put that proposal to the electorate last June. How can the Government say that, when during their period in office they have cut resources from central Government to education by 20 per cent. in real terms? If they believed in education, they would invest in it. The Minister's only response to the argument about the state curriculum is to incant the phrase that the schools "are independent." They are not

independent, because section 71 of the Education Act 1944 allows the Secretary of State to supervise and control them.

We believe in a national curriculum; the Government believe in a state curriculum. We believe that there is a need to extend and to improve standards for all; the Government believe in privilege. The Bill is about privilege, and the Government are about privilege. The Minister would have done better if she had had the courage to tell the House the truth and say that all she was doing was defending privilege and the status quo. That is what the Tory party and the Government are about, which is why we shall divide the House on the amendment.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 199, Noes 304.

Division No. 228] **[6 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Hefler, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leator, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl'ts)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry

Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 2

The National Curriculum

Sir Hugh Rossi (Hornsey and Wood Green): I beg to move amendment No. 75, in page 2, line 6, leave out from 'comprises' to 'specifies' and insert

'religious education and other core and foundation subjects and, with the exception of religious education'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 224, in page 2, line 6, leave out

'the core and foundation subjects'

and insert—

'religious education and other core and foundation subjects and, with the exception of religious education,'.

No. 25, in clause 3, page 2, line 26, after '(a)', insert 'scripture'.

No. 22, in clause 3, page 2, line 26, after 'technology', insert 'religious education,'.

No. 77, in clause 4, page 3, line 32, at end insert—

'(c) to arrange that within the provision of the national curriculum, there is flexibility and scope for the governors of voluntary schools to promote and develop the distinctive ethos and character of their schools'.

No. 76, in clause 4, page 3, line 33, at beginning insert—

'Save for religious education (the arrangements for which shall be as required by sections 25-30 and section 77 of the 1944 Education Act),'.

No. 367, in clause 6, page 4, line 35, at end insert—

'(3) It shall be the duty of each local education authority to establish and maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education, in accordance with its powers under

Section 29(2) of the 1944 Act, in order to monitor and support the teaching of Religious Education in the Local Authority's area and act as a conduit for representations as provided for in Section 15 of this Act.'

No. 368, in clause 6, page 4, line 35, at end insert—

"(3) It shall the duty of each local education authority to convene a statutory conference, when requested to do so by their Standing Advisory Council, for the purposes of paragraph 12 of Schedule 5 of that Act, and at least once every 12 years.'.

No. 369, in page 4, line 35, at end insert—

'(3) Each Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education shall annually produce a report for their parent local education authority.'.

No. 78, in clause 17, page 12, line 21, at end insert—

'(11) This section shall not apply to an aided or special agreement school where the governors have published a figure of admissions which is less than the standard number in the interests of preserving the school's religious character'.

No. 79, in clause 19, page 14, line 49, at end insert

'or having regard in the case of an aided or special agreement school to the need to maintain its religious character and to the willingness and ability of the governors to meet the financial liabilities arising from the standard numbers'.

Sir Hugh Rossi: I wish to speak to amendments Nos. 75 to 79 which stand in my name and the names of my right hon. and hon. Friends.

The purpose of amendment No. 75 is to establish religious education as a core or foundation subject but in such a way as to allow for differences in treatment from other core and foundation subjects. In particular, the amendment excludes religious education from the national machinery of attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of clause 2.

In place of those provisions, amendment No. 76 proposes that for county and controlled schools the existing arrangements laid down for religious education in sections 25 to 30 and section 77 of the Education Act 1944 shall continue. In other words, for those schools the character of religious education remains to be determined by locally established agreed syllabuses and for aided and special agreement schools by the governors and religious authorities who own or are in charge of the schools.

Amendment No. 77 requires that the governors of voluntary schools be able, within the national curriculum, to promote and develop the distinctive ethos and character of their schools. In other words, it asks for recognition that religious education is something more than a single timetable subject with a given number of school periods allocated for it. Its teaching should pervade and influence the entire syllabus.

6.15 pm

Amendments No. 78 and 79 in a sense follow naturally from that. They are offered in the alternative but with a common objective—the ability of governors of aided or special agreement schools to prevent the religious character of their schools from being changed by the statutory requirement to admit up to a standard number of pupils. In theory, under present legislation, the intake of such schools is governed by agreements between Church authorities and local education authorities. In fact, for reasons of their own, local education authorities have entered into relatively few such formal agreements, resulting in something of a stand-off situation.

The requirements in the Bill that schools should admit up to a standard number of pupils creates an entirely new situation and would leave protection of the denominational character of Church schools to the good will of the local education authorities, which I hardly think was in the mind of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State when the Bill was drafted. Unamended, the Bill could place intolerable burdens on Church authorities to incur expenditure in maintaining places not required to meet the needs of their own communities. Amendment No. 79, in particular, seeks to take care of the question of financial burden.

Closely related to those questions is that of the possible change in character or ethos of voluntary schools and the difficulties that could arise for Church authorities seeking to maintain a viable network of schools for their communities as a whole if individual schools are able to withdraw too easily from the maintained sector. The Church authorities do not seek a right of veto, but they feel that the burden should be heavier than it is under the Bill, both with regard to the voting majority and the way in which it is calculated and with regard to the need to give due weight to the overall demands of the national education provision that they seek to make.

The last two matters are covered not by these amendments but by two amendments which unfortunately were not selected but which are part and parcel of the case in relation to the position of denominational schools in our educational system. I hope, therefore, that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will spare a sentence or two to reply to those aspects.

All these issues will be familiar to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, as the Church authorities have made their anxieties known widely and publicly but also personally to my right hon. Friend. There is thus no need for me to argue the merits of the case at great length. The fact that Opposition Members have tabled amendments in virtually identical terms shows the common source of my amendments and those in other names.

Mr. Straw: Divine intervention?

Sir Hugh Rossi: No one claims that, but it is clear that there is wide support throughout the Chamber for the proposals that I have put forward.

On the question of religious education, as I understand it there is no difference in principle between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the Church authorities. Indeed, he felt that he had done all that was necessary by leaving the provisions of the 1944 Act in place and strengthening them by the declaration in clause 1(2)(a) about

"the spiritual, moral . . . and cultural development of pupils".

I believe that he said publicly that the Church authorities were being unduly anxious and that they had not followed through his real intent. It appeared that his overriding consideration was to avoid his own responsibility, either directly or through the lay councils, for the content of religious education, which would be the case if religious education were simply a core or foundation subject under clause 3.

The amendments have been framed in a particular way to avoid the Secretary of State having to assume that responsibility, which he does not want, and at the same time upgrading religious education as a subject in the education system. The Church authorities believe that by not including religious education as a core or foundation subject, the Bill is playing down its importance. Religious

[Sir Hugh Rossi]

education would be forced to compete with a range of optional subjects for limited classroom time and, in county schools, for resources. The Church authorities also feel that there is no effective means in the Bill of implementing the obligations that are carried over from the 1944 Act.

Perhaps of greatest importance to the Church authorities is their belief that religious education is not a single timetable subject, but the foundation of an entire educational process. If the values imparted by religious education are to be of importance and to be understood by pupils, they should pervade the whole of the syllabus, and inspire and unify every aspect of school life. In the light of that outlook, although clause 1(2)(a) appears to meet the requirement, the words "spiritual" and "moral . . . development" are not given any real substance in the Bill and rise little above the level of a pious platitude.

It is for that reason that I urge on my right hon. Friend these amendments concerning the content of religious education in schools, as a matter of great importance to the Church authorities and in accordance with principles with which he does not disagree, but which those outside the House feel are not given sufficient emphasis in the Bill as it is drawn at present. The object of the amendments is to try to give effect to an agreement that apparently already exists between my right hon. Friend and the Church authorities. I hope that if the wording proposed is not absolutely perfect in the way in which it is drafted or in the way in which the amendments are introduced, they nevertheless carry with them sufficient of the agreement that exists to enable my right hon. Friend to say that he accepts them, in principle, in the spirit in which they are being proposed.

The question of intake into schools is again extremely delicate. There is a real fear among the Church authorities about the requirement for standard numbers. They feel that there should be more in the Bill than there is at the moment to ensure that they can protect the character of their schools from being changed by their being obliged to take in pupils of different denominations, religions and faiths, or of their becoming financially responsible for the education of those to whom they do not have the same degree of responsibility as they have towards the children of the members of their Church.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will have given a sympathetic hearing to what has been said and that he does not make it necessary for me to seek to press the House to a Division on any of my amendments.

Mr. A. E. P. Duffy (Sheffield, Attercliffe): I hope that the Secretary of State will accept the amendments of his hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) in the spirit in which they have been presented, and that he will especially bear in mind the hon. Gentleman's closing remarks about the problems of school admissions. I shall not say another word about that, because I have no doubt that the Secretary of State is now familiar with the problems that undoubtedly arise in our society through admissions to schools. I am sure that he will appreciate the need, as it is seen by a considerable section of our society, to preserve the character of certain schools.

I wish to speak directly to amendment No. 224 in the names of my hon. Friends and myself, which relates specifically to the place of religious education. It seeks to establish religious education as a core subject, but to allow for the difference between its position and those of other core and foundation subjects. The amendment recognises that religious education need not be subject to the national machinery of assessment targets—it is hoped that the Secretary of State will accept that—or to programmes of study or assessment arrangements. Indeed, there is agreement with the Secretary of State that such criteria are unsuitable for religious education, the character of which is determined either by locally established agreed syllabuses for county and controlled schools or by the governors and religious authorities for aided and special agreement schools.

Without the sort of provision for which we are looking to the Secretary of State, religious education, formerly the sole compulsory subject, is left as a required subject but without any perceived status. What, in common estimation, confers status is not whether a subject is compulsory but whether it is seen to be of sufficient significance or importance to be within the core and foundation of what is to be studied. Moreover, status carries with it certain practical implications — for example, resources, availability of INSET training, encouragement to follow courses, and so on. I stress that without accepted status, religious education in county schools will be in great difficulties.

I should like to speak in a more personal vein and in the context of the schools with which I am most familiar but which I do not necessarily prize most — Catholic schools. Catholics believe that religious education is not one subject among many, but the foundation of the entire education process. They are not alone in seeking to base education on the knowledge of Christ and his teachings.

Such schools, which range across the denominations, have long been dedicated to the education of the whole person. Therefore, the curriculum is seen as all-embracing and providing for spiritual as well as aesthetic and creative development.

6.30 pm

However, those objectives do not apply exclusively to Catholic schools or to Christian schools. The beliefs and values that are sought through such a curriculum today inspire members of many faiths who similarly seek not only their expression but their unity through every aspect of school life. They believe, as I know from representations that I have received from them, that the Bill's preamble, which requires all schools to promote pupils' spiritual and moral development, is unlikely to be fulfilled unless the House endorses the amendment that was moved by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green.

Mr. Anthony Coombs: In supporting the amendment tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi), I should like to urge upon the Government my amendments Nos. 367 and 369.

There must be few times in recent history when it has been more crucial to strengthen the spiritual and moral understanding and sense of self-responsibility that good religious education can bring. Nowadays, too often in our schools we hear of truancy at rates approaching 40 per cent. We hear from the Professional Association of Teachers of 80 per cent. of teachers who have been verbally abused by children and one third who have even been physically attacked. Too much emphasis is placed on television and fast food values. A survey of 15-year-olds in Cleveland only 12 months ago showed that no less than

two thirds thought that there was little or nothing wrong with acts of vandalism. Finally, there is a Government inquiry on school discipline. Plainly, we have a society that is looking for a spiritual and moral lead. Christian-based religious education should play an important role in giving that lead in our schools.

The fact that religious education needs strengthening is not in doubt. The Pope has said that in Catholic schools religious education is the core of the core curriculum. More generally, the Secretary of State said in Crawley on 11 December last year:

"What the vast majority of children have been utterly starved of are the riches of the spirit. Their ignorance of the historic faith of this country, a faith which has inspired and guided so many of its greatest men and women, is a national disgrace".

That is despite the fact that sections 25 to 29 and schedule 5 to the 1944 Act gave a clear and unequivocal duty to local education authorities and ultimately the Secretary of State to teach religious education. Sadly, it must be said that the 1944 Act has been a cipher. It has failed schools and religious education. Sadly, its tenets have been practically ignored.

Let us look at the facts. Where religious education is taught, at the most it takes up one lesson a week. The religious education statistics bulletin for last year shows that 62 per cent. of fourth-year children and 58 per cent. of fifth-year children are not taught any religious education. There is a lack of specialist teachers of religious education and as a result a lack of pupils taking examinations. Too often in our schools religious education has degenerated into comparative religion and even into humanism. In another place, Baroness Cox called it

"a kaleidoscope of shallow ideas about myriad belief systems".—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 26 February 1988; Vol. 493, c. 1456.]

It is not religious education at all.

It is significant that Mr. Mustapha, the chairman of the Moslem Teachers Association, went into a school that he was inspecting because he was an adviser and heard the head teacher say, "We do not mention Jesus in this school. We mention only God." Mr. Mustapha was so shocked that he went and told his imam. The next Saturday, in the central mosque in London one heard Moslems saying prayers to improve the respect for the place of Jesus Christ in British schools.

Sir Hugh Rossi: Is my hon. Friend aware that in the Inner London education authority the great religious emphasis this year is on the fact that it is the year of the dragon?

Mr. Coombs: Indeed I am. I could talk further about ILEA. It has the idea that "worship" is "worthyship", so it has more to do with community values than with religion. That gives one an idea of how wide of the mark the teaching of religious education has become in inner London schools.

In short, as the Association of Christian Teachers said, religious education

"is safe in the Statute Book; it is not safe in the schools."

It is on the way that it achieves that jump from the statute book to schools that this Act of Parliament will be judged. Of course I appreciate that clause 1 refers to spiritual and moral development, and clause 6 refers to section 25(2) of the 1944 Act, although we should be talking about the whole of section 25. Clause 15 establishes a specific complaints procedure of which religious education should be able to take advantage.

The Bill recognises the importance of religious education, but there are two major problems. The first is that if religious education is not a foundation subject, there is a danger that, in practice, because it will not be assessed and may therefore not be examined, it may be practically marginalised in schools. I admit that I find unconvincing the arguments against including religious education as a foundation subject, arguments which have recourse to the virtues of localism and worries about cutting across the degree syllabus in voluntary schools. I have tried to convince religious education teachers, but I have had to come to the conclusion that eventually we shall have a nationally agreed syllabus, which will be predominantly Christian-based, for religious education. Religious education teachers in our maintained schools will be able to agree on that.

Mr. Frank Cook (Stockton, North): I am listening carefully to what the hon. Gentleman is saying. Does he not appreciate that he identified one of the problems created by the 1944 Act when he quoted the instance of the head teacher saying that his school did not refer to Jesus Christ but referred to God? Yet in acknowledging the problems created by the agreed syllabus ethic, he seemed to suggest that we should maintain the milk-and-water, dilettante, nondescript pact that we have had since 1944.

Mr. Coombs: All that I am suggesting is that religious education should be predominant and Christian-based, but as with the Christian virtues, it should display tolerance and knowledge of other religious beliefs. That is containable within a nationally agreed syllabus and I believe that eventually we shall reach that position.

Given the fact that my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green has moved an amendment that strengthens the position of religious education outside but alongside the national curriculum, I shall be happy to support it.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): The hon. Gentleman may be right in his argument and it is not for me to judge accordingly, but he referred to the need for religious education and the tolerance that it would instil. Is it not a fact that in Northern Ireland there is no lack of education on both sides of the sectarian divide? Is there any evidence that that form of religious education, which may be right—I am not criticising it—has instilled tolerance, understanding and above all respect for human life?

Mr. Coombs: I believe that that is totally irrelevant to the situation in British schools and that that type of intervention debases our discussions.

The second problem that currently faces religious education is the gap between law and practice. Schedule 5 to the 1944 Act only allows for conferences to be set up by local education authorities on a statutory basis to revise the agreed syllabus. There is no regular review mechanism allowed for in the 1944 Act. My amendments would mean that religious education teaching was permanently monitored by standing advisory councils for religious education, on a multi-faith basis, within local education authorities. The councils would act as conduits for complaints about religious education under clause 15 of the Bill.

[Mr. Coombs]

My amendments would also ensure that there was a maximum period of 12 years within which revisions of the agreed syllabus would have to take place. They would also ensure that the standing advisory councils would report annually to the LEAs on matters such as examination take-up, the time allocated in schools for religious education, teachers' qualifications and so on.

The councils would establish a committed, knowledgeable, permanent driving force within LEAs to ensure that religious education was properly and adequately taught. Whatever fine words we may place on the statute book, good religious education, which will bring tremendous benefit to pupils, depends upon detailed follow-up matters such as teacher training, recruitment and school priorities. The permanent standing councils for religious education would be designed to achieve such objectives.

The Bill, if successful, will present a unique opportunity to improve standards of education, not just in an academic, vocational or technocratic sense, but in a spiritual and moral sense. If the Bill does that, it will exceed everyone's wildest expectations and will provide a tremendous boost to educational standards in this country.

Mr. A. J. Beith (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I support the intentions of the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) who has tabled the amendment and I hope that his efforts and the efforts of others will lead to some new development in Government thinking, perhaps announced today. I hope that the amendment will ensure that this matter is given a great deal of attention when the Bill proceeds to the other place. I am glad to have the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith), who is a prominent Unitarian—the Free Churches are to the fore on our Bench today.

There is widespread concern about the state of religious education in maintained schools—that concern extends beyond churches to many parents. They want to see a firm foundation of religious education available in the schools and they increasingly complain when they do not find that. An understanding of religion, especially the Christian religion, is essential to an understanding of the society, history and heritage of these islands. Such religious understanding is also essential to appreciate the breadth of human experience and the way in which people's lives have been motivated and affected by their religious beliefs.

Religious education is widely sought by parents as a framework within which their children can grow up. It is one that those children may reject or maintain as they choose as they grow up. Indeed, religious education has never prevented children from taking a different course. There are many stories of those who have in later life rejected the religious education of their childhood and adopted a different approach to religion. However, many of those who have changed their approach to religion have been thankful for the particular religious foundation they originally received.

It would be wrong to assume that the proper re-establishment of religious education in our schools would lead to some form of pietistic docility within children. Some people on the Right assume that such teaching will lead children to accept completely the decisions presented to them from the powers that be on earth. It is just as likely to lead young people to challenge increasingly aspects of our existing society and to develop a radical approach to what should happen within it. It is for them to choose and decide on the basis of their religious education.

Should religious education be wholly Christian-based? In that connection one should think of a character in one of Fielding's novels, Parson Thwackum, who said:

"When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion but the Church of England."

There is no place for such arrogance in our assumptions about religious education. Such education should be broader and more tolerant than that described by Parson Thwackum.

6.45 pm

We should enthusiastically recognise that we live in a multicultural society. That does not mean that the place of Christianity in our religious education should be diluted or reduced. The fact that we have so many black-led Churches, together with Christians from different cultural backgrounds and such a strong Moslem presence, underpins religious education and has increased the demand for it to be effective and strongly based. Even if we were not a multicultural society, it is important that children should have an understanding of the approach taken to religion in other societies.

Such understanding, however, should not mean that there is no longer a firm, credible basis for understanding Christianity. We would be doing a disservice to the people of our community if they did not understand the basis of the religion that has predominated in these islands for so many centuries. Many people in other religious groups recognise that and would not wish the religious education in maintained schools to fail to provide a proper grounding and understanding of Christian religion.

The extent of the concern that now exists is illustrated by the dramatic change that has taken place over the years. At the beginning of this century Nonconformists and Liberals—at that time, for many purposes, they were almost identical groups — were rebelling vigorously against Church of England schools. They refused to pay their rates, they were sent to gaol and in some instances they had their property distrained. They did not want to have imposed upon them or pay for a wholly denominational system of religious education. They fought to have a county school in every village so that they were not required to send their children to a church school where the religious education was based on the catechism of the Church of England. My party was helped to win the 1906 election with such a resounding majority because of the sheer strength of feeling among Nonconformists about religious education.

Today there has been a profound change. Many Nonconformists willingly send their children to Church of England schools; many Nonconformists and members of the Church of England willingly send their children to Roman Catholic schools. They do so because they want some religious basis in the education of their children and they feel that that basis has been diluted within the maintained sector.

Now there is a willingness on the part of Christians of different denominations to cross the denominational divide in search of a Christian-based education; that illustrates the gap that has opened up in parts of the maintained system. It also reflects a growing recognition

within the Christian denominations that the things we have in common are more important than the things that divide us.

At the heart of the argument is the core curriculum. Many people believe that the dominance of the core curriculum will, like it or not, be such as to push religious education to the margin. The pressures on schools are such that it seems extremely likely to happen. Therefore, I believe that religious education should be part of that core curriculum even though I prefer a pattern of local determination regarding the content of the religious education syllabus. Indeed, I was unhappy about the core curriculum from the start because of the centralisation involved. If there is a core curriculum the absence of religious education from it is likely to be to the detriment of such education and likely to marginalise it.

That leads me to believe that we must consider seriously the case for including religious education in the assessment procedures which are developed. My hon. Friends have criticised those procedures, but if they are there, the exclusion of religious education from them opens up the risk that because it is not assessed it becomes less important.

Unless we find an alternative way—and in this we look to the Secretary of State who has said that he regards religious education as important — to assert the importance of religious education in the curriculum, we may have to consider the pattern that he sees as the pattern which makes other things important in the curriculum, and through which resources will be concentrated. There is a real fear that religious education will have to jostle with many other worthy and necessary subjects which are excluded from the core curriculum.

Some of the same considerations apply to voluntary schools, but there are also special considerations which apply to Catholic schools, Church of England schools and schools founded by Nonconformists. In those schools there is a strong desire to safeguard religious education, perhaps through the core curriculum procedure or some other, so that it is not squeezed out. However, these schools particularly do not want their religious education provision centrally determined, to the exclusion of the rights and responsibilities of the managers and trustees of the schools. The members of the Churches have invested a great deal of money, time, energy and effort in the development of their school systems, and for them to be robbed of the ability to influence religious education would be wrong. In their view that component is not just one subject on the timetable; it is the influence of religion on the life of the school.

Voluntary schools are also worried about the possibility of a total change in the character of the school which could be brought about under the admissions procedures. That is a legitimate fear. They are worried about the effect of the opting-out procedures on an investment in which they have entrusted so much over the years.

The voluntary sector of education is an important partner. As I said earlier about Nonconformists, it is a partnership which is widely supported. It is no longer some sort of exclusive ghetto; it is a sector to which many parents turn because it provides some of the values in education that they feel are missing from the state sector.

Our ideal is that there should be proper provision of religious education in state schools and that the voluntary sector should have the opportunity to develop and safeguard the investment it makes in those schools. There are genuine and deeply felt anxieties on those issues and I hope that the Secretary of State will answer them tonight. If he does not, not only will hon. Members feel that they should support the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green, but they will feel even more strongly that the other place should consider the matter carefully.

Mr. Raison: I agree with a great deal of what the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) said.

Amendment No. 75 remains strictly unnecessary. Having written many letters to my constituents explaining that it is unnecessary because the safeguards being sought are already in the Bill, I certainly acknowledge that my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) made an eloquent speech, as always. If it makes people happy to have his formulation written into the Bill, I would have nothing against it. It would not even begrudge the time spent writing all those letters. There is a good case for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to listen sympathetically to what my hon. Friend has said. In effect, he seeks a symbolic reaffirmation of the place of religion in our schools.

My amendment No. 25 seeks to include scripture among the foundation subjects and it is an alternative to my hon. Friend's amendment. There are basically two reasons why we should think about scripture when we think about these matters. The first reason was touched on by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed: our scripture is a crucial part of our culture. I tried to include in the criteria set out in clause 1, which is meant to govern the whole of our educational system, a criterion saying that the curriculum should help

"to transmit the best in British culture from one generation to the next."

I am sorry that we have not had a chance to debate that, but perhaps the other place may select such an amendment.

If we can include the notion of scripture in the Bill, we can help to remedy that gap. Hon. Members will recall that when T. S. Eliot was writing his notes "Towards a Definition of Culture", he said that he regarded religion as being the essence of culture. I would not go as far as that, but it is wholly impossible to understand British culture without a knowledge of the Bible and, I would add, the Book of Common Prayer. Those are the two greatest prose works in the English language and any child who grows up under an educational system which does not give him experience of them is significantly deprived.

Mr. Cormack: I entirely agree with everything my right hon. Friend says. Does he agree that it is indeed important that those who teach the scriptures believe what they are teaching? At the root of the problem in many schools, excluding Roman Catholic and Church of England schools, is that those who teach religion do not believe in what they are teaching.

Mr. Raison: As a generalisation, I accept that. It would be desirable, but I would still rather have children exposed to the scripture by honest teachers who do not necessarily believe profoundly in religion, than not exposed. It is a cultural experience.

My second reason for including scripture is that it is at the heart of religion, so it should be firmly at the heart of religious education. Far too often, scripture is not at the heart of it.

[Mr. Raison]

We recognise that all the great religions have their great books and that they need interpretation. I am not simply suggesting that we should read the Bible and stop there. Such books need both interpretation and to be applied to the world in which we live. Nevertheless, without a firm basis in scripture, or the other essential books of other religions, religious education can easily degenerate into a cosmic waffle which does no good to anybody. It can be a type of subjective interpretation of good words without even as much as a nod in the direction of faith. Religious education should, if possible, include some exposure to the actuality of worship and belief as well as to study.

We are faced with the crucial question: whose scripture and religion should be taught in our schools? After all, the word "religion" does not apply specifically to Christian religion. Every hon. Member who took part in the debates on the 1944 Act assumed that they were talking about Christianity. I have not found a single hon. Member who doubted that religion equalled Christian religion. We must acknowledge that we are living in a rather different world today, so we must ask different questions. We live in a country with a variety of religions. How, therefore, should we interpret the requirement to have religious education?

The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed spoke wisely. We would apply common sense and say that the religious education given to children should, to some extent, be affected by the locality and circumstances in which they are growing up. If they live in the Sikh-dominated world of Southall, that should be reflected in their religious education. If they live in the Moslem areas of Luton, the same should apply. There should be some attempt in religious education to consider the society in which our children are growing up.

On top of that, at the heart of religious education must still be Christianity. The reasons are very much to do with the fact that it is so deeply embedded in our culture. It is not possible to grow up, play a full part in life and derive the benefits of society if a person is cut off from something which was of such fundamental importance in shaping English civilisation.

7 pm

In a sense that is a profound reason why Christianity should still be at the core of religious education. If parents dislike the idea, their right under the 1944 Act to opt out has not been tampered with. They can take their children somewhere else. If they wish to do so, no one should stop them. That is a part of religious freedom which we should accept. If they opt out and can be provided instead with teaching in another faith, such as the Moslem faith or whatever, I see nothing wrong with that. That again is part of religious freedom and good education.

I believe that there should be religious education in schools and that it should be rooted firmly in scripture. It should also be about faith which should still find expression through Christianity rather than through innocuous platitudinising.

Mr. Frank Cook: I wish to speak on amendments Nos. 75, 79 and 224. First, I should confess an interest in that I was a product of Church schools—Catholic schools and Jesuit Catholic schools. I taught for six years in a voluntary Church school before entering state education, so I understand the importance of the subject of religious education—if subject it is—to people of the Catholic faith and of other readily identifiable religious sects, for want of a better word.

In the schools in which I taught, teachers of my generation believed that religion should permeate every subject in the syllabus. We thought that it should permeate not only English language, but geography and history. The version of English history taught in a Catholic college is different from the English history taught in a non-Catholic college because we used to concentrate on the truth. *[Laughter.]* I thought that hon. Members might like that. We need the subject of religion in the curriculum because we need the opportunity to explain regularly the code of ethics which we hold dear, the way in which we interpret it and the scripture on which it is based. That is a reasonable aim for anyone.

It is not often that I agree with Conservative Members, but I agree with almost every word uttered by the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi). Had I been moving the amendment—I would greatly have valued the privilege of doing so—I would have repeated almost word for word what he said. However, his amendment had the advantage of being tabled before ours. I commend his words and I agree with every point he made, as I agree with every point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy).

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): His was in Latin.

Mr. Cook: Had it been in Latin, I would still have followed it, being a classical student.

The amendments have been the subject of much consultation, careful thought and attention. I understand that the Secretary of State is reported as having said, in response to a question about why religion was not granted the status of a core subject, that he thought that the Churches had never asked for it. I suppose that we should look upon the amendments as a second chance for the Secretary of State. I am not suggesting that he was misrepresenting the truth; that would be improper. But I suggest that he was mistaken or perhaps had not checked the facts. While we do not look to the Secretary of State to do penance, we are certainly seeking a firm purpose.

Sir Rhodes Boyson (Brent, North): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) and to see almost overwhelming agreement on both sides of the Chamber on an important educational issue. Religious education matters in schools. It is most important because man is a moral being. He is made differently from animals. When God breathed on man in the Garden he gave him a soul, a conscience and a sense of right and wrong. Man must know how to make that judgment.

Aristotle said that man is always higher or lower than the animal. When he is carrying out a moral purpose correctly, he is higher; when he betrays that moral purpose, he is lower because an animal has no sense of right or wrong and no conscience. It is no good blaming the animal in a moral sense or condemning it to hell. It has to follow its instinct for survival. It is most important that we have religious education in assembly, that it is taught and that it suffuses much of the rest of the curriculum.

Reference was made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) to the 1944 Act. I have read the debates on that Act. The provision for

religious education was opposed by only one hon. Member, if my memory is correct. It was said time and time again that that Act came into being because we had seen in Nazi Germany the bestiality that man could display. Therefore, we were determined to teach religion in our schools so that what had happened in Nazi Germany would not happen here. That is why people felt so strongly about religious education then.

There are troubles all around the world at present. Indeed, we have seen them nearer home during the last week. It shows that our fathers were right in 1944 in regarding religious education as important and in requiring it to be taught in schools. It is needed even more now.

There are two important points about religious education in schools. The first is the assembly and the other is teaching in the classroom. There is a secular defence of assembly. Any school which cannot get pupils to stand up straight in assembly, in quietness, will never control them in the classroom. I sometimes think that schools do not have assemblies now because the head teachers cannot take control. What will teachers do if they cannot ensure once a day that the pupils are quiet and that the imprint of the teachers is put on the school? I am an old-fashioned defender of the assembly. If a school does not have a hall which is big enough, there is plenty of room outside, even if umbrellas are needed. It could be an extension of physical education.

There should also be a short service, with not too many homilies. Boys do not like homilies. There should be a good tune to which they can sing and a prayer which will have meaning in their lives. A reading should be done by one of the pupils. If some of the best pieces of scripture were read, they would become part of their lives and might be recalled in times of trouble or delight, in the case of the Psalms.

The fact that we have so many children of other faiths is a challenge to the Christian religion. It is not an excuse to do nothing. Many schools, local authorities and churches use all the different religions as an excuse not to do anything. The churches do not evangelise or go to see what the pupils are doing.

My first headship in London, which started me on the path that led me to this place, was at a school in the east end, where my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) also taught at one time. Indeed, we lived together in the Oxford university settlement in the east end of London. That school had a large Jewish contingent, a large Moslem contingent and a large Christian contingent. When I arrived there, the school did not have assemblies because, if there was a Christian assembly, everyone became Jewish and if there was a Jewish assembly, everyone became Moslem. It was obvious that the only way to have an assembly was to get them all together.

I met the leaders of the three religions in the area, and we chose 10 hymns that worshipped the Almighty without any mention of any deviation into other religions, and at our first assembly everyone came in to sing those 10 hymns. Religious education was taught by people sent into the school by those religious leaders. Rabbis came in to teach the Jewish pupils, imams came in to teach the Moslem pupils, and we had enough Christian teachers—here and there—to take religious education for the Christian students. The point is that we were prepared to do it, instead of making excuses.

I do not wish to reminisce too much, but at Highbury Grove school, the West Indian pupils were Christian. They liked good singing, with a few hallelujahs thrown in, and a few tambourine bands went down well. But we also had to cater for the Catholic pupils. I met the Catholic priest. I will not mention which church he came from, in case I get him into trouble with the Pope, the bishop or my friend the cardinal. But the priest and I agreed that the Catholic pupils would come to my assembly—not to worship me but to worship God—four days a week and the priest would come in and say mass on the fifth day. We did not tell ILEA about it. A good head never tells anyone what is going on, as long as the parents and children agree. The result was fully attended assemblies.

It is amazing that Her Majesty's inspectorate, the local education authorities and the Churches have not enforced school assemblies. Most schools either have no assembly or do not know what they are doing. It is no wonder that people are anxious to have it in black and white in this Bill, even though the provisions of the 1944 Act have not been enforced.

It has always been difficult, especially in secondary schools, to timetable religious education because there has always been a shortage of teachers of religion and in many non-denominational state schools it is often difficult to keep order in religious education classes. So it is not a subject that people are queuing up to teach. Schools often use it to balance the curriculum. Teachers may be down for 28 periods of teaching, only 26 of which are in their own subject, and if they have been to church at any time in the past 10 years they are asked to teach religious education. It is probably better than being landed with domestic science, which they may never have done.

Mr. Straw: Has the hon. Gentleman cooked in the past 10 years?

Sir Rhodes Boyson: I must not allow the hon. Gentleman to interrupt me, even though Blackburn Rovers did not win their match last week. That is worshipping of a different sort. I do not wish to cause any ill-feeling in Blackburn, which is near the place of my birth. The hon. Gentleman and I will stand shoulder to shoulder if Blackburn Rovers go up into the first division. We want to put religious education into the first division —[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] That was a good one, Mr. Deputy Speaker!

Mr. Straw: The hon. Gentleman's comments will be a cause for great celebration in Blackburn. Indeed, the players will turn out tonight with a skip in their stride, especially since Blackburn Rovers' finest hour was when they beat Rossendale United 11-0—a match at which the hon. Gentleman's grandfather was present.

Sir Rhodes Boyson: We talked of nothing else. Perhaps I should just say amen and go on.

When the Bill becomes law, and core and foundation subjects are introduced, there will be a great battle for the remaining periods. Should they be used for extra science, second languages, the classics, home economics, business studies or economics? Religious education will be at the end of the line. It will disappear unless it is written into the Bill.

This week, I received a letter from a teacher at a renowned independent school in London—the wife of a minister of the cloth in my constituency—which said:

[Sir Rhodes Boyson]

"I am also concerned with the Education Bill and what is happening to the teaching of Religious Studies. Since it is excluded from the Core Curriculum it is being squeezed out of the syllabuses and even in my independent school it is no longer being offered from next year as a GCSE subject."

7.15 pm

As the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) always says, there is the reality. The hon. Gentleman is not listening. I shall speak to him privately later. The hon. Gentleman is a close friend of mine, and I respect him greatly——

Mr. Flannery: Will the hon. Gentleman repeat what he said?

Sir Rhodes Boyson: The hon. Gentleman regularly uses the phrase, "That is the reality." The reality here is that, if religious education is not a core or foundation subject, it will disappear.

I understand the difficulty about constructing a syllabus for religious education, but I believe that the amendments meet it. It cannot be laid down nationally. We shall have to find a different method. I understand the problem of the many different religions in Britain, but I believe that people should be taught the faith of their fathers in schools. If, as in Dewsbury, 95 per cent. of a school's pupils are Moslem, it seems to me that that school should be given over to the Moslem faith. What it is doing as a Church of England school, goodness only knows. Why not introduce some reality, instead of everyone pretending to do things for everyone else and nothing for themselves along the way?

As hon. Members on both sides of the House have said, religious education must not be a parade round a museum of religion. There must be faith. Those who teach religious education must believe in it. Presumably people who teach art believe in it. Those who teach physical education or football believe that it is a good thing. Teachers must sell themselves. I was a non-believer in woodwork, so I produced advertisements for the magazine instead. My teacher did not win in that case.

Religious education must be a foundation or core subject, and the Churches, Her Majesty's inspectorate and the local authorities must ensure that it is taught. Its teaching was not enforced under the 1944 Act. They were simple words. If these are only words, we shall have wasted our time tonight, but I trust that what we have said will convince the Government of the strength of our case.

Mr. Dalyell: The collective mind of the House of Commons can be forgiven for boggling at the serried ranks of the pupils of Highbury Grove, with their umbrellas, listening to the roll call conducted by the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir. R. Boyson).

One disadvantage and shortcoming of the House is that when those of us who have been here for a long time speak from personal experience, by its very nature that personal experience is dated. But I am brave enough to do so, because for four years of my life I taught a great deal of religious education at Bo'ness academy. Anyone who has taught it must have found it very difficult.

Incidentally, I do not agree with the right hon. Member for Brent, North, who was a distinguished and successful headmaster, that those who teach religious education must have faith. As the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) knows, because he and I were taught scriptures by remarkable men, those who teach religious education do not always share the faith. But that is a minor issue.

The hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) made an important point. He said that if scripture or religious instruction was not examined, it would become marginalised. I say to the Secretary of State: I believe that is true. It is difficult enough at any time to teach divinity, religious instruction — call it what one will. If that subject is not examinable, and other subjects in the curriculum are, it is impossible to obtain the same seriousness of attention from the pupils for it. What is the Secretary of State's thinking on the issue of examinations?

This raises another tangential issue. Last Thursday I had the interesting experience of being invited by my hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham (Mr. Grant) to the neighbouring constituency of the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) for the opening of the Alexandra Palace. My hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham introduced me to many of his friends, including the chief education officer for his area. For those of us who do not come from inner London, it is staggering to be told that 86 languages and 200 dialects are spoken in the borough of Haringey.

We are not here to argue the rights and wrongs of ILEA; I have no locus in that. However, that leads me to another question that I want to ask the Secretary of State about an issue that has been discussed for a long time in the House. Where on earth will the teachers come from? My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) and others know that many people are shy and coy about teaching religious instruction. I do not say that they funk it—that is a nasty word—but such teaching is daunting for many.

It is all very well to go on about what is desirable, but we shall not get far unless we are clear about where the teachers will come from, not only for biblical studies but for Moslem and Hindu studies. At the function to which my hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham invited me, I sat next to a Cypriot bishop. The Cypriots have their own history and culture. Where will the teachers for them come from? Incidentally, where will the resources come from?

I cannot sit down without asking one question in this context of morals and behaviour. Can we be let into the secret of what happened about that letter?

7.21 pm

Mr. Harry Greenway: The speech made by the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) would not have been complete without that concluding sentence, which we enjoyed. He mentioned 86 nationalities in Hornsey. I was the deputy headmaster of a mixed comprehensive school of 2,200 children; 85 languages were spoken in that school alone. Yet the school was able to hold assemblies based on a Christian theme or a theme of another world religion. So that sort of thing can be handled in a school, but a central religious theme must be taken. That should be based on Christianity, but it should not exclude other world religions for comparison purposes. It is only possible to get across to children an understanding of one religion in 10 years or so. Other hon. Members have said that, and I agree with them.

It is ironic that the Churches should be struggling to retain their place in education and the place of religious education in schools, when one remembers that it was the Churches and religious leaders and teachers who brought

mass education to this country. The great movement of Church schools was the foundation of schooling in this country.

The legal requirements of the 1944 Act for teaching religious education are increasingly failing, so the position is serious. Five years ago, the Religious Education Council said that in two thirds of primary schools, teachers of religious instruction were confused about what they were trying to teach. So what chance would the children have? The same report said that four fifths of children over 14 received no religious or moral education. Alas, too, in many schools in this country there was no reference to Christmas last year. In some areas people said that it would be offensive to talk about the nativity of our Lord to people who were not Christians. That is sad, and we need to do something about it.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), that the assembly is an essential part of the school day. In the school in which we both taught, and of which he was such a successful head, and in all the schools in which I have taught, whatever their ethnic make-up, I have always made certain that every pupil could recite and understand the Lord's Prayer as the basis of something to turn to in their hour of need —and much more besides. The ability to pray is a basic human requirement and should not be forgotten.

Is not the education of every child enriched by some teaching and understanding of the Sermon on the Mount and the great parables and teachings of Jesus, with their pedagogic contents? We must remember that our culture is based on the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments and the parables of Jesus, as was all Christendom. Hon. Members who have said that to understand our society children and adults needs an understanding of Christianity are right. That is why Christianity should be the centre of religious education, although not to the exclusion of all else.

In late February I wrote to *The Times* on the important theme of religious education in schools, and I based my amendment No. 221 on that letter. I discussed it with Cardinal Hume, with other Christian leaders and with leaders of other religions. All are agreed that the legal back-up for religious education in the 1944 Act has been unsatisfactory, and I do not think the legal back-up in the Bill is of any value, either. I do not mean to be rude to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State when I say that.

Successive lawyers from the Department of Education and Science, who have been pressed before the Select Committee to respond to hon. Members' concern about a failure to teach, for example, mathematics in one particular school for two years, have said that, provided that the local education authority and the school concerned had made efforts to find teachers to teach that subject, they were covered. The law could not touch them and any parental complaints would fall to the ground. It would be the same for religious instruction under the Bill. Sadly, the Bill has no significant value in that respect.

We need to get religious education into the core curriculum, and I should be happy to accept the amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi), to which I have added my name. It subsumes my amendment and would put religious education into the national curriculum, thereby giving it the status of a core subject without the restraint of the national curriculum council. That is of great importance.

7.30 pm

As other hon. Members wish to speak, I shall be brief. Never has there been a greater need for an assertion, an improvement and a re-establishment of religious education in schools. There is considerable social violence not only at football matches but in many other areas. One in three of the population is convicted of a criminal offence by the age of 28. Families are under great stress, with the breakdown of one in three marriages.

I recently met a nice 10-year-old boy and had a nice chat with him, but his headmaster said later that he had tied a banger to a cat's tail and was greatly amused to watch it running along with a fizzing banger on its tail. The explosion damaged the cat to such an extent that it had to be put down. Yet that boy, who was a perfectly nice lad, could not understand that he had done wrong. He simply does not understand the difference between right and wrong.

I hope that my right hon. Friend will accept that lying behind the amendment is pressure from the majority of the population, especially from parents, demanding that society, if it is to be healthy, must ensure that children know the difference between right and wrong and that they are prepared to stand up for that.

Mr. Straw: This has been a thoughtful, as well as an entertaining debate. I pay tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) and for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for their contributions. I also pay tribute to the right hon. Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson), who always presents himself as some sort of latter-day Gradgrind. However, I represented Islington on ILEA when he was the headmaster of Highbury Grove school, and I can tell the House that the image that he presents is wholly confounded by his reputation as a progressive headmaster who sought high standards for every child in the true spirit of the comprehensive school that he ran.

The hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) and my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North referred to the great anxiety felt not only by the Catholic but by the Anglican Churches about the impact of the Bill on Church schools. They are worried not only about religious education but about the consequences of the open admission and opting-out policies. From the inception of the Committee stage, my hon. Friends and I sought to raise those issues, and they were discussed at great length. As a consequence, the Government have made some movement. I hope that this evening the Secretary of State will acknowledge, although I am not sure in what way, the anxieties expressed.

The Government cannot allay some of those anxieties while they press ahead with their so-called free market education system — that is, opting out and open admission. Although there is a wide measure of agreement about the importance of religious education, the Churches should not be fooled that unless there are major modifications to the operation of the opting-out and open-admission policies, the position of Church schools may, and probably will, be seriously undermined.

The fact that the Bill is being changed at this late stage illustrates the point made in many quarters at the beginning of the process last July, that the Secretary of State should have taken a great deal more time to consult affected bodies before introducing the Bill. The parallel between his 10 weeks for consultation and Rab Butler's

[Mr. Straw]

two years is striking. Like other hon. Members, I have been studying the debates of the 1944 Committee relating to Church schools and religious worship and instruction.

It is interesting to note that the issues being raised today are similar to those raised 44 years ago. The aptly named Member for Ayr Burghs, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas Moore — [HON. MEMBERS: "We remember him well."] Perhaps I have been in this place rather less time that some hon. Members, because I certainly do not remember him. He put forward an amendment proposing that religious instruction should be limited to the

"accepted Christian principles of truth, honesty, kindness, clean living and self-respect."

I am pleased to say that that was not accepted by the Government.

The anxiety that schools were not undertaking their proper duty towards worship and religious instruction was also expressed. Rab Butler said:

"It is perfectly right for those who have spoken . . . to say that there is a great deal of nonsense talked about schools being God-less and about there being no worship or religious instruction. In fact, within the limits of what we have been able to achieve, the schools are doing great work in this field, but it is absolutely right for me, as the Minister in charge, to say that the schools, although they can play their part, cannot do everything.

The great part of the responsibility for this religious worship or instruction must fall on the denomination, or on the parents themselves in the family circle, and what the schools can do is to help with this vital part of a child's upbringing."—[*Official Report*, 10 March 1944; Vol. 397, c. 2402-2416.]

Mr. Dalyell: Perhaps we can reminisce about Sir Thomas Moore for a moment. He used to sit where the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) is now sitting, although it must have been before his time. Every day he arrived with a fresh red rose in his buttonhole.

An Hon. Member: Before Neil Kinnock.

Mr. Straw: It was before the day of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition. I understand that Sir Thomas Moore wore a black shirt as well as a red rose: of course, my right hon. Friend does not.

If there was a recognition of the same issues and the same anxieties, there was also a recognition in those 1944 debates that the question of religious instruction and worship had the same potential for social division. That was touched upon in a joke made by my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North, who said that the history that he was taught in a Catholic school was different from that taught in other schools, and that what he was taught was the truth. That was a joke, but——

Mr. Frank Cook: It was not a joke; I was serious.

Mr. Straw: In that case, we would do well to remember that it is not only one part of the United Kingdom that has capacity for great religious tension and strife. It is not true to say, as some do, that the Irish problem is nothing to do with us. If we knew anything about our history, we would know that the Irish problem was the English problem exported, and that it reflects the deep social and religious divisions in this country that caused great carnage and bloodshed over many centuries.

Sir Hugh Rossi: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that were he to pick up a French history book and read about the Napoleonic wars, he would think that he was reading about an entirely different historic period from that portrayed in English history books? It has more to do with tribalism than with religion — and so has Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw: The next point in my notes is that we must remember from our history that we did not abandon Anglican tests for admission to colleges in Oxford and Cambridge until 1871, and that there was discrimination against Catholics throughout this century. We must remember how easily religious devotion can turn into tribal destructiveness. There is a fine and delicate line between the two.

Mr. Winnick: Is my hon. Friend aware that, unfortunately, the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) misrepresented the point that I was making? I was making the point that the position in Northern Ireland demonstrates that the teaching of religion—Protestant, Catholic or any other religion; it is not confined to Christianity—does not produce tolerance and respect for human life. That was the only point that I was making. I certainly mean no disrespect to any form of religious teaching.

Mr. Straw: My hon. Friend is right. The great achievement of Butler and the Churches in 1944 was to secure a lasting religious settlement for this part of the United Kingdom between Church and state in education. We should not disturb that settlement unless we are convinced that the change will be for the better.

I accept the importance of religious worship and education in schools, for reasons on which hon. Members have expanded. We can have no understanding of our history and culture unless we understand that we have a Christian tradition. We cannot even understand the architecture of the Palace of Westminster unless we know about this nation's Christian heritage. It is impossible to understand our literature, poetry, classical art and music without that knowledge. Alongside that, all of us, whatever our political beliefs, wish society to operate according to ethical codes and faiths. Political ideology can never by itself provide that.

Hon. Members have recognised that we now live in a multi-religious society, in which there are not only Christian faiths but other faiths of equal importance to those who practise them.

Dr. Alan Glyn (Windsor and Maidenhead): Does the hon. Gentleman advocate that religious education should become part of a core curriculum?

Mr. Straw: I was about to deal with exactly that point. The question is how best we achieve those aims. The problem is that a national curriculum lays down a core of subjects which will be followed by all pupils and provides that there should be assessment and testing of those subjects. We can argue about exactly how that will work, but there is agreement about the framework. The difficulty about including religious education in the national curriculum—it may not be insurmountable—is that it does not fit within that framework.

Under amendment No. 75, religious education is to be excluded from the testing and attainment targets, for reasons which I understand and to which I subscribe. In any event, it is difficult to test a subject fairly when some children can be withdrawn from it. That is the problem with including religious education in the national

curriculum. The difficulty with excluding it—this point was made by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith)—is that RE may be crowded out by the imposition of the national curriculum.

Our suggestion, which I hope better meets hon. Members' aspirations and expectations—I know that the Secretary of State will want to think about this before the matter comes before the other place—is that there should be a special status within the Bill for religious education. There should be a new clause which provides that the time and approach to religious education will be laid down by order, after wide consultations with the Churches, LEAs and parents, and which accepts, for the reasons on which the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green has expanded, the difference in the quality and character of RE.

Religious education will not be tested. It should pervade the curriculum as a whole and not just be taught as a single subject. We believe that that would meet the Churches' concerns better than simply spatchcocking RE in the national curriculum. This is a crucial issue. It is crucial that we take our time and get it right.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: Anyone who has heard our discussion for the past two hours could not help but be impressed by the quality of the debate and the interesting matters raised. I have been a Member for 20 years. My anniversary falls next week.

Mr. Straw: We shall send a card.

Mr. Baker: Many happy returns as well, I hope.

In those 20 years, I do not recall a debate on religious education. I recall debates on the Prayer Book, the Synod and other aspects of religion, but this debate has been specifically on religious education. It has been improved immensely by the experiences of at least four hon. Members who taught in schools and had to deal with religious education—the hon. Members for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) and for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North (Sir R. Boyson) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway).

7.45 pm

The Government have continually stressed the importance that we attach to religious education. As evidence of that, we have made RE a national priority within the Government's grant scheme for the in-service training of teachers. We are providing about £1 million this year and next for that training.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow asked me about the position of RE teachers. The latest figures show that the intake has been about 80 per cent. of target. In January 1987, there were vacancies for 75 RE teachers in the whole of England—a low figure. There is a problem with the deployment of teachers qualified in RE education. In 1984, a secondary schools staffing survey revealed that, of the 16,200 full-time teachers with a main or subsidiary qualification in religious education, only about 9,000 were teaching the subject. The survey also showed that about 25 per cent. of tuition was given by teachers with no qualifications in RE. I think that the hon. Member for Linlithgow said that he was one of those.

The problem is being tackled through in-service training. As I have said, training in the teaching of RE is one of the national priorities of the training grants scheme, which provides grants at the rate of 70 per cent. of LEA expenditure incurred on RE training, up to £1 million in each of the years 1987-88 and 1988-89. In the current financial year, local education authorities have told us that they expect to provide about 32,000 teacher in-service training days in religious education.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): Who is responsible for that training and on what basis is it worked out? Is it training in contemporary religion or training based essentially on Christianity?

Mr. Baker: The training would be based at local level and would be arranged by the local education authorities, so I cannot answer directly. I should be happy to provide my hon. Friend with information on the syllabuses of the teacher training colleges.

Mr. Cormack: If there is no requirement that those who are trained believe in the religion that they are to teach, will it at least be certain that they are not hostile to it?

Mr. Baker: All good teaching comes basically from the enthusiasm that one feels for the subject. I should have thought that the great majority of teachers, if not virtually all, have a deep understanding of religion—not only of the texts and scriptures but of the aspects of faith and belief.

We have spelt out in the Bill the duty of local authorities to provide religious education in accordance with the provisions of the 1944 Act. It is a matter of concern—this has been expressed by hon. Members on both sides of the House—that the quality of religious education provided in many schools leaves much to be desired. In many schools that are not Church schools, religious education has become very perfunctory. We have therefore tried in the Bill to strengthen the provision for RE in the 1944 Act. Far from playing down the importance of religious education, the Bill puts the promotion of spiritual and moral values at the forefront of any consideration of the curriculum and makes a statutory requirement in that respect.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) spoke of the importance of the study of the scriptures as texts, and certainly, the Cranmer Prayer Book and the King James version of the Bible are great literary as well as religious texts.

Mr. Cormack: They are not much used in the churches these days.

Mr. Baker: Those of us brought up with an understanding of, and a familiarity with, the Prayer Book and the King James version will carry phrases and words from them rattling around in our memories until the day we die. I agree with the assertion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury that the study of the scriptures is vital, although my study of the scriptures at school was particularly narrow, as we spent a lot of time tracing the detailed voyages of St. Paul in Asia Minor. Our RE lessons became more like geography lessons. That gives the House a small window into my experience.

Religion is not just about studying the text. Religious education should involve exposing children to the possibility of belief and the experience of faith. Education should not be concerned only with the mental and physical development of a child. The moral and spiritual dimension should be opened up.

[Mr. Baker]

Clause 1 provides that the curriculum of all maintained schools should promote the spiritual development of all pupils at schools and of society as a whole. Clause 6 places a direct statutory duty on local education authorities, head teachers and school governing bodies to ensure that religious education is provided, and that duty is explicit rather than implicit.

In addition, in clause 15 we have for the first time provided specifically for parents and others to lodge a formal complaint if they believe that religious education is not being provided in accordance with the statutory requirements.

We hope that the clear spelling out of duties in the Bill will go a long way to improve the quality of religious education and that resort to the new complaints procedure will be exceptional. But it is no part of our intention that religious education should be any less well underpinned than the foundation subjects of the national curriculum — a point made by the hon. Members for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) and for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) and by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North.

All the provisions strengthen the existing duty to provide religious education and will help to improve the quality of what is provided. However, for reasons that we fully understand, the Churches have been anxious to ensure that religious education should be further strengthened within the national curriculum. For many people, religious education, in its widest sense, lies at the heart of the curriculum. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Windsor and Maidenhead (Dr. Glyn) asked about the core nature of the subject, and the very use of that word is significant. Some have argued that religious education should be a foundation subject, but that would involve the determination of the syllabus by the secular and central authorities — the National Curriculum Council and the House of Commons.

We firmly believe that if religious education is to continue to be taught well in our schools in the longer term, what is taught must reflect the views and values of local religious communities. As the law stands, religious education in county and in voluntary controlled schools is provided in each local education authority in accordance wth an agreed syllabus, determined locally by religious educational interests in the area.

For aided schools — the full Church schools — provision is determined by the governors of each school in accordance with any trust deed relating to religious education. The arrangements have stood the test of time, and while there are good grounds for strengthening them, it would be most unwise to remove the existing local dimension. The 1944 Act got the balance right and it would be a retrograde step if the House determined centrally what is taught in religious education, as we would if religious education were made a foundation subject under the Bill.

The Government have no wish to decide what religious education should be given in Catholic or Jewish schools. It is for the leaders and practitioners of those faiths to decide what should be taught. Nor would we presume to require that religious education should be the same in county schools in Devon as in schools in Bradford. That is rightly a matter for local decision, and we have no wish to tamper with the local discretion currently provided.

The House will know that I have held extensive discussions with the leaders of the Church of England, with the Catholic Church in England and with the Methodists to consider how their worries can be met. I am glad to say that our discussions have been rewarding and that we have had some success in finding common ground and reaching agreement. What I am about to say reflects that agreement with the Churches, which amounts to a new religious settlement.

The Churches wish local discretion to be retained. I acknowledge their desire for even greater emphasis to be placed on religious education alongside our national curriculum proposals. We have therefore agreed to amend clause 2 to ensure that religious education is statutorily identified as part of the basic curriculum to be provided for all pupils by all maintained schools and that it takes its place before the core and foundation subjects. I therefore welcome the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi) and by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), supported by the hon. Member for Attercliffe, among others. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green for the way in which he spoke to the amendments.

I also welcome the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) which provide for the strengthening of the locally agreed syllabus procedures for RE. I am also well aware of the value of standing advisory councils in ensuring that RE is properly provided in county and controlled schools and in making sure that agreed syllabuses are reviewed from time to time. That is why, in principle, the Government agree with the aims of the amendments and would be willing to amend the 1944 Act along the lines proposed.

Mr. Straw: I note what the Secretary of State said about the inclusion of religious education in the basic curriculum. Do the Government intend that section 25(5) of the 1944 Act, which provides for parents to withdraw their children from RE as well as worship, should continue to apply?

Mr. Baker: The clear answer to that is yes. That is one reason why we cannot accept the amendments as drafted. I have given my hon. Friends a clear undertaking that the spirit and meaning of the amendments will be incorporated in the Bill in amendments tabled in another place. I have to take advice from parliamentary counsel, and one point that would have to be spelt out is that parents would continue to have the right to withdraw their children from religious education or from collective worship.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Under the settlement that my right hon. Friend has announced and the provisions that he has promised to introduce, will it be possible for Christian instruction to take place in all schools? It seems to me that, under the local arrangements that he described, certain schools might be instructed in a religion other than Christianity. That would mean that the culture of this country — the adoptive culture of many from overseas — would not be taught to children.

Mr. Baker: I shall come to that point in a moment. It is an important point and it has been touched upon by several colleagues. My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North told us from experience how he had handled that point.

The outcome of the discussions that have taken place over the past few months is a worthwhile, workable and, in many ways, historic agreement. It is historic not least because it will reinforce the quality of religious education in our schools.

8 pm

Mr. Spearing: The right hon. Gentleman will know that for 14 years I taught religious education on a voluntary basis. On the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), will the Secretary of State agree that whatever arrangement he comes to or whatever adjustment of statute there may be, the possibility of increased quality must depend on the people who choose to take up the profession? When he has discussions with the Churches about this matter, will he ensure that they are as concerned about it as we are?

Mr. Baker: I am willing to give that undertaking. I have already mentioned the number of trainee teachers in religious education. When I talked to the bishops and discussed numbers, I said that there are not only the teachers who are trained in religious education. There are many vicars and priests in our country and there are members of other faiths who are well trained in the understanding of their religions who could contribute a great deal.

The other point I have made to the bishops of the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church is that many parents are not believers, who do not attend church and who may be agnostic or even atheist but who believe that if their children could be subjected to the moral teaching and possibly the spiritual awareness of religious education, they would benefit enormously. Therefore, this settlement represents a great opportunity, which I hope the Churches will now seize.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): The Secretary of State made the point about those who have no faith themselves but choose to send their children to schools where religion is taught. May I refer him to the problems of Church schools and invite him—perhaps not at this point in his speech — to address the problems of the admissions system and opting out? He knows that those are still matters of great concern to the hierarchies of the Catholic Church and the Church of England.

Mr. Baker: That is on cue, because I am about to deal with admissions policies and open enrolment, which was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green.

The Churches have pressed on me their concern about the effect of more open enrolment on their schools. The solution offered by my hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North and others in amendments Nos. 78 and 79 would effectively be to exclude aided and special agreement schools — nearly one fifth of maintained provision—from the effects of chapter II of the Bill. I cannot accept that. I want to see all schools responding as much as possible to the preferences of parents. However, I am prepared to strengthen the existing safeguards for the special ethos of denominational schools so as to reassure the Churches and their champions in the House.

We have always emphasised that the safeguards in the Education Act 1980 will continue to apply under more open enrolment. It was the 1980 Act which, for the first time, built in safeguards, particularly on admissions policies for Church schools.

As at present, aided and special agreement schools will not be required to admit children where that would conflict with admission arrangements they have agreed with their local authority — for example, to limit the number of non-Catholic pupils entering a Catholic school. In such cases, some non-Catholic pupils may legitimately be refused admission even where there is space left in the school because their admission might dilute the essentially Catholic ethos of the school.

Church leaders fear that local authorities may not always be willing to reach such agreements. Therefore, I intend to bring forward amendments in the other place that will require local education authorities to conclude admission arrangments with the governors of aided and special agreement schools where they are requested to do so. Where the two parties fail to agree on the terms of an arrangement, there will be provision for the holder of my office to determine what will be reasonable in the circumstances.

I have also been asked about the position of grant-maintained schools. With your permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I apologise: Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Long live the difference.

Mr. Baker: I apologise. I will not enter into a discussion of women or women priests.

I should like to emphasise that the safeguards for Church schools in the local authority sector will continue when such schools become grant maintained and the Churches should have nothing to fear from the proposals in chapter IV.

If a voluntary school becomes grant-maintained, the foundation will continue to appoint the majority of governors. The assets of the trust will remain secure and the school will have to offer religious education in accordance with its practices as a voluntary school and will remain part of the broader Church community.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green and others have proposed that the governors of a voluntary school should not be able to make an application for grant-maintained status without the agreement of their trustees. If grant-maintained status was going to remove the trustees' influence at the school or threaten the assets, I might have some sympathy with that point of view. However, as it will not do that, I do not see why the parents and governors of Church schools should be denied the rights and opportunities that we are offering to parents and governors at other schools. The Bill provides that the trustees should be informed as soon as a decision is taken to hold a ballot of parents, and gives them the right to object to any proposal that may subsequently be put to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Frank Cook: The points that worry me, in view of what the Secretary of State has just said, are whether time would be allowed and whether trustees would get the opportunity to take account of the trusteeship in relation to other schools that may be part of their group so as to bring to the consciousness of the parents who will take the decision the consequential impact of any decision they may make.

Mr. Baker: I think that I can answer yes to that question. I should like to spell out the way in which we would envisage that being done. The Catholic Church has asked for a direct veto, and I am afraid that I cannot agree to that. However, it would be possible to bring forward amendments spelling out clearly the opportunities that would exist for the trustees in a Church school to make clear the consequences not only for their school but for others in their area. We would expect that to happen in the process of public consultation.

I should like to calm the fears of my hon. Friends and other hon. Members who are concerned about the matter. I propose to bring forward certain amendments in the other place. They will be along the lines mentioned by the hon. Member for Stockton, North. More specifically, I propose to table an amendment to provide that no grant-maintained school will be able to propose a change in its religious ethos without the prior consent of the trustees.

I shall make it clear that, should a school at any stage need the assistance of additional governors appointed by the Secretary of State, the trustees will have the right to appoint more foundation governors to preserve their majority. After a Church school has become a grant-maintained school, it will be clear that it cannot cease to be a Church school. The trustees and the foundation will still be in control.

To sum up: first, the teaching of spiritual values should imbue the whole curriculum. Spiritual values are not something to be taught in half an hour on a Friday afternoon. Secondly, religious education should be statutorily required in clause 2 as an essential part of the curriculum for all pupils at school, regardless of their age or other circumstances, unless they are withdrawn by their parents.

Thirdly, what is taught should be decided locally by those concerned in the community, according to the well tried procedures set out in the 1944 Act—or, in aided schools, by the schools' governors. It should not be prescribed by Parliament.

Fourthly, the arrangements for advising on locally agreed syllabuses and for keeping them up to date should be strengthened, first by making the appointment of standing advisory councils on religious education compulsory and, secondly, by requiring local education authorities to set in motion procedues for reviewing their locally agreed syllabuses and keeping them up to date if advised to do so by the councils.

The duties of local education authorities, governing bodies and head teachers to secure that religious education is provided for all pupils in accordance with the locally agreed syllabuses or the wishes of the governing body should be clearly spelt out. They should also be capable of being reported on and enforced through complaints from parents or others in the same way as the Bill proposes for foundation and core subjects in the national curriculum. This is a thoroughly worthwhile outcome of a civilised debate, the more so because it reflects the shared views of the main Churches.

Mr. Harry Greenway: May I ask my right hon. Friend whether Her Majesty's inspectors will have an overseeing role in this area?

Mr. Baker: Yes, of course, and a senior inspector is particularly responsible for religious education.

My final point in response to my hon. Friend is on the Christian faith. A fundamental part of any religious education syllabus should be the Christian faith. That faith was brought to these islands by St. Augustine and it has woven its way through our history. It is in the weft and warp of our country and any understanding of our country without an appreciation of that is poor and inadequate. However, we must recognise that there are other creeds and faiths that are now strongly established in parts of our country and one must respect those.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, North, in his experienced way, told the House how those could be accommodated in the practice in our schools. If it is done by mutual respect and understanding, one can lead children of different faiths to understand one another's faiths. My right hon. Friend rightly said that nearly all the faiths in Britain believe in a god. That was the unifying element that he sought to build upon in the way that he conducted his school. I commend that approach to the House.

Across the party and religious divides, the House has decided to reinforce and strengthen the position of religious education in our schools and in the national curriculum. I hope that future generations will thank us for that.

Sir Hugh Rossi: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for the very generous way in which he has responded to the amendment. He has shown a characteristic flexibility of mind. He will forgive me when I say that we shall want to study very carefully the wording of his amendments in another place. There may be a need for further discussion. Subject to that caveat and in view of what my right hon. Friend has said, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 3

FOUNDATION SUBJECTS AND KEY STAGES

Mr. Straw: I beg to move amendment No. 63, in page 2, line 20 after 'to', insert 'subsection (2A) and'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to consider the following: Amendment No. 64, in page 2, line 24, after 'to', insert 'subsection (2A) and'.

Amendment No. 62, in page 2, line 31 at end insert—

'(2A) The Secretary of State shall publish in draft form, and invite representations on, any advice or guidance to be issued in respect of the proportion of time within the overall timetable to be allocated in any year to the subjects specified in subsections (1) and (2) above'.

Amendment No. 65, in Page 2, line 31, at end insert—

'(2A) The determination of the overall curriculum of a school by—

(a) in a county school, the headteacher in accordance with the objectives of the governing body or the local education authority under section 18 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986; or

(b) in a voluntary school, by the governing body under section 19 of the 1986 Act

may provide for the subjects specified in subsections (1) and (2) above to be included within the curriculum in any combination or proportion which is considered appropriate, subject to the duty to secure the implementation of the National Curriculum under section 1 Above, and nothing in this section shall prevent the inclusion of such other subjects or areas of learning experience as may be considered appopriate, either separately on in combination with any subject specified as a core or foundation subject.'.

Mr. Straw: The amendment enables me to say a few words about the conclusion of the debate on the previous amendment, because amendment No. 63 is a paving amendment for amendment No. 62.

I can say, Miss Fookes — I apologise. I have that name on the brain because I have the name of the Under-Secretary on the brain. On one occasion when the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) was in the Chair, an Under-Secretary described the national curriculum variously as a three-wheeled bicycle and a fairy tricycle. In a reply to the hon. Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), he accepted that the national curriculum need not apply for more than one minute in any one week. While we take the words of the Secretary of State at face value, I am not sure what he has in mind. In view of that, there have been some anxieties — for example that religious education could be crowded out of the national curriculum.

It being 15 minutes past Eight o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution this day to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

Amendment agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at 15 minutes past Eight o'clock.*

Clause 4

DUTY TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM BY ORDER

Amendment made: No 100 in page 3, line 38, at end insert—

'(2A) An order made under subsection (2) above may not require—

(a) that any particular period or periods of time should be allocated during any key stage to the teaching of any programme of study or any matter, skill or process forming part of it; or

(b) that provision of any particular kind should be made in school timetables for the periods to be allocated to such teaching during any such stage.' —*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 7

ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNCILS

Amendments made: No. 101, in page 5, line 15, leave out 'and'.

No. 102, in page 5, line 18, at end insert

'; and

(e) to carry out such ancillary activities as the Secretary of State may direct.'.

No. 103, in page 5, line 34, leave out 'and'.

No. 104, in page 5, line 36, at end insert

'; and

(g) to carry out such ancillary activities as the Secretary of State may direct.

(4A) For the purposes of subsection (3)(e) or (as the case may be) subsection (4)(g) above, activities are ancillary activities in relation to a Council if the Secretary of State considers it is appropriate for the Council to carry out those activities for the purposes of or in connection with the exercise by the Council of any of its other functions under that subsection.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 8

TRANSFERS OF PROPERTY AND STAFF TO COUNCILS

Amendment made: No. 105, in page 6, line 15, leave out 'under a contract of employment'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 9

DEVELOPMENT WORK AND EXPERIMENTS

Amendment made: No. 106, in page 7, line 12, after 'application', insert—

(i) by the governing body with the agreement of the local education authority;'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 14

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Amendments made: No. 115, in page 10, line 3, at end insert—

'(4A) Regulations under this section shall not require information as to the results of an individual pupil's assessment under this Chapter to be made available to any persons other than—

(a) the parents of the pupil concerned;

(b) the governing body of the school; or

(c) the local education authority;

and shall not require such information to be made available to the governing body or the local education authority except where relevant for the purposes of the performance by that body or authority of any of their functions.'.

No. 116, in page 10, line 6, leave out 'copy'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 17

ADMISSIONS TO COUNTY AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS

Amendment made: No. 289, in page 11, line 9, leave out 'this section' and insert 'subsection (1) above'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 18

STANDARD NUMBERS FOR ADMISSIONS

Amendment made: No. 290, in page 12, line 32, after '17', insert '(1)'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 20

CONSEQUENTIAL PROVISIONS

Amendment made: No. 291, in page 16, leave out lines 17 to 23.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 22

INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTER II

Amendments made: No. 292, in page 18, line 20, after 'Act', insert 'subsection (1) of'.

No. 293, in page 18, line 23, leave out 'section—' and insert 'subsection—'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 24

INITIATION, IMPOSITION AND VARIATION OF SCHEMES

Amendments made: No. 245, in page 20, line 12, leave out 'such a scheme' and insert
'a scheme under that section'.

No. 246, in page 20, line 21, at end insert
'; and each such governing body shall consult the head teacher, in any case where he is not a member of that body, before giving their views on being consulted by the authority under this subsection.'.

No. 247, in page 20, line 26, at end insert
'; and
(b) subject to such conditions as he may specify in giving his approval.'.

No. 248, in page 20, line 31, after 'authority', insert 'as required by that subsection'.

No. 249, in page 20, line 34, leave out 'such' and insert 'the authority and such other'

No. 250, in page 20, line 44, leave out subsections (8) to (10).—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 27

SCHEMES: DETERMINATION OF BUDGET SHARES

Amendment made: No. 251, in page 23, line 25, leave out 'met from' and insert
'taken into account in determining'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Schedule 2

APPOINTMENT AND DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL STAFF, ETC., DURING FINANCIAL DELEGATION

Amendment made: No. 243, in page 170, line 6, leave out 'notice terminating his contract of employment with the authority'
and insert
'such notice terminating his contract of employment with the authority as is required under that contract'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 36

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND REQUIRED FINANCIAL DELEGATION APART FROM SCHEMES

Amendment made: No. 252, in page 31, line 11, leave out subsection (5).—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 38

DUTY OF SECRETARY OF STATE TO MAINTAIN CERTAIN SCHOOLS

Mr. Fatchett: I beg to move amendment No. 192, in page 32, line 31, at beginning insert
'From the date named in an Order under subsection (1A) below and'.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider also amendment No. 193, in page 32, line 34, at end insert
'(1A) The Secretary of State may make an Order giving effect to subsection (1) above in a particular area from a date not earlier than two years after the introduction of a scheme for local financial management in that area, and an Order made under this subsection may specify different dates of different areas.'.

Mr. Fatchett: Those of us who came in late during the debate on the last amendment but one also enjoyed the debate, and it was interesting to see the consensus and concern about a range of issues. Some of us feel scandalised by the guillotine that has just fallen, because we sense that my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) was set for winding up to a major and well-prepared speech on that amendment. That speech is well worth publishing in another place.

Mr. Straw: In Dartford.

Mr. Fatchett: Perhaps in Dartford. I was about to suggest to my hon. Friend that he should publish it in *The Guardian*, although given the way in which that newspaper is currently printed he may find it easier to print his speech elsewhere. Perhaps if he printed it in Dartford, it would be more widely read.

If we had some consensus in the debate on the last amendment, I shall try my best to carry it forward into the debate on this one. As the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn) knows, I always try to cultivate consensus during proceedings in Committee because obviously that is the best way to proceed. I shall start by looking at the areas in which we have some consensus because the amendment allows me to be consensual and, if I dare use the word, conflictful. I am being like the hon. Member for Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss), who spoke about the word "prioritise". I apologise for using such words and upsetting him once more.

The amendment has two basic parts. One deals with local financial management, about which there is some agreement, and the other deals with the provision for opting-out schools, on which I suspect there is very little agreement in the House. On local financial management, I shall try to cultivate the consensus that was apparent in the debate on the previous amendment. We said in Committee that delegated local financial management was something we approved of in principle; as Socialists, we should accept and argue for that. The more people that are involved in decision-making the better, and the more we deplore power the better. The more we have people involved in participation at all levels, the better the way society is run and managed. That applies to our schools just as it should apply to many other institutions.

One of the arguments that we need to note is that the demand for decentralisation and participation is now greater in our society than at any time in our history. It goes against the political grain to advocate centralisation, but it goes with the political grain to advocate decentralisation.

It is interesting to note that, of the local education authorities that currently practise some system of devolved financial management, some will be controlled by the Conservative party, some by the Labour party and one or two by the alliance.

Mr. Cormack: There is no alliance.

Mr. Fatchett: I shall not get involved in that argument. Hon. Members who served on the Committee will know that I have had sufficient trouble with the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). I am delighted that the hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) is occupying the place of the hon. Member for Yeovil. I said yesterday that the latter had brought reinforcements in the form of the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes). The hon.

Member for Yeovil is absent, but he has provided us with substantial reinforcements in the form of the hon. Member for Rochdale. I understand that he wants to say a few words later about opt-out, and we shall look forward to that.

There is some consensus, in principle and practice, about local financial management. However, we have concerns, which arose in Committee, some of which I shall refer to later. We are concerned about whether it is intended to use local financial management to squeeze resources. If so, we shall oppose it because any squeeze on resources would damage the interests of our children and the provision of education. Experience suggests that, in an authority such as Cambridgeshire, where the alliance was in control, when local financial management has been practised it has been proved more expensive. That may be the price that must be paid for the principle, and it may be a price that we wish to pay.

We are concerned—this matter emerged during the debate in Committee—that the principle of delegated financial management will be used to undermine trade union negotiating rights and pay and conditions. We were anxious about the comments made by the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), who seemed to suggest that it would be possible for a locally managed school not to recognise an individual trade union, particularly the non-teaching trade unions. He seemed to suggest that it would be possible for a locally managed school not to pay the going rate for non-teaching staff. Such a move would undermine the principle of local financial management and, again, we would fundamentally oppose that.

We have some practical concerns, and the Government have recognised that it will take time to sort them out. We have learnt from the Government that the process of introducing delegated financial management—this will apply to authorities that are already practising some form of delegated management—will take time. It will take three years to implement those regulations and specifications, during which time many practical issues will have to be faced. Clearly, there will be times when we shall disagree about the implementation of local financial management, but there is some agreement in principle that allows us to support the clauses that permit that principle to be put into practice.

As to grant-maintained schools, the agreement about locally delegated financial management quickly disappears. This subject shows the Secretary of State at his ideological worst. In the last debate we saw him at his pragmatic best, but with regard to opt-out and grant-maintained schools, ideological forces drive him in a direction that we oppose.

We oppose grant-maintained schools for two principled reasons. We feel that they will be divisive because they will lead to selection and the reintroduction by the back door of the 11-plus. We completely oppose such a reintroduction, because there is no argument that the practice of the 11-plus damaged education and was socially divisive.

Those who take an interest in grant-maintained schools will have read a pamphlet produced by Peter Wilby, who is the education editor of *The Independent*. He advanced a persuasive argument that opt-out must lead to selection, and the only form of selection that would be available would be some re-run of the 11-plus.

I know that the Secretary of State would say that that is not the way that he intends it to work and that that is not the way in which it will work in the first CTC at Solihull. I respond by saying that I would want to look at that CTC over a number of years, because I am sceptical of how its intake will change. The Secretary of State contradicts himself, because he argues that the opt-out school will be popular. If it is, by definition there must be some process of selection. I fear that that process will not be made on any measure other than a simple IQ test at the age of 11.

Mr. Pawsey: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, when a school opts out, it will have to apply the same admission procedures and criteria as it did before it left the maintained system? Why does the hon. Gentleman persist in suggesting that some form of 11-plus will be reintroduced? With respect, he knows jolly well that that is not the case.

Mr. Fatchett: The Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), came up with what he thought was the answer and accused me of being naughty. There is another answer—I have read the Bill. If one reads the Bill, one will see that there is a provision for the character of the opt-out school to be changed after a period of years with the approval of the Secretary of State.

I understand the politics of Conservative Members, and I know what will happen. The Secretary of State will be under pressure—for example, from the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey)—to allow a school to change its status or character. I can imagine the hon. Gentleman trying to run a campaign on that basis. I can imagine the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth—we all know that he is a keen advocate of the 11-plus and of selection—saying to the Secretary of State, "There is a school in my constituency that would like to change its character." The Secretary of State would say, "It is important to do so because, if that school does not change its character, you might be in some electoral difficulties."

The persuasive methods that the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth would use on the Secretary of State would point only in one direction. The hon. Gentleman knows that I am not being mischievous, because there is power in the Bill to permit that change.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): We all know that my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) has tremendous powers and is almost superhuman in his regard for his constituency. To achieve the objective that the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) is saying that my hon. Friend would like to bring about, my hon. Friend would have to take a large number of people with him.

Mr. Fatchett: I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would try to do that. In Committee we discovered that the Under-Secretary failed to carry Kent county council with him. Every day we received letters from Kent county council criticising the Bill. The Under-Secretary promised that there would be no more letters from Kent county council. With that thread of Stalinism that runs hard through the Tory party, he said, "Leave them to me," yet we still received letters from Kent county council.

Mr. Dunn: They got better.

Mr. Fatchett: They got better because they became more critical as time went along. The grant-maintained school will be divisive because it will lead to selection, and it will be divisive for a second reason.

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): The hon. Gentleman suggests that there is no selection at present. Some of us think that selection for education might be based on aptitude and ability, but at present we have selection based on a mathematical formula which says that some children must be from the upper band, some from the middle band and some from the lower band. That is far more absurd and far less rational a method of choosing than selection on aptitude and ability.

8.30 pm

Mr. Fatchett: The hon. Gentleman widens the debate in a direction in which many of us would be happy to take it.

Mr. Straw: I dare you.

Mr. Fatchett: I am not sure that I do dare, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I suspect that you are about to point an admonishing finger in my direction. You may not have the same power over my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn as the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) had, but in present circumstances you may well have such power over me.

The hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) seems to have let the cat out of the bag. The Secretary of State may not agree, but the hon. Gentleman seemed to be arguing for the reintroduction of selection at 11 and the reintroduction of grammar schools and secondary modern schools. I suspect that the hon. Gentleman and, indeed, many Conservative Members take that view, but they do not have the confidence to go to the country on that basis because whenever they put that proposition to the electorate they are overwhelmingly defeated. Whenever they have tried to move from comprehensive education back to selective education, the Conservative-controlled local authority concerned has been forced to change its position because local parents, including middle-class parents and Conservative voters, have made it clear that they do not wish to go back to selection.

That is why there is so much public and parental fear about testing at the age of seven. Parents know that it is likely to be unscientific if the Prime Minister has her way. It is also likely to be divisive and to create a context in which youngsters are deemed to be failures at a very early age. Those of us who lived through the 11-plus experience know how it divided families and what happened to primary school teaching, and we know the great freedom that was given to primary schools with the abolition of the 11-plus.

Our primary schools now bear comparison with those in any other part of western Europe. We have very good primary education. If Conservative Members do not believe that, let them read the detailed report on primary education produced by the Select Committee in which my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) was involved. The quality of our primary school system is clear.

Selection at 11 was divisive. It also moderated standards. The same will happen with a simple system of selection at seven. As the 11-plus generation knows, almost without exception — I recognise that there are some exceptions — people deemed to be educational failures at 11 remained educational failures for the rest of their lives. The same will happen with selection at seven.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett: I am delighted to see such a queue of Conservative Members wishing to intervene. As always, I will show a bias towards Leeds. I give way to the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson).

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): The world has moved on, and the hon. Gentleman's arguments about selection at 11 no longer apply, as other education systems show. I have just returned from Boston, where I visited some magnet schools in deprived areas in the east and south of the city. There they believe not in selection but in specialisation. There are schools specialising in information technology, mathematics and science in the poorest parts of the city. That is the way in which we should be thinking and moving in this country.

Mr. Fatchett: I agree that testing has moved on, and I respect the hon. Gentleman's knowledge of education. We sometimes disagree about education matters in Leeds, but I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's anxieties and some of his parochial difficulties there and I shall not bring them out here.

The hon. Member for Leeds, North-West and the world of education may have moved on, but sadly, the Prime Minister has not. The crucial debate on the Bill concerns the form of testing that will eventually be implemented. We have said time and again that we favour diagnostic and differential testing but we do not approve of simple pass-or-fail testing of the kind that the Prime Minister seems to support. We have moved on, as the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West and, I suspect, the Secretary of State have moved on in relation to testing, but I wonder whether the Prime Minister has.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: The hon. Gentleman is being disingenuous. Testing takes place every day in every school in the country. There are 10 or 12 different reading tests to diagnose pupils' progress. It is not a matter of passing or failing but of whether the child has reached the standard applicable to the relevant age group. If the child has not reached that level, clearly action is needed.

Mr. Fatchett: I think that that intervention was released on Monday in the Conservative party Central Office brief, which received some press coverage. We agree with the Central Office brief, but we are waiting for the Downing street brief, which is likely to be more interesting. We argue, therefore, that grant-maintained schools will be divisive in terms of selection.

It has taken me a long time to reach my second point. Indeed, I believe that Conservative Members are intervening as a matter of policy to try to spin me along on this. I believe that it is inevitable that grant-maintained schools will charge parents. We had a long debate about this in Committee, and the Minister of State was unable to reassure us.

Mrs. Rumbold: You had made up your mind.

Mr. Fatchett: I am a very reasonable person, and I pleaded with the Minister time and again to reassure me that there would be no charging. She replied that she would not discount the possibility of voluntary contributions from parents towards the employment of

additional teachers for science or modern languages, so as to enrich the curriculum. The nature of that contribution worried me, because its social context would make it increasingly mandatory. If a mandatory contribution is not a charge, I do not know what is.

For all their disingenuous looks, Conservative Members know that the logic runs in one direction. The grant-maintained school must be different, and it must offer more. That means that it will need more teachers and more resources. Unless the Government change the formula for central Government aid to grant-maintained schools, the only way to obtain additional money to change the character of the grant-maintained schools will be some contribution from parents. Grant-maintained schools will thus be divisive in two respects.

My next point was a victim of the guillotine and of the Secretary of State's great desire to curtail debate on these important issues. We understand why he wishes to do that. As we have said many times in the past two days, as the debate continues, support for the Government's proposals declines. The Government therefore have an interest in curtailing debate in this context.

The Secretary of State seems to be looking for something—no doubt the latest opinion poll. I will let the House into a secret. When we put the statistics to the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Dartford, in Committee, he said that he had a new poll which would go against all those carried out by national organisations. [HON. MEMBERS: "Was it from Kent?"] No, it was certainly not from Kent, because we know what it would have said if it had been from Kent. The poll was organised by and through the *Liverpool Daily Post*. It showed that in Liverpool 20 per cent. of people agreed with grant-maintained schools, while nationally the figure was 17 per cent. That really is a great achievement.

Tonight we should have had a debate, if we could have had the time, about balloting procedures — *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members will realise that, on the selection of amendments, that is almost impossible to achieve. We share in interest in a debate and a vote on the balloting procedures.

We have a proposal from the Government that a simple majority can change the status of a school. Reduce to its logical, absurd conclusion, that simple majority could be one parent voting to take the school out of local authority maintained control — *[Interruption.]* Well, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, West (Mr. McLoughlin) makes a sedentary intervention, but if there is a simple majority, a decision could be taken in this place by just one hon. Member. We have argued in Committee——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I refer the hon. Gentleman to the fact that balloting comes under Government amendment No. 300. Perhaps he could contain himself until we reach that amendment.

Mr. Fatchett: I always try to contain myself, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I have failed miserably on this occasion. I was trying to say that this is an important item, on which we feel that there should be some debate.

Mr. Cormack: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Obviously one understands why you made that ruling, but the House is placed in a difficult position because this is a central issue on which many hon. Members from all parties have strong feelings. You have been exceptionally tolerant of the hon. Gentleman up to now, but would it be possible to have a slightly more wide-ranging debate on this clause so that points which may not be voted upon, but are felt deeply about, may be aired?

Madam Deputy Speaker: I think I am extremely tolerant in the Chair and I understand the strong feelings of hon. Members. However, this clause is a very narrow one, with the exception of the first subsection. I am being as tolerant as I can. I hope that hon. Members will help me. I must advise the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) that balloting is strictly limited to Government amendment No. 300, but I shall try to make the debate as wide-ranging as I possibly can to meet the interests of hon. Members on this matter.

Mr. Fatchett: I certainly will not challenge your ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure that you understand the views of the House in this respect. You have reflected them very well.

There is a divide on this. We support local financial management, but we have reservations. We totally oppose the principle of grant-maintained schools. Our amendment links the two issues in a way that shows that this Labour Opposition is thoroughly constructive. We are a listening and helpful Opposition. As part of that, we are trying to make the system of grant-maintained schools work more effectively. In the amendment we are trying to suggest that if a school is going to opt out, it should have some experience of managing its own affairs before the process of opting out is debated and balloted on, and the decision taken. That seems a reasonable precondition.

It would be terribly damaging to the image of the Secretary of State if many grant-maintained schools ran into difficulties simply because they did not have the experience of managing their own affairs previously. So along come the Labour Opposition with an amendment which I suspect the Secretary of State will be keen to accept. I think that he will be keen to accept it because the Minister of State told us in Committee that she will accept it.

We know that the Minister of State—this was picked up by some newspapers at the time—is a keen believer in opt-out schools. Indeed, one or two newspapers said that for the first time she showed some real enthusiasm for the Bill. It was almost the glazed-eyed ideological commitment of the Prime Minister, but I know the Minister of State too well by now to say that she quite achieved such levels—or should I say such depths.

The Minister of State was deeply committed to the notion of an opt-out school. We know that the right hon. Gentleman is somewhat less committed—*[Interruption.]* Well, the Minister of State says that it was another of the Secretary of State's ideas. This man has more ideas than most of us, but I suspect that none of the Secretary of State's ideas will bring a great deal of popularity to the Conservative party. I wonder whether he will be running up and down the country in the next 18 months saying, "I am the man who invented the poll tax."

8.45 pm

We know that the Secretary of State had some reservations, because he said first that he would like a few schools to opt out. Then, when the Prime Minister said, "Thousands," in a typical Secretary of State word the right hon. Gentleman said that he would like "some" to opt out —not too many, not too few, but just enough tc keep the lady of Downing street happy. He just pitched it right——

Mr. Pawsey: Just right.

Mr. Fatchett: —so that he was saved from the Left, from the Right, and above all from Downing street.

Therefore, we know that the Secretary of State has reservations, but not the Minister of State, who, during the debate on grant-maintained schools, said of opting out:

"Experience of financial delegation is absolutely essential before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is likely to consider an application." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 26 January 1988; c. 893.]

To make sure that we had got the message correct, a couple of columns later, at column 895, the Minister of State—I can understand why she is now hiding herself in her papers — stated that there would have to be reasonable experience of local financial management.

All that our amendment seeks to do is to put on the face of the Bill the commitment that was given by the Minister of State. It is a commitment that was given by the believer and it should be important to the Government. I suspect that the Secretary of State will not want to distance himself from the true believer in this context. Our amendment simply seeks to give the Government the opportunity to make sure that it is the Minister of State who carries the day in terms of opt-out schools and the need for local delegated management.

Mr. Patrick Cormack (Staffordshire, South): The ability of the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) to skate on thin ice would have won him a medal at the winter olympics. When we are faced with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, who is justly popular in the country and the Conservative party, and who is also perhaps the most skilful tightrope walker in politics, we have a marvellous gymnastic contest.

You have been exceptionally tolerant, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I shall certainly not seek to strain your patience. We are talking about grant-maintained schools, the importance of those institutions and the importance of this innovation. Because of the constraints of the timetable, we are not going to have an opportunity to discuss matters that you would rightly rule out of order and which, were I Chairman in Committee, I would rule out of order myself, so except to say that balloting causes concern, I shall leave it at that.

In a brief contribution I should simply like to say that the concept of grant-maintained schools has caused a great deal of concern and apprehension throughout the country. However, I personally believe that my right hon. Friend is entirely justified in including these provisions in the Bill because I believe that it is right that parents in parts of the country where the local education authority behaves strangely should not feel that their children are imprisoned in schools, and in some cases in systems, that are totally repugnant to them. To that degree, I warmly endorse my right hon. Friend's innovative concept and applaud what he is seeking to do.

However, it is important that where a school opts out it should do so only because there is overwhelming desire that it should opt out. The Bill is deficient in two major respects. First, there is not that opportunity to demonstrate that it is the overwhelming desire of parents to opt out, and secondly the Bill gives enormous powers in that respect, as in others, to the Secretary of State.

I have great trust and faith in my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, which may be touching concept for Opposition Members, but it is a genuine feeling on my part. However, I do not feel that I should necessarily have the same confidence in other people who might occupy that job, from whichever party they were chosen. I also believe that one of the cardinal principles of government in a democracy should be that one does not take powers to oneself that one is unhappy about one's opponents exercising.

If there is one single fault that runs through much of the legislation that the Government have introduced since 1979, it is that far too often Secretaries of State, in Act after Act, have taken powers to themselves that they would be very unhappy to see in the hands of Labour Secretaries of State or even, if one has that delightful, charitable flight of fancy, a Liberal Secretary of State. Therefore, in the weeks and months ahead when the Bill goes to another place, where their Lordships are not constrained by the timetable that inhibits and restricts us, I hope that my right hon. Friend will show the pragmatism, the breadth of mind, the depth of understanding and the intuitive sympathy that he showed when he replied in that magisterial speech to the debate on religious education to become contagious within his cranium.

Mr. Dalyell: Would this little homily and lecture apply to editors of *The House Magazine* who pulp pre-Christmas issues?

Mr. Cormack: If I answer that mischievous intervention, you will rightly rule me out of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. When the hon. Gentleman has a hobby horse, he will ride it, wherever he may be. I am only surprised that I was not asked about references to the Belgrano.

Dr. Hampson: Will my hon. Friend draw the attention of our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State when he considers the matter and, indeed, those in the other place, to amendment No. 83, which was not selected? It shows a broad range of opinion, led by our hon. Friend the Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Sir H. Rossi). A wide range of knights and others in the Conservative party are expressing exactly the same sentiment as my hon. Friend.

Mr. Cormack: I believe that I have reasonably good company in the sentiments that I am expressing. If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State takes a little time between now and when the Bill comes back from the House of Lords to reflect on the general sentiment that I am seeking to express, I think that he will find that it is echoed in many parts of the Conservative party as well as in many parts of the country.

I leave it at that. I say to my right hon. Friend that the concept is admirable, but the manner in which he is seeking to execute it leaves a great deal to be desired.

Mr. Cyril Smith (Rochdale): I have sat in the Chamber since approximately 4 pm and I have listened to many speeches. I consider that this clause is the most important part of the whole Education Reform Bill now before the House of Commons and shortly to go to the House of Lords. It is the most important part because it eats and digs away at, and destroys, the roots of local government and its influence on education. We should not underestimate, or deal flippantly or jocularly with, a clause that is doing what this clause will inevitably do to the education system throughout the land. It is extremely important. We should not minimise in any way the importance of what we are being asked to do.

I have heard many hon. Members extol their record in education. In all matters, I always hide my light under a bushel, but I was a member of an education committee for 23 years and chairman of an education committee for over six years. The education system that we developed in Rochdale was a system of which we can be and are proud.

When I listened to the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) extolling the virtues of the system in Wigan, it went through my mind that since he was educated in the system in Rochdale that I introduced while I was chairman of the Rochdale education committee, the qualities of that system have washed off on him and he has passed them on to the Wigan education authority. I interviewed the hon. Gentleman for a scholarship when he was 18, in my capacity as chairman of the committee. All that that does is to show what a young man the hon. Gentleman was when he took an interest in those matters.

There are education authorities that leave much to be desired, but they are few in number. I have never been in favour of taking sledgehammers to crack nuts. That is what the Bill is all about. It is about taking a sledgehammer to crack a small nut. At present my education authority is seeking to reorganise education and, indeed, to destroy excellence in Rochdale's education system, which I deplore and shall oppose. However, I do not believe that the system of opting out is the way to deal with such a situation. I still believe that local influence and local authority planning over a wide geographical area are vital elements in planning the education system for the whole area. I do not believe that one can achieve the overall pattern and system of education and the overall quality of education if one allows certain parts of a geographical area to opt out of the system and leaves the others to paddle their own canoe.

I listened to the Secretary of State's reply on Catholic organisation. I was delighted to hear his concessions, but I say with great respect, perhaps at some cost to ultimate decisions—who knows?—that my experience of the right hon. Gentleman is such that he does not follow parents' wishes. A matter was placed before him concerning the reorganisation of Catholic education in Rochdale. Because the bishops urged the right hon. Gentleman to support the scheme, he did so and approved it, although 97 per cent. of the parents who had children in those Catholic schools had objected to and opposed it.

I read with great interest the articles in the *Sunday Express*—indeed, I would have been tempted to put pen to paper had it been a respectable newspaper. The experience of the right hon. Gentleman's approach to parental objection, as outlined the *Sunday Express*, was similar to mine.

In the past two weeks I have had occasion to see the Secretary of State about another matter and I was accompanied by all four of the governors elected by the parents of the two schools in question. I have not yet received his decision about that matter, but it will be extremely interesting to see whether he upholds the views of the parents in that case or, once again, overrules them. I am not entirely happy with the suggestion that we have a Secretary of State who is always keen to uphold the views of parents. Whether he upholds the views of parents or not, I am certain about one thing—opting out is not the answer.

9 pm

The hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said that opting out would lead to divisions and the reintroduction of the 11-plus. When he said that, I turned to the hon. Member for Wigan—we have known each other for a long time—and said, "That is not the key issue. The key issue is ability to pay." The hon. Member for Leeds, Central developed that argument later, and I agree with everything that he said.

It is not a matter of charging pupils to go to schools that have opted out. Pupils may go to those schools free, but there will be trips to Germany, France and here, there and everywhere. They will be charged for music lessons after school. If they want to learn the violin, they will have to pay. If they want extra tuition, they will have to pay. Ultimately, class divisions across an authority will emerge and those areas where the parents have the ability to pay will opt out. The other parents will be left with the maintained sector because, much as they would like to send their children to a school that has opted out, they will feel unable to do so because they will be unable to keep up financially with the other parents.

Mr. Stott: I am following the hon. Gentleman's speech with a great deal of interest. He has already pointed out that we have many shared experiences and I admired what he did when he was a chairman of the education authority in Rochdale. The systems of Rochdale and Wigan are similar.

At the moment, schools are not simply places on the campus—education is in the round in Wigan, as it is in Rochdale. In Wigan, we supply the child psychology service, the reading services, Outward Bound hostels and many music facilities such as the Wigan jazz orchestra, which is similar to the Rochdale brass band. If schools were to opt out of the local authority, would it be able to charge schools for the remedial reading services, the child psychology service or the Outward Bound activities, which the schools and their pupils now enjoy as a right? The hon. Gentleman was absolutely right—all those things will cost money.

Mr. Smith: That is a valid point. The local authorities will be able to charge for such services. Indeed, because of the political complexion of some authorities, they will try to charge at a point that forces schools into difficult situations. I do not believe that the Secretary of State has thought this through and worked out all the implications.

Another important consideration—I do not want to be misunderstood, but it must be faced—is that there are schools—I have such schools in my authority—where more than 90 per cent. of the children are Asian. Will the Secretary of State refuse those Asian parents the right to opt out? If he does so, he is in difficulty, but if he does not he is also in difficulty. The right hon. Gentleman may smile, but he is walking into a minefield of racial hatred that can develop in local authorities where such problems exist. He should not underestimate the scale of that problem, because there may be serious repercussions.

If one school opts out, it can only do so at the expense of another. I believe that to be a fact and I do not see how it can be otherwise. It should also be remembered that children leave school. I accept that, to an extent, that factor is covered, but I do not believe that the hon. Gentleman has thought it through. Those parents who, in one year, wish to opt out and vote to do so may not be parents at that school in two or three years' time. Parents

[Mr. Smith]

change and the school—given the time period in the Bill—then has to start to try to get back into the local authority maintained sector.

What is more important is that head teachers change. From my experience of education, the headship of a school has as much to do with the quality of a school as anything else—if not more. I could quote schools in Rochdale where, at one time, we had a problem persuading children to go to them. If one changes the head, it changes the whole style of the school. I could quote a school where we literally had to keep pupils out because it was bulging at the seams. The head moved from one school to another and the kids followed him.

Mr. Carttiss: Like the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott), I have listened carefully to what the hon. Gentleman has said and I agree with some of his points, or did so at one time. Is it not the case that school governors will be much more involved in the appointment of heads than has been the case with local education authorities—I was a member of an LEA for many years—which sometimes impose a head who does not fit in with what the school governors want? The Bill provides parents with greater representation than they have at present, so the governing body will be that much better equipped to ensure that a successor to a good headmaster reflects the ethos that he has created and will not bring about a revolutionary change, as sometimes happens when LEAs force on schools heads whom they do not want.

Mr. Smith: With great respect, is it not a fact that under the Bill parents have only 30 per cent. of the governorship of the school? At present, a local authority may impose a head on a school. That has never been my experience, but I admit that Rochdale is a progressive authority and balloted parent governors 25 years ago. There is nothing new about that—only the numbers have increased. Only 30 per cent. of governors will be parents, so while at present the LEA may impose a head on a school, under the Bill the governors appointed by the Secretary of State will do that because they will make up 70 per cent. of the board.

Parents change, head teachers change and, although I do not wish to frighten the Minister, Ministers change. The right hon. Gentleman may not be the Secretary of State in a month. To be fair to him, I should think that he will be, but I would not put as much on 12 months. He will certainly be the Secretary of State until any reshuffle, and probably thereafter.

Ministers change. It is all right putting power in the hands of one Minister, but those powers apply to every Minister from then on until the powers are changed. I have almost 16 years' experience of this place and I know that, once a Minister has power, he does not come to the House to give it up. No way. He sticks to it and uses it. It is extremely rare to have a Minister come to the House asking it to withdraw his power; he always comes to increase it.

While some parts of the Bill may be commended, this clause compels me to vote against the Bill on Third reading, as I shall do on Monday. The clause is disastrous. It is a fundamental error. It will remove from LEAs their ability to plan for a geographical area. That ability is absolutely vital to maintain standards of education, to plan maintenance and the allocation of teachers, and so on. The ability to organise exchanges between schools because in one school five pupils wish to study Latin and four something else, and to merge schools for particular subjects will disappear. The ability to plan centrally will be removed.

While I deplore what some LEAs have done—I deplore what the Rochdale authority is trying to do—I still believe that that is a better alternative than allowing schools to opt out and get away from the basic roots of the system of educational organisation that we have come to know.

I said earlier that the Bill is destroying local government, and it is. Local government is about providing necessary services for people who cannot afford to pay for them individually. People are brought together, they chip into a kitty and they elect people to run the services and spend that kitty. If chunks are allowed to opt out, as is proposed, the very basis of local government will be destroyed. Opting out is a gross irresponsibility.

I shall support the amendments not because I think that they are the ideal solution but because they are better than what is in the Bill. The amendments help to obstruct opting out. Anything that makes it more difficult to opt out is worth supporting. I do not believe that the clause has been thought through, or that the Government fully understand its implications. I forecast that the Government will rue the day that they put the provision in the legislation.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): I represent a constituency in the letter-writing county of Kent. The county has responded positively to the proposition for opting out. The chairman of the education committee has said loudly and clearly that she sees opting out as a challenge to which she intends the local education authority to respond by maintaining schools of such a standard that none will wish to opt out. That seems to be an entirely appropriate response to the proposition that we should have increased variety in the educational system. So I am in favour of opting out.

I want to ask my right hon. Friend a simple question. Will there be assistance, particularly for primary schools, in carrying the burden of financial delegation? There is much more anxiety about local financial management in primary schools than in secondary schools.

Dr. Hampson: Kent seems to have every conceivable system that God has created—including, I believe, middle schools. In Leeds, all middle schools are categorised as primary yet they have more experience than most primary schools. They cater for the 9-to-13 age group. Unfortunately too many of them come below the threshold of 300. I do not know whether my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) feels, as I do, that there should be an acknowledgement of that by the Front Bench and that they should adjust the Bill accordingly.

Mr. Rowe: I see this great reform Bill as the beginning of a long period of evolution. We are bound to learn by experience. I hope that that point will emerge quickly and will be dealt with speedily.

In the debate on the financial memorandum, I queried whether what is left to the local education authority for financial management is not too much. I have an edgy feeling that, if we are not careful, the first result of the legislation will be a massive increase in administrative expense because we have not devolved sufficient financial

control from the local education authority to enable it substantially, reduce its administrative staff, while at the same time we are laying upon schools such extra administrative burden as to require additional administrative input. My right hon. Friend should consider carefully whether he should not take more financial control away from the local education authority and devolve it to the schools.

I particularly want to address one other crucial issue which has been touched on in this debate and in the previous debate and which should have more consideration. I was disappointed that the Committee did not give it sufficient attention. When we consider the eligibility of a school to opt out and the criteria which the Secretary of State will demand, it is likely that many groups will wish to opt out for wholly respectable reasons. But the consequence of their opting out will be to create a school of one religion, cultural group or ethnic group in such a way as to deprive the children in that school of the broadening influence of other groups.

9.15 pm

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is entirely right to say that there are safeguards against a school changing its nature in the first 10 years. But if a school with 80 per cent. Moslem pupils and 20 per cent. Christian pupils—as is the case in a school that was drawn to my attention—is given the opportunity to opt out, it is almost certain that the 20 per cent. of Christian pupils will have disappeared long before the 10 years are out. Schools that wish to opt out on those terms have a strong basis in principle for doing so, because there have always been Roman Catholic and other religious minority schools.

But there has been a significant change. As the world has shrunk in terms of communication, through travel and television, groups can identify much more actively with the causes of their fellow religionists or others of their race all round the world. For example, it would be easy for a school that had a substantial percentage of Tamil pupils to become a centre of Tamil sentiment and to identify closely with the problems of Tamils overseas.

I do not wish to over-dramatise the position, but I believe that not enough consideration has been given to the balkanising effect on British society of the understandable and wholly respectable desire of a range of groups to use the opting-out mechanism to create and maintain in perpetuity schools that will be narrowly focused. The problem would become much more dangerous if there was a substantial downturn in the economy and it was perceived locally that one group was being preferred over another—for example, in obtaining employment.

On the day when two soldiers are being buried as a result of an incident in a country that is rent by religious strife, compounded by disadvantage of one sort or another, I hope that my right hon. Friend will pay careful attention to the large number of requests to opt out to create the sort of school which I believe may be undesirable.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: We debated this important and interesting point at length in Committee. I can give my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) some reassurance. The problem will arise whether or not the school opts out. I have made it clear that a change of religious ethos or character of a school is a major change of character.

Just because a certain proportion of children happen to belong to one foreign religious faith, a school does not become a school of that faith. That applies to grant-maintained schools or to schools that remain local authority-maintained. Should there be a desire to change the religious character of a school, it must go through the full process of clauses 12 and 13—a process of public examination and debate. So a school could not suddenly slip into the hands of a minority——

Mr. Fatchett: Or a majority?

Mr. Baker: —or a majority, and I want to reassure my hon. Friend that there are safeguards.

Mr. Rowe: Of course, I take reassurance where I may find it and I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for it. I do not feel there is a great danger of schools slipping into the control of minorities; I am concerned about schools slipping into the control of majorities who, not necessarily at the time but in years to come, will draw many of their cultural and other priorities from outside these shores.

I admit that I am ambivalent about this. At one level I do not see why people should not be allowed to establish schools in which they can pursue their own moral, cultural and religious traditions. At another level, it is Government's job to maintain the integrity of the United Kingdom. As there are already examples within our shores of areas in which it has become impossible to recreate that integrity, the same may well happen in other parts.

One last example, and I shall shut up. Let us take an extreme one. Suppose that there are enough Sikhs in Southall who firmly believe in the establishment of Khalistan and they found a school in which that becomes part of the historical instruction, and so on. The national curriculum will protect against that only to some extent.

I am not being alarmist. This was an issue that we discussed up hill and down dale on the Swann committee for five years and found great difficulty in resolving. We came up with proposals that separated the teaching of religion from the teaching of sectarian religion, but that was not a satisfactory solution. So I have reservations about opting out, but this is my only serious worry. On the whole, it will produce a valuable element of competition, but it needs a great deal more thought than it has been given thus far.

Mr. Wyn Griffiths: Several hon. Members have pointed out that this is an extremely important part of the Bill and is principally designed to undermine the work of local authorities. It is taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut and, worse, it will deepen the divisions that already exist in education.

One of the insidious things about this part of the Bill is that it seeks to strengthen privilege by the DES providing for parents who would not, perhaps, usually think of going to the expense of sending their children to private schools, but who will receive a private education for them on the cheap in this way. In doing so, they will be causing local authorities untold difficulties of organisation.

What will happen when parents suddenly discover that the attractions of an opted-out school are taking other children away from their children's school, with the result that the local authority will say that it is costing far too much to keep the first school open and children in it will have to be transferred to other schools in the area? That

[Mr. Win Griffiths]

may not cause too many difficulties with, for example, transport in a populous area, but in rural areas it could be a disaster. It is just one example of the way in which the opting-out provision will adversely affect many parents and children.

What will the admission procedures be in schools that opt out and are then over-subscribed? Will the headmaster say that, in the first instance, children who already have a brother or sister at that school will have first choice? Will he then say that those children living within a mile of the school will have automatic right of entry? What about the other children? We need to know exactly what the admission procedures will be when a school is deemed to be full. I hope that the Secretary of State will give a detailed explanation of what will happen.

Some schools have special units attached to them, which often use a wide range of specialist services provided by the local authority and also some of the facilities in special schools. A school in my constituency, in which my wife works, has a unit for children with special needs. The school, which is at Brackla, uses the swimming pool of a special school in Bridgend. It is an integral part of the service provided by the Mid Glamorgan education authority, which is one of the leaders in providing for special needs and in seeking to integrate such pupils into the mainstream system. If that school opted out, should it have to pay for the services of the swimming pool? The education authority will have to decide whether to make a charge based on the marginal cost of running that school, or whether it would have to charge the whole cost of the time spent in the swimming pool.

The headmaster might decide to cut specialist provision because he is finding it difficult to make ends meet.

Mr. Stott: Unless the Government provide funds.

Mr. Griffiths: Yes. Will the Secretary of State specifically provide funding for special units within mainstream schools that opt out? Will he tell us his exact intentions? Children with special needs have very different funding needs within the education system. The right hon. Gentleman will have to set up a complicated system of provision to cover all those different needs.

This part of the Bill is a disaster for the British education system and a disaster for our children. Parents in schools that opt out will have education on the cheap at the taxpayers' expense. The Government would be far more honest if they dropped the clause and instead devoted their attention to the proper funding of the whole of the maintained sector. They must ensure quality of education, through a decent, flexible national curriculum, in all our schools, including those in the independent sector.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): The hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) waxed eloquent on the dangers of this part of the Bill. I agree with much of what he said, but the logical conclusion to be drawn from his remarks about the behaviour of some local education authorities was that opting out as a matter of last resort was beneficial.

One of the peculiarities of the guillotine procedure is that not only can we not vote on the most important matters in the Bill but we cannot speak about them, because of the rules of order. I do not want to trespass beyond the rules of order—I am probably less skilful than my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson).

If opting out is a matter of last resort, as I think it should be, it follows that the procedure to opt out should not be made as easy as possible, as it is under the Bill. There should be a hurdle to jump before it can be carried out. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider this matter seriously. He knows that there is a considerable body of opinion that thinks along these lines. I hope that my right hon. Friend will ensure that a proper hurdle is built.

9.30 pm

Mr. Flannery: We are discussing the fundamental part of the Bill. If this group of clauses were missing, the Bill would fall apart, because they are at the centre. In an intervention, the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) said that the world has moved on. The implication was that the Opposition had not moved with it. But the Bill takes not just a few steps back; it goes a great way back.

It is sad to see the docile way in which Conservative Members fall into line, even those who struggled for some time against the Conservative leadership and lost their positions for doing so.

Mr. Stott: With honourable exceptions.

Mr. Flannery: I am not bothered about the exceptions. I want to get on with the opting out.

There is no basis for this opting out, except crude dogmatism about education. It is selection by the back door. It springs from the long vendetta against comprehensive education and especially against the elected local education authorities. There is determined opposition to the Bill throughout the country. When one looks at one's postbag, one wonders who supports the Government, apart from the docile Conservative Members. I think that virtually all LEAs are against the Bill.

The teachers' unions were unnecessarily pushed into taking disruptive action for two years. Eventually, the money which could have been given to them two years before and which could have stopped all the nonsense, came forward.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Flannery: Not just now, Paddy. I think that the hon. Gentleman has had a good deal today.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Give way.

Mr. Flannery: I want to continue. I shall not give way to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown).

Mr. Ashdown: I gave way.

Mr. Flannery: The hon. Gentleman gives way only to people whom he thinks are important. He does not bother giving way to people like me. The hon. Gentleman is not as important as he thinks he is.

Mr. Ashdown: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Flannery: Stop interrupting and let me get on with what I want to say.

Mr. Ashdown: Give way, briefly.

Mr. Flannery: It will not be a brief intervention.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members should return to the subject.

Mr. Flannery: This fathead will not shut up.

I should like to list the bodies that are against the Bill. Virtually all the LEAs, all the teachers' unions, except for one particularly servile little organisation, all the parent-teacher associations, the National Association of Head Teachers and the Secondary Heads Association—all the people who make the education system work on an organised basis—are against the Bill and especially this part of it.

As I said in Committee, this is a step in the dark. The Government do not have the faintest idea where they will go. It is obvious to anyone who has worked in education what will happen. Nearly all Conservative Members went to private schools and do not understand the complexity of dealing with the education of millions of our people. While the practical effects of the Bill are being worked out and its provisions are producing chaos, Conservative Members' children will still be going to private schools. It is our children that they are flinging into this mess by disrupting an education system worked out patiently and democratically over 100 years or more.

Mr. Ashdown: According to the Whip, the hon. Gentleman has two minutes.

Mr. Flannery: The voucher system came first——

Mr. Ashdown: Two minutes.

Mr. Flannery: Shut up. I think that I have done my best against the ugliness of the hon. Member for Yeovil, so I conclude by saying that the Bill is unworkable. Opting out is a wild plan inspired by sectarian hatred of the present democratic system of education built up so patiently over the years. It is a veritable leap in the dark and it is bound to cause chaos. There is no precedent for it. The Government have no idea where they are going. The provision will be extremely expensive. It has now become public that the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have fallen out over that and we understand that their difference is going deeper. The courses needed to train people in how to do their best with the provision will be extremely expensive and will take people out of school.

The Conservative party, dizzy with success, does not know where it is going. Conservative Members are carrying out what their mistress told them the Friday before the general election, when she got totally carried away. The reality is that the provisions are a major leap in the dark. The Bill will not work, and opting out is something that nobody sensible could possibly have conceived of.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): Although I strongly support the principle of opting out, I believe that a majority of all parents should have to make the decision. The decision to opt out is an extremely important decision for a school to make. If a school wishes to opt out, well and good, but it should not be done by the decision of a minority of parents. I am a consumer of state education. The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) seems to think that all Conservative Members went to Eton or Benenden and that we send our children there. We send our children to state schools. We believe in state education, but we also believe in the right of parents to choose. We believe that parental choice should be solid and clear. I support the amendment and believe that the decision must be made by a majority of all parents and not simply by those voting. A decision to opt out will then be the parents' decision, and that is right.

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): I have found the debate fascinating. In the interests of consistency, I shall continue to talk about process, as I tried to do throughout the Committee stage. Process is the essence of education; it is at the centre. In a sense, this debate has highlighted the problems that the Government have with process, which arise largely from the woefully inadequate consultation that they have allowed on the Bill and the woefully poor response to what consultation there has been.

It is not insignificant that we are now discussing what many of us consider to be the most important part of the Bill in such a short debate. Our proceedings are to be guillotined and we have not had an opportunity this evening, or at any time during our proceedings on the Bill, properly to deliberate or to hear all the views. We have heard some interesting views tonight, particularly from Conservative Members. There is great anxiety in schools and local authorities and among parents about these measures and about the role that they will play.

I was at a school on Saturday—yes, Saturday—and two teachers had been there all day with a group of children who were producing a school magazine. They asked me where that would come in the national curriculum, and I was not quite sure how I should answer them. They told me that three of their school governors have already said that they will not stand again after this year because they fear the proposals on local financial management. I am concerned that a lack of consultation has failed to reassure parents and governors and has failed to give them confidence as to what it is all about.

It seems to be my lot to keep speaking when our sergeant-major tells me that I have only half a minute. To have only one and a half hours on the serious issue of opt-out is bizarre.

Two aspects of opt-out are problematical. One is the massive centralisation and the other is the essential divisive nature that it adds to our education system. If education is going to do anything, it should enable the children of our country to begin to know one another, to begin to know and understand the nature of our society and how they as individuals will contribute to that society and work within it. The tragedy of opt-out is that it cuts to the very heart of what I see as the benefits of education. It celebrates and encourages divisions. It does not work towards eradicating divisions and does not help us to learn how to work together in our society.

There are many other things that I would like to say but I have been told to wind up and I shall do so. I hope that the Secretary of State, if he does not listen to us, will at least begin to listen to some of his hon. Friends, and that he will recognise that the Government have got this wrong and that they need to think it through again and that they need to take people with them in doing so.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: This has been an interesting debate and has ranged widely over the issue of grant-maintained schools. I shall try to reply to the various points that have been raised. I should like to express my disappointment at the fact that there has not been a direct debate or vote on the balloting procedures. I am not criticising the selection of the Chair, but I am disappointed for the simple reason

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

that I had prepared a long and effective speech on that matter which I shall now save for another occasion. However, I shall touch upon it and draw from it from time to time.

I shall reply to the points made on the amendments by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) because he did touch on the amendments at the end of his speech. I do not criticise him for dealing with other matters. I shall obviously recommend my hon. Friends to reject the amendments.

The purpose of the amendments was to delay the process of the grant-maintained status coming through until schools have had financial delegation. I intend that the first grant-maintained schools should be able to start their new lives from September 1989. It would be quite wrong to raise expectations of freedom only to say that schools will have to wait three or four years until they have clearly identifiable budgets under local authority schemes of financial delegation. I mean to ensure that greater choice for parents and greater autonomy for schools are realities by the end of this Parliament.

I accept that the first grant-maintained schools may come from local authorities that have not, at that stage, implemented financial delegation. Initially, we shall have to make estimates of the appropriate maintenance grant based on historic funding levels and the funding of comparable schools in the area.

Local education authorities are now required to publish statements of their expenditure on individual schools and the contents of those statements will be more carefully defined as a result of the Bill. The better the figures are, the less scope there will be for argument about the appropriate level of funding for grant-maintained schools.

As soon as financial delegation is in place, the determination of the school's maintenance grant will be based on the formula that the local authority has developed for allocating resources between schools. There will be necessary additions to allow for the grant-maintained school's share of the resources that it can spend on central services.

9.45 pm

Mr. Fatchett: The Secretary of State has moved considerably from what was said in Committee. The Minister of State said:

"Experience of financial delegation is absolutely essential before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is likely to consider an application"

for opt-out. Was the Minister of State right, or has the Secretary of State now shifted his policy?

Mr. Baker: I was present during the debate, which was about primary schools, which are not subject to financial delegation. The interpretation of that debate is entirely compatible with the statement that I have read. At the end of the debate my hon. Friend the Minister of State said:

"I do not want to commit my right hon. Friend now on such a broad question." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 26 January 1988; c. 893-96.]

Mr. Fatchett: The Secretary of State will recall that during that debate Conservative Members asked questions about the category of school that could opt out. Those questions were about numbers and not about whether the schools were primary or secondary. In response to that, the Minister of State spoke about the need for experience of delegated financial management. The Secretary of State's assertion that the Minister of State was simply dealing with primary schools does not hold water. She was either wrong then or the Secretary of State is now shifting policy.

Mr. Baker: Primary schools are related to the fact that under our proposals, all secondary schools, as well as primary schools with more than 300 pupils, will be allowed to opt out. That is entirely compatible.

The hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) said that, when schools were allowed to opt out, it would be impossible for local authorities to plan. I think that that was the nub of his argument. I accept that local education authorities will be operating in a more uncertain climate once schools have the chance to opt out. If they are doing their best to provide the sort of service that parents want, they will have little to worry about. They might even welcome a little healthy competition, which would be welcomed by many local education authorities.

There is no reason why sensible proposals for the rationalisation of local authority school provision should slow down. Local authorities already have to take account of the existence of schools that they do not maintain in their planning of their area's educational requirements, and grant-maintained schools will not change that. I say to hon. Members who are concerned about the role of local education authorities after all our reforms are passed that there will still be a substantial role for such authorities after the implementation of financial delegation, open enrolment and grant-maintained schools. The Coopers and Lybrand report brought that out strongly and it itemised the roles and responsibilities of local education authorities.

First, and perhaps most important, local authorities will continue to be responsible for making decisions about the shape and resourcing of their school provision as a whole, and they will decide how much collectively has to be spent on education in their areas. That is a key and important role. Secondly, they will need to continue to monitor the performance of the entire system and will be responsible through their inspectors for the delivery of the national curriculum in their schools. That is an important and regular inspection review and a fundamental responsibility for local education authorities.

The LEAs will continue to have responsibilities in connection with the welfare of their pupils. Those are the statutory responsibilities of local education authorities. It is important to note that they will retain for all the pupils in their area the responsibilities that they were given under the Education Act 1981 in respect of children with special needs. Of course they will be greatly involved in the planning of further education in their areas. I suggest to hon. Members who have expressed anxiety about this matter than there will still be a considerable role for local education authorities after our reforms have worked through.

Mr. Spearing: Does the Secretary of State agree that this is a residual administrative sweep-up role and that the opt-out arrangements that we are discussing will give encouragement to certain education entrepreneurs and that gifted head teachers may be encouraged to do the very thing that the hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Smith) spoke about? They may set up on their own because of the greater freedom. Is that not one of the dangers for comprehensive local authority coverage?

Mr. Baker: I am sure that some gifted head teachers will want to opt out, but many will not. It will be for the parents and governors to decide in each case.

An accusation has been made that there will be financial discrimination between grant-maintained and local authority-maintained schools. Grant-maintained schools will not be allowed to charge fees; they are explicitly denied the right to charge fees. If the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) had been on the Standing Committee on the Bill he would know that we have introduced complex changes in relation to charging in all schools. I assure him that grant-maintained schools will have to conform to the new system of charging that applies to all schools. The system will be the same for local authority and grant-maintained schools.

As for differential funding, I reassure hon. Members that the amount that will be available for the education of a child in a grant-maintained school will be the same as that in a local authority-maintained school. There is no question of a bias in the money going to grant-maintained schools.

My hon. Friends the Members for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack) and for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) asked about the degree of support that should be shown for opt-out schools. I remind my hon. Friends that the process of opting out is a three-tier process. The governing body meets and decides whether it wants to consider opting out. It will debate the matter and decide by a vote. They then wait 28 days to reconsider and reaffirm that decision. There is that safety check at the beginning because such a change is important and should not be undertaken lightly; the governors will be taking on substantial additional responsibilities.

If the governing body decides that it wants to continue further, it puts the matter to a secret ballot of all parents. We believe that a simple majority is a sufficiently high hurdle. My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham asked whether the hurdle should be high. I suggest to him that a simple majority is a high hurdle indeed. No Government since the war would have been elected on the suggestion that he made. Tremendous commitment is required to obtain a simple majority.

Mr. George Walden (Buckingham): I am glad that my right hon. Friend is not remotely shy about the proposition that he is advancing. At present, education in many of our inner cities is run by local education authorities who have been elected as on as low a turnout as one third. I encourage my right hon. Friend not to be remotely shy about this issue.

Mr. Baker: I am glad to receive my hon. Friend's support and I assure him that I am not remotely shy. I believe that the hurdle is sufficiently high, and it will require a considerable commitment. I do not believe for one moment that when a ballot occurs for opt-out there will be a low turnout.

Mr. Cormack: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Mr. Baker: I ask my hon. Friend to restrain himself. I shall give way to him shortly because he was quite polite to me earlier.

It is fanciful to suppose that there will be a low turnout. When there is a ballot for a school to opt out, the local education authority will almost certainly campaign hard against it. It will stir up the parents, and those who are committed will have to run a strong campaign.

It is sometimes put to me, "Suppose only 10 parents vote and six agree but four disagree?" No Secretary of State could accept that as an expression of opinion. That decision would almost certainly be set aside at judicial review.

Mr. Cormack: I cannot understand what my right hon. Friend is afraid of. I remember when he and I enthusiastically supported the Dalyell-Cunningham amendment on devolution. I do not see why we should not build on that precedent.

Mr. Baker: As an alternative precedent, there was no particular hurdle in the referendum on the European Community. Devising fancy franchises with targets of 40 or 50 per cent. leads to dreadful muddles. For instance, if one stipulates 50 per cent. and 499 out of 1,000 parents vote yes, that is a tremendous body of opinion but it would fail for the lack of one vote.

The main Opposition arguments against the measure have been that it will increase privilege and give a greater chance to the lucky ones and that there is a hidden agenda designed to take out lots of good schools. Nothing could be more fanciful.

The proposal for grant-maintained schools is popular. The hon. Member for Leeds, Central chided me about opinion polls. I have a very good one here. Indeed, I have several. On 25 January *The Times* reported that 34 per cent. answered yes when asked whether they supported the Government's policy to allow state schools to opt out. There was also a very good poll in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. *[Interruption.]* Labour Members should not joke about that publication. I remember meeting Harold Macmillan in the Smoking Room one day. He was giving advice to various young people—he was very good at that—and he told me, "Two papers that you must read every day, young man . . . my boy . . .", and so on, "are the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Liverpool Daily Post*." I have followed that advice ever since.

The *Liverpool Daily Post*poll found that 54 per cent. wanted to opt out, so the proposal is clearly popular. Yet Labour Front Bench still talk about privilege, as the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) did today. I do not regard it as privilege to give choice to parents.

The House will know that letters between Ministers are sometimes leaked. I am glad to say that something has been leaked to me—the views of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). They came to me in a brown envelope from a well-wisher because that is how he usually gets them. I opened the envelope with great interest, only to find that the hon. Gentleman's views had been leaked to *The Guardian*. In today's edition there is an article by the hon. Gentleman entitled,

"Will Labour be able to manage?"

[Interruption.] The question is rhetorical, I believe. Clearly, the article is the opening shot in the leadership campaign which I see has been announced tonight. The hon. Member for Blackburn stands on the revisionist side of the Labour party. He is one of the young Members who are trying to bring the Labour party into the 1980s and we wish him well, although some of his Front Bench colleagues do not.

[Mr. Baker]

The article seeks to persuade the Labour party that consumers are important. The hon. Member for Blackburn writes:

"First, we must recognise that a nation of consumers enjoying relatively high living standards becomes literally much more choosy, much more interested in choice and variety."

I see the hon. Gentleman nodding away. The article gets even better. It continues:

"The expectation of choice—of independence—is one reason . . . why owner-occupation is so much more popular than the tenanting of a property."

Here we have it:

"The aspirations of choice are now spreading from consumer goods to public service".

That is what we are offering. We are offering choice in public service. We are offering choice to parents and governors who wish to exercise it to run their own schools. I say to the hon. Member for Blackburn, "Don't stay halfway—come right over!"

By the way, I am glad that the hon. Gentleman has moved on from education to the general policy of the Labour party. He has now recognised that the Labour party must move with the times and recognise the importance of parents as consumers in education. We are doing that. We are offering choice and variety—the choice and variety of grant-maintained schools, city technology colleges, and a whole range of schools. That is what will emerge from our Education Reform Bill. That is why it is popular, and why it must go on the statute book.

Mr. Fatchett: I cannot delay the House for long on this occasion. However, it is clear that Conservative Back Benchers were not happy with the proposal. Every hon. Member who has spoken in the debate has had reservations. If the Secretary of State is so certain, why does he not allow parents to have a real ballot so that the majority of parents can show their support? He is not prepared to do that.

We feel strongly about the issue and shall seek to divide the House on that basis.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the Orders, [1 and 17 February] and the resolution this day to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.]*

Question put, That the amendment be made:

The House divided: Ayes 212, Noes 309.

Division No. 229] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Grant, Bernie *(Tottenham)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Rhodes James, Robert
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Cyril *(Rochdale)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*

Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Begg, Roy
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*

Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Speaker *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments moved by a member of the Government, of which notice had been given, to that part of the Bill to be concluded at Ten o'clock.*

Clause 43

POWERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Amendment made: No. 294, in page 38, line 7, leave out subsections (6) to (8).—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 44

ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT

Amendments made: No. 295, in page 39, line 9, leave out from 'to' to the end of line and insert

'arrangements for appeals, in such circumstances as may be provided by the articles, to an appeal committee constituted in accordance with the articles'.

No. 296, in page 39, line 14, leave out from beginning to 'any' in line 16 and insert

'or

(ii) the permanent exclusion of any pupil from the school;

and for enabling the governing body to make joint arrangements for that purpose with the governing body of one or more other grant-maintained schools;

(dd) with respect to arrangements for the consideration and disposal of complaints relating to'.

No. 297, in page 39, line 28, at end insert—

'(ee) with respect to disciplinary rules and procedures applicable to members of the staff of the school and procedures for affording to them opportunities for seeking redress of any grievances relating to their employment;

(ff) with respect to arrangements—

(i) for affording to any member of the staff whom the governing body propose to dismiss an opportunity of making representations with respect to the proposal, including (if he so wishes) oral representations to such person or persons as the governing body may appoint for the purpose, and for requiring the governing body to have regard to any representations made by him before taking their decision; and

(ii) for affording to any member of staff whom the governing body have decided to dismiss an opportunity of appealing against their decision before they take any action to implement it;'

No. 298, in page 39, line 38, leave out 'provided' and insert 'required'.

No. 299, in page 39, line 50, leave out 'the head teacher'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 46

INITIATION OF PROCEDURE FOR ACQUISITION OF GRANT-MAINTAINED STATUS.

Amendments made: No. 300, in page 40, line 22, leave out paragraph *(a)* and insert—

'*(a)* the governing body decide by a resolution passed at a meeting of that body ("the first resolution") to hold such a ballot and confirm that decision by a resolution ("the second resolution") passed at a subsequent meeting of the governing body held not less than twenty-eight days after that at which the first resolution was passed; or'.

No. 301, in page 40, line 34, leave out

'occurrence' of either event mentioned in subsection (1

and insert

'passing of the second resolution required for the purposes of subsection (1)(a) above or (as the case may be) on receipt of any such request as is mentioned in subsection (1)(b)'.

No. 302, in page 41, line 4, after second 'the', insert 'second'.

No. 303, in page 41, line 6, at end insert

'(5A) A request such as is mentioned in subsection (1)(b) above shall be taken as having been received by a governing body if given or sent to the chairman of the governing body or to the clerk to the governing body (and may be sent by post)'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 47

BALLOT OF PARENTS

Amendments made: No. 304, in page 41, line 9, leave out from 'section' to end of line 11 and insert

'they shall secure that all necessary arrangements for the ballot are made by such body as may be prescribed ("the prescribed body").'.

No. 305, in page 41, line 13, leave out from 'to' to second 'to' in line 16 and insert

'secure that the prescribed body take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that every person who is known to the governing body'.

No. 306, in page 41, line 44, leave out from 'date' to 'for' line 46 and insert

'by reference to which the information required for the purposes of this paragraph was compiled'.

No. 307, in page 42, line 11, leave out from 'In' to end of line 12 and insert

'determining the arrangements they require to be made by the prescribed body for the purposes of the ballot'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 48

PROPOSALS FOR ACQUISITION OF GRANT-MAINTAINED STATUS

Amendments made: No. 308, in page 43, line 44, leave out 'of those categories'.

No. 309, in page 44, line 12, at end insert

'and the in-service training and professional development of teacher at the school'.

No. 310, in page 44, line 29, leave out from 'electors' to end of line 30.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 49

CONSTITUTION OF THE INITIAL GOVERNING BODY OF A GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOL

Amendment made: No. 311, in page 46, line 12, leave out 'such as to secure' and insert 'a number which secures'. —*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 54

PROVISIONS SUPPLEMENTARY TO SECTION 53

Amendment made: No. 312, in page 51, line 9, at end insert

'present and voting at a meeting held for the purpose (with the chairman of the meeting having a second or casting vote in the event of an equality of votes)'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Schedule 3

THE INITIAL GOVERNING BODY OF A GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOL

Amendment made: No. 343, in page 171, line 39, leave out 'that section' and insert 'section 42,'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 65

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS BY LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

Amendments made: No. 313, in page 63, line 5 leave out 'the following provisions of this section' and insert 'subsection (2) below'.

No. 314, in page 63, line 7 at end insert '(including the financial year current at the time when this section comes into force)'.

No. 315, in page 63, line 21 at end insert—

'(2A) Subject to subsection (2C) below, in respect of any financial year in respect of which a local education authority who maintain one or more special schools are required to prepare a statement under section 31 of this Act the authority shall prepare and publish a statement in accordance with subsection (2B) below with respect to the authority's financial provision for the school or schools concerned.

(2B) The statement shall contain the following particulars in relation to the financial year in question—

(a) the total amount appropriated by the authority for meeting expenditure in that year in respect of the school or, where more than one such school is maintained by the authority, in respect of all those schools, other than expenditure of a capital nature;

(b) the amount so appropriated in respect of the provision for the school or (as the case may be) for all those schools of services of any prescribed description; and

(c) where more than one school is maintained by the authority, the share in the case of each school of—

(i) the total amount so appropriated; and

(ii) any amount specified in the statement by virtue of paragraph (b) above;

which the authority regard as attributable to costs incurred or to be incurred for the purposes of that school.

(2C) Subsection (2A) above shall not require a statement to be prepared or (as the case may be) to include particulars with respect to any special school in respect of which, by virtue of any regulations made under section 32 of this Act, any information is required to be included in the statement prepared by the authority concerned under section 31 of this Act.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 73

CHANGE OF CHARACTER OR ENLARGEMENT OF GRANT-MAINTAINED SCHOOL

Amendments made: No. 316, in page 69, line 29 leave out 'The published proposals' and insert

'Proposals published under this section'.

No. 317, in page 69 leave out lines 35 and 36.

No. 318, in page 69, line 42 at end insert—

'(3A) Proposals published under this section shall be accompanied by a statement—

(a) describing any effect the implementation of the proposals would have on provision at the school for pupils who have special educational needs; and

(b) explaining the effect of subsection (4) below.'.

No. 319, in page 69, line 46, leave out from 'electors' to end of line 47.

No. 320, in page 70, line 22, at end insert—

'(8A) No decision taken at a meeting of the governing body of a grant-maintained school that would result in the submission of proposals under this section shall have effect unless it is confirmed at a second meeting of the governing body held not less than twenty-eight days after the first.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 76

DISCONTINUANCE BY GOVERNING BODY

Amendments made: No. 321, in page 70, line 44, leave out from beginning to 'and' and insert

'decide by a resolution passed at a meeting of that body ("the first resolution") to publish proposals under this section for the discontinuance of the school and confirm that decision by a resolution ("the second resolution") passed at a subsequent meeting of that body held not less than twenty-eight days after that at which the first resolution was passed;'.

No. 322, in page 71, line 1, leave out 'their' and insert 'the second'.

No. 323, in page 71, line 3, at end insert 'second'.

No. 324, in page 71, line 22, leave out from 'electors' to the end of line 23.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 81

DISCHARGE, TRANSFER AND TERMINATION OF LIABILITIES, ETC

Amendment made: No. 335, in page 78, line 45, leave out subsection (5) and insert—

'(5) Where—

(a) a school is established in pursuance of any proposals under section 13 of the 1980 Act on the premises of a discontinued grant-maintained school; and

(b) any liabilities of the governing body of that grant-maintained school have been terminated under subsection (4)(b) above;

the amount of those liabilities shall be treated for the purposes of section 14 of the 1944 Act (restrictions on discontinuance of voluntary schools) as expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State (otherwise than in connection with repairs) in respect of the premises of the new school.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 82

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE: FORMER VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS

Amendment made: No. 336, in page 81, leave out lines 29 to 39 and insert

'a school is established in pursuance of any proposals under section 13 of the 1980 Act on the premises of the grant-maintained school, any capital expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State in relation to the grant-maintained school

shall for the purposes of section 14 of the 1944 Act (restrictions on discontinuance of voluntary schools) be treated (if it would not otherwise be so) as expenditure so incurred (otherwise than in connection with repairs) in respect of the premises of the new school.

(8A) In subsection (8) above "capital expenditure" means any such expenditure as is mentioned in subsection (3)(a) or (b) above.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 83

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE: FORMER COUNTY SCHOOLS

Amendment made: No. 325, in page 82, line 30, leave out subsection (5) and insert—

'(5) Where this subsection applies the capital grant expenditure shall for the purposes of section 14 of the 1944 Act (restrictions on discontinuance of voluntary schools) be treated (if it would not otherwise be so) as expenditure incurred by the Secretary of State (otherwise than in connection with repairs) in respect of the premises of the new school.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 88

INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTER IV

Amendments made: No. 326, in page 87, line 6, leave out 'and'.

No. 327, in page 87, line 16, at end insert

'; and

(i) references, in relation to a grant-maintained school, to the former maintaining authority shall be read, in any case where—

(i) the school was maintained by ILEA immediately before it became a grant-maintained school; and

(ii) the function formerly exercisable by ILEA in relation to, or in relation to registered pupils at, the school are by virtue of section 139(6) of this Act exercisable by an inner London council;

as references to that council.'.

No. 328, in page 87, line 42, after '59(9)', insert and subsections (1)(i) above.

No. 329, in Page 88, line 24, at end insert—

'(5A) In subsection (1)(i) above, "ILEA" and "inner London council" have the same meanings as in Part III of this Act.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 90

AGREEMENTS FOR ESTABLISHMENT, ETC., OF CITY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGES

Amendments made: No. 351, in page 89, line 13, leave out 'free of charge'.

No. 352, in page 89, line 20, leave out 'such' and insert—

'(a) conditions and requirements imposed for the purpose of securing that no charge is made in respect of admission to the school or, subject to such exceptions as may be specified in the agreement, in respect of education provided at the school; and

(b) such other'

No. 353, in page 89, line 28, at end insert—

'(4A) Where such payments relate to capital expenditure, the agreement shall provide for the repayment to the Secretary of State, in the event of any time of the school discontinuing or ceasing to have the characteristics specified in the agreement and in subsection (2) above, of sums determined by reference to—

(a) the value at that time of the school premises and other assets held for the purposes of the school; and

(b) the extent to which expenditure incurred in providing those assets was met by payments under the agreement.'.

No. 354, in page 89, line 32, leave out 'previously' and insert '(a)'.

No. 355, in page 89, line 33, at end insert—

'or

(b) incurred by that person (otherwise than by virtue of subsection (4A) above) in consequence of the termination of the agreement.' — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 91

PROHIBITION OF CHARGES, ETC., IN MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

Amendment made: No. 345, in page 90, line 29, after 'school', insert 'premises'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 92

PROVISION FOR CASES WHERE EDUCATION IS PROVIDED PARTLY DURING AND PARTLY OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS

Amendment made: No. 346, in page 91, line 15, leave out

'subsection (2) of that section'

and insert—

'section 91(2) of this Act'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 94

REGULATION OF CHARGES

Amendments made: No. 347, in page 92, line 33, leave out

'education in question consists of individual'

and insert—

'optional extra in question consists of'.

No. 348, in page 92, line 37, leave out 'education' and insert 'tuition'.

No. 349, in page 92, line 38, leave out subsections (7) and (8) and insert—

'(7) Where charging is permitted under this section, the question of whether any charge in respect of the optional extra or the board and lodging should be made, and the amount of any charge to be made, shall be determined—

(a) in a case where the cost of the provision of the optional extra or board and lodging is met from funds at the disposal of the governing body, by the governing body; and

(b) in any other case, by the local education authority.'.

No. 350, in page 93, line 9, leave out '(8)' and insert '(7)(b)'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 95

CHARGES AND REMISSIONS POLICIES

Amendments made: No. 330, in page 93, line 28, leave out 'a governing body' and insert—

'the governing body of any school other than a grant-maintained school,'.

No. 331, in page 93, line 32, at end insert—

'for any optional extra or board and lodging provided for a registered pupil at the school.'

No. 332, in page 93, line 33, leave out 'any such body or' and insert—

'the governing body of a maintained school or by a local education'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 96

CHARGES FOR BOARD AND LODGING AT BOARDING SCHOOLS

Amendments made: No. 333, in page 94, line 3, leave out 'the local education authority' and insert—

'a local education authority or the governing body of the school,'.

No. 334, in page 94, line 5, at end insert—

'to that authority or body'.

No. 337, in page 94, line 6, leave out from 'pupil' to second 'the' in line 10 and insert—

'—

(a) at a school maintained by a local education authority; and

(b) under arrangements made by the authority on the ground mentioned in subsection (2B) below;'.

No. 372, in page 94, line 11, at end insert—

'(2A) Where the board and lodging are provided for the pupil—

(a) at a grant-maintained school; and

(b) under arrangements made by a local education authority on the ground mentioned in subsection (2B) below;

the whole of the charges payable under this section shall be payable by the authority instead of by the pupil's parent.

(2B) The ground referred to in subsections (2)(b) and (2A)(b) above is that, in the opinion of the authority concerned, education suitable to the pupil's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have cannot otherwise be provided by the authority for him.'.

No. 338, in page 94, line 12, leave out 'the' and insert 'a'.

No. 339, in page 94, leave out lines 15 to 18 and insert—

'(a) in the case of charges payable to the authority, shall remit so much of those charges as falls in accordance with subsection (3A) below to be so remitted; and

(b) in the case of charges payable to the governing body of a grant-maintained school in respect of board and lodging provided under arrangements made by the authority, shall pay so much of those charges as falls in accordance with that subsection to be so paid.

(3A) In the case of any such charges, the amount that falls to be remitted or paid by a local education authority by virtue of subsection (3)(a) or (b) above is—

(a) such part of those charges as the authority consider ought not to be paid by the pupil's parents in order to avoid such hardship as is mentioned in that subsection;

(b) if in their opinion such hardship cannot otherwise be avoided, the whole of those charges.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 97

CHAPTER V: GENERAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Amendments made: No. 340, in page 95, line 16, leave out 'the local education' and insert—

'which is a school maintained by a local education authority, the'.

No. 341, in page 95, line 18, leave out from 'means' to 'and' in line 19 and insert—

'(a) any school maintained by a local education authority; and

(b) any grant-maintained school;'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered tomorrow.

Housing Benefit

10.15 pm

The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. Nicholas Scott): I beg to move,

That the draft Housing Benefit (Supply of Information) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 14th March, be approved.

I understand that it will be for the convenience of the House at the same time to discuss the following motion:

That the draft Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 14th March, be approved.

Both are relatively detailed and small pieces of legislation which none the less make an important contribution to the housing benefit scheme as a whole.

In presenting the Housing Benefit (Supply of Information) Regulations to the House, the essential point is that the procedures which they contain in the main do no more than confirm liaison practices between local authority housing benefit offices and DHSS local offices which have existed since 1983. The current arrangements are based on the certification of housing benefit. This is a process whereby householders in receipt of supplementary benefit are automatically entitled to housing benefit through the issue of a certificate to the local authority. With the advent of income support, the distinction between householders and non-householders will disappear along with certification, and it is therefore necessary to ensure that certain information regarding benefit claimants can continue to be exchanged.

These arrangements will reduce duplication of effort both for claimants and for staff in verifying entitlement to income support and housing benefit, and at the same time ensure that in the majority of cases a local authority will be able to determine housing benefit entitlement without further contact with the claimant. These are sensible administrative arrangements which are supported entirely by the representatives of local authorities and should be approved by the whole House.

The majority of the provisions of the Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations relate to the treatment of income and capital payments from the Macfarlane trust to recipients of housing benefit. The House will recall that following a powerful case put to us by the Haemophiliac Society we accepted that the position of HIV-infected haemophiliacs was wholly exceptional. Accordingly, over £10 million has been set aside for these tragic cases and this money will be paid to them through the Macfarlane trust which has now been established.

The first payments from the trust will be made on 11 April and, as my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health announced last week, all payments from the trust shall be wholly disregarded in assessments of income-related benefits. Indeed, we have gone beyond this by ensuring that haemophiliacs need not even declare receipt of payments from the trust to either DHSS local offices or local authorities, so their position will remain entirely confidential. These regulations achieve both these effects for housing benefit, and yesterday similar regulations were debated in this House which achieved the same effect for both income support and family credit.

The remaining provisions in the Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations will enable local authorities for three months—that is, until 30 June—to make payments on account of housing benefit where they

[Mr. Nicholas Scott]

are unable to assess claims properly under the new scheme after 1 April. These regulations also enable them to issue short-form notices of determination for the same three month period.

Before explaining in detail how these payments will be calculated and reconciled, I would like to point out that I expect only a tiny minority of local authorities actually to need to resort to these temporary easements, particularly the payment on account facility. Indeed, it may help to put these regulations in context if I set out the results of a questionnaire on implementation progress which my Department issued to all local authorities in January this year.

By 4 March, some 315 authorities out of a total of 479 had responded. Of the 315 replying, 209 have confirmed that they expect to implement fully on time and a further 54 were awaiting confirmation that they will implement. Although some 52 have indicated they will not do so, we have reason to believe that this will prove in the end to be a considerable overestimate; I believe it paints much too gloomy a picture.

My senior officials have recently undertaken a significant programme of visits up and down the country; it was clear that, of those who said that they would not be in a position to implement on 1 April, many had erred on the side of caution and will have converted all existing claims to the new scheme and will be ready to assess properly all such claims by the relevant date.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): Has the Minister seen the representations from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on behalf of member authorities and from large authorities like Leeds which argued as recently as last week that it would have great difficulty in being ready for next month and asked if he would consider making the implementation date two months later?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman will have a chance to intervene in the debate. It might be better if he were to listen to what I shall say. Of course, I shall respond in due course to the debate. As I say, I think that the vast majority of local authorities will implement on the appropriate day. There may be a small minority who feel at the moment that they cannot do so. In practice, many of those will do so by the due date. I recognise that there may be a small minority who may not be able to implement.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Does the Minister agree that the "small minority" about which he speaks is some 17 per cent. of local authorities and that the relevant caseload on housing benefit may be as many as 1 million? Those are covered by local authorities which say that they will not be in a position to implement at the required date.

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman will know that I am always prepared to give way. However, since I will respond to the debate, I think it might be better if he were to keep his questions and comments until I have had a chance to set out what the Government intend to do. The hon. Gentleman may then seek to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker. At the end I will respond to the points which have been made.

A great deal of effort has been put into this by local authorities to achieve the result which would be in the interests of the Government, local authorities and those who are entitled to housing benefit. Although the timetable has been demanding, as I acknowledge, local authorities have responded positively. I should like to place on record my recognition of the part which they have played in achieving the results which will make possible the implementation of the new housing benefit rules.

A minority of authorities, for a variety of reasons, may face difficulties on 1 April. My Department has been asked to ease the transition to the new scheme for this group. The regulations which we are debating will achieve this. We will not postpone the implementation of the new scheme but we will produce regulations which will ease the position for local authorities which, for one reason or another, are unable to meet the target date. The regulations will provide those local authorities with an alternative method of assessment and a reduced form of notification to be sent to claimants—the latter being an easement specifically requested by the local authority associations.

We shall issue guidance to the authorities about the calculation of those payments on account of housing benefit so as to avoid the risk of large-scale overpayments. The regulations will ensure that payments that are made under the provisions are clearly identified and that subsequent overpayments and, indeed, underpayments will be fully recovered and refunded.

I trust that hon. Members will see the regulations for what they are — practical easements for the small number of local authorities that might otherwise be in difficulty on 1 April.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): Will the Minister elucidate the Government's thinking on one consequential effect of the regulations? Their effect is to extend to the public sector the arrangements for payment on account that are currently available to the private sector. As the Minister will appreciate, the subsidy provided by the Government for payments on account in the private sector is 97 per cent. of total expenditure. Will he confirm that the Government intend to extend that percentage to the public sector just as the regulations extend the arrangements for payment on account?

Mr. Scott: Despite the problems of many local authorities, which I understand relate to the computer software programmes that they have commissioned, they have available straightforward and simple arrangements to enable them to calculate closely the payments that they should make. I expect local authorities to implement the regulations either properly or at least closely in accordance with the proper methods, and that no special arrangements will have to be made.

In those circumstances, I believe that the regulations, which provide for contingency plans, should be acceptable to the House.

10.27 pm

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I can find nothing sensible to say about the regulations dealing with rating and valuation, so I propose to say nothing on them.

The other regulations before the House amend the housing benefit rules. I welcome the exemption of payments under the Macfarlane trust. The matter caused

concern to hon. Members when the Minister made his statement, and I welcome the fact that the Government have responded to that anxiety by exempting payments from the trust from calculation for housing benefit.

But I flag that welcome with a reservation. The more beneficial we make the Macfarlane trust and the treatment of payments to haemophiliacs, the more it begs the question about the other citizens who have been infected by HIV-positive blood products in the Health Service who are not haemophiliacs and who do not qualify for payments from the trust. The Secretary of State will be aware that I have been in communication with his Department and with his office on the matter.

As with this measure, the more that we extend the unique prerogatives and privileges of the trust — to which I do not object—the more we bring into question the fact that, outside the ambit of the trust, a few citizens have, entirely innocently, been infected at the hands of the NHS. In all fairness, they should have the same recognition and treatment as the House has decided to extend to haemophiliacs.

The thrust of the regulations is the Government's recognition that many local authorities will be unable fully to implement the housing benefit rules on 1 April. The regulations offer them a rough and ready calculation by which they may proceed on 1 April. Therefore, I do not propose to oppose the regulations. They are necessary, given the hole in which the Government now find themselves.

However, this does not diminish their importance as an admission of failure, in that a number of local authorities cannot get the system up and running by 1 April. That is not their failure: it is the Government's. Those same local authorities were promised 12 months' clear notice of the details of the housing benefit regulations. They got five.

The regulations that we debated last November were laid in the first week of November. The guidance manual to local authorities, advising then how to interpret those regulations, were not issued to local authorities until January, three months before the implementation date. It is a remarkable piece of effrontery on the part of the Government to take two years in which to decide what the regulations should be and then to give the local authorities five months in which to put them into practice.

The Minister referred to the survey carried out by the Government on the state of readiness of the DHSS— *[Interruption.]* I crave your assistance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would you advise those hon. Members who find that they have important things to discuss to hold their conversations in the Tea Room? The Chamber was not provided as a place for them to gossip in, but for official speeches in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): I hope the House has heard what the hon. Gentleman has said.

Mr. Cook: I am obliged, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Institute of Housing has today issued a quite different interpretation of the Government's survey of local authorities. It issued a press release this morning under the heading:

"Time Running Out for Crisis-Hit Councils".

According to the figures in that press statement, the survey to which the Minister referred contains replies from 281 councils, of which 101 are not in a position to implement the scheme fully on 1 April.

I have been carrying out my own survey of local authorities' state of readiness. It is a pity that the Government did not inform me that the DHSS was carrying out theirs; that would have saved me a lot of postage. The picture that emerges from my survey is markedly worse even than that which appears in the Institute of Housing's gloss on the Minister's study. I have, to date, received 119 replies from authorities, of which only 59 are confident that they can implement the scheme in full on 1 April. The other half—almost precisely—state either that they will have no scheme in operation by 1 April or that they will have only part of one. One authority, which will not be assisted by tonight's regulation, does not anticipate having a full scheme in operation until 31 December.

I stress that the replies from local authorities in difficulties cross all party lines. Among those that have informed me that they will have no scheme in operation on 1 April are Cherwell, Havant and Merton. These are not Labour-controlled, or even Liberal-controlled councils. Nor is it surprising that they find themselves in that difficulty, because the blame does not lie with them. It is impossible for them to perform better than the software with which they are supplied. Some software suppliers have now advised local authorities that they cannot deliver in time for implementation on 1 April.

The most conspicuous case of this — the Minister managed to avoid mentioning it, but let us have it out in the open—is ICL, which is servicing 90 local authorities. It is advising them that the first tranche of software will be available on 27 March, which, even if there are no snags in the software, and no additional training is required for staff, leaves those 90 authorities precisely four days, of which two are a weekend, to key in all the details of their cases.

There will be no facility for revision of the scheme until a further software package is provided on 24 April, and the software package will not be completed until June. I presume that that is the significance of the date of 30 June in the regulations.

As this is a non-controversial measure, we shall not divide the House, and I have no wish to score points at the expense of the private sector. In fairness to that great computer company ICL, I must say that the major task of putting on to computer the 105 paragraphs of the housing regulations was rendered impossible by the short time scale and the complexity of those 105 paragraphs.

Among the replies that I received from local authorities, I have a number of obiter dicta from the chairmen of the housing committees, who stress that point. The chairman of Merton council—not a Labour council—observed:

"There is no doubt that the late laying of the regulations made the job of producing software almost impossible within the timescale allowed."

The chairman of the Derby housing committee—my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) is with me on the Front Bench tonight—said:

"Our experience has confirmed all our fears that the timetable has been totally unrealistic. Even if we are operating in April, we will not be giving a proper service."

By far the most stark comment came from the chairman of the Birmingham housing committee, who said:

"It does appear that deadlines were set with the sole aim of seeing how many could be broken."

I hope that the Minister will not deny the difficulty of that tight deadline; his predecessor had the grace to admit it.

[Mr. Cook]

I have the minutes of a meeting between the DHSS Ministers and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities on 12 May 1987—a date that is engraved on the hearts of many hon. Members. The minutes state:

"The Minister apologised for the delay and assured the Associations that 'the regulations were not very far away' . . . The Minister would give no specific assurances as to the date of the regulations and said we would not 'necessarily have to wait until after June 11th'"—

a date that is engraved even larger on the hearts of many hon. Members.

The minutes continued:

"In fact he hoped 'to deliver within the next few days'."

That was 12 May. The final version of the regulations were not laid within the next few days, nor the next few weeks, nor the next few months. They were not laid until the first week of November, a full six months later. The interval between that meeting with the Minister, at which he promised that they would be laid within the next few days, and the publication of the final version of the regulations was actually longer than the local authorities were allowed for implementation of the scheme after they were published.

There is another area in which the DHSS must accept responsibility for the position that we find ourselves discussing tonight. It is the quite clear and deliberate underfunding of the cost of the transfer to the new scheme. The local authorities estimate that the national expenditure by local authorities on transition to the new scheme will be £46 million. The Government grant to assist with the hardware for the transition is only £25 million —about half the total expenditure. From the evidence that I have received from individual local authorities, I believe that that estimate is correct.

In case I am accused of being partial and citing evidence only from Labour heartlands, I shall give the figures for East Sussex, an area in which the merits of Labour representations have not yet been adequately recognised. There are seven district councils in East Sussex, whose total expenditure on transition to the new system is £796,000. The total grant from the Government is £426,000—barely 55 per cent. of the total.

I cannot resist rubbing home the extent to which Labour councils have attempted to achieve this as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible by mentioning that only one of the seven is a Labour council — Brighton. Brighton managed to keep its expenditure nearer to the Government grant than any of the other six councils, yet, despite the competence and efficiency of its housing committee, it failed to achieve that level and is therefore left with a net expenditure on the scheme.

The conclusions are clear. The Government have sought to introduce this major change on the cheap, shuffling half the cost on to local authorities. They have introduced the scheme in a hurried and impossible time scale. It has baffled the brains of the top computer firms which have had to turn it into a software package within the available time. In the 59th minute of the 11th hour, at the last gasp, the House funds itself debating these regulations which attempt to retrieve the situation.

It is characteristic of the Government's meanness of spirit that everyone but themselves will have to pay for their delays and errors. The regulations that the House approved only last November provided that local authorities could not recover an overpayment where it occurred through official error and where the claimant had no way of knowing that he or she had been overpaid. The regulations consolidated what had been the existing position on housing benefit for quite some time.

The effect of the regulations which we are now considering is that, if a local authority commits an official error during the transitional period to 30 June, it will have the power to recover that overpayment from the claimant, even though the claimant may have had no reasonable way of knowing that he or she had been overpaid. In view of the complexity of the regulations, it is hardly surprising that many claimants will be wholly innocent of the knowledge that they have been overpaid.

As the Minister said, there may well be some underpayments, but the overpayments are much more likely to exceed the underpayments because the new scheme that takes effect on 1 April is less generous than the current scheme. It is likely that errors will err on the side of overpayment rather than underpayment. One can only conclude that there will be hardship when the new scheme is put in place—as we have always known—but it will be all the greater if the new, correct calculation arrives after three months of overpayments which the claimant is now expected to repay. That is wholly unjust.

I asked the Minister about subsidy arrangements. I confess that, although I attended closely to his response, I am not sure that he entirely answered my point. Perhaps, during the debate, the hon. Gentleman will have a greater opportunity to reflect and take advice and so give a more complete reply when he responds. I shall put my query to the Minister in greater detail than I could in an intervention.

There are no regulations before the House on the subsidy arrangements for the new housing benefit system. I understand that such regulations are yet to come before us. It is yet another entertaining comment on the extent to which the Government are behind schedule with the scheme that at this stage, only a fortnight before implementation, we still do not have before the House the regulations providing for the subsidy of that scheme.

I am advised that 1 April has particular significance in terms of the procedures of the House. If the regulations on the subsidy arrangements are published before 1 April, they are subject to affirmative proceedings. If they are published after 1 April, they are subject only to negative proceedings. Having made that discovery, I suspect that we can be confident that the regulations will be published after rather than before 1 April. I can only wonder in retrospect how we let this slip through in the Social Security Act 1986.

As the regulations are not published, there is evidently time for the Minister to reflect on how he will integrate these provisions into the general subsidy arrangements. In general, the subsidy under housing benefit is 97 per cent. of all expenditure, with the exception of subsidy for overpayments in the public sector, which is only 15 per cent. The device under discussion extends to the public sector the system of payments on account, which are currently available for private tenants, for which the subsidy is, and always has been, 97 per cent.

I therefore put it to the Minister—I hope to carry at least my hon. Friends on this, if not the whole House—that if he is to extend the device to the public sector, he must extend to public sector tenants the same basis of subsidy and pay 97 per cent. for any overpayments that cannot be recovered by the local authorities.

Opposition Members strongly object to the new housing benefit scheme. I shall not weary the House by detailing all the objections that we made when we debated the parent regulations on 19 November. Suffice it to remind the House that the regulations will leave 6 million claimants worse off and 1 million claimants deprived of housing benefit altogether. Among those 1 million will be several hundred thousand who will lose their entire benefit as a result of the new rules on capital savings.

I am very sorry that the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) is not with us tonight, because last night he made a remarkable and memorable intervention in our debate. He said that the new system of benefit was needed to ensure that those who were out of work did not succeed in getting benefits that compared with those of people in work. The effect of the housing benefit regulations—particularly in relation to the capital savings rule—is to penalise precisely those who have taken the Government at their word by being prudent and thrifty and putting by a modest nest egg for their retirement. They now find that that deprives them of any right to housing benefit.

We condemn and reject the system that will be in place on 1 April, and we cannot but contrast it with the largesse offered in the Budget only last week, which gave sums well in excess of the savings from this mean and nasty measure to a mere 3 per cent. of the population. The least that we might have expected is that the Government, in introducing the new scheme, would not have displayed incompetence to pile even greater hardship on those hit by the changes in the benefit system. The regulations confirm that the Government have been incompetent in their introduction of the new scheme and that they are determined that the price of that incompetence will be paid by the victims in restoring any overpayment in the early period of shambles that will follow 1 April.

We cannot oppose these regulations, because they are a makeshift measure made necessary by the Government's own failure, but we thoroughly condemn the measure that gave birth to them. In a sense, we almost welcome tonight's regulations, as they are an early and damning admission of the pain and hardship that will break above the heads of so many claimants when the scheme is implemented in the coming weeks.

10.48 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): The position of my hon. Friends and myself is very similar to that of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). We share his concern and fear about, and his opposition to, the substantive changes, which may well affect two thirds of the families in my constituency—the number that depend on some form of supplementary benefit.

We will not oppose either of the sets of regulations. The first is a necessary administrative measure that was foreshadowed earlier and the second, as the Minister said, is necessary, given that the system would otherwise not have been able to operate as was originally envisaged. The regulations will improve arrangements that would otherwise have been very unmanageable. Therefore, I shall limit my remarks to a couple of questions about the Housing Benefit (Supply of Information) Regulations, and to some points about the general regulations, which are obviously of greater substance.

Obviously, I appreciate that the supply of information regulations relate, as the Minister fairly said, to the transfer of information between agencies. However, there are two practical matters that may arise in relation to the need for information by people who will be affected by these regulations and by the Social Security Act 1986. Both matters were put to me by my local authority, which is not one of the authorities anticipating great difficulties on 1 April. Therefore, my authority was not simply complaining about the date of implementation. However, that is a problem that faces other authorities and they make that complaint justifiably.

It looks as if there will be a problem because people who will receive less or no housing benefit and who will have to pay some or all of their rent will not realise that. That will come about as the result of a change in the level of payment coming through the housing benefit system. I know from constituency experience, as I expect the Minister does, that the result will be that people will begin to accrue rent arrears. Those arrears will initially be unseen because they will go on paying the same amount without realising that they have to make an additional contribution. At the moment, those most likely to be affected are those who have all their rent paid but who, after 1 April, will have to pay some or all of it.

I am concerned about how the process of supplying information will be subsidised and financed so that the people affected can be informed, particularly if the changes affect them adversely, and so that they will not find themselves with increasing rent arrears.

The second and linked issue is that one of the consequences of the regulations is that people may have to make a 20 per cent. rate contribution. People may think that they do not have to pay and, therefore, they will not pay. The concern of the officers in Southwark—it is a point of general importance, and I make it because I believe that it will be generally useful—is that the cost of chasing up those who will have to make that 20 per cent. contribution but do not do so, because they are not aware that they should, could be more than the revenue that would be raised for the local authority in question. That could be dealt with by supplying information. The Government should ensure that local authorities are given the financial wherewithal to provide that information so that people will not face rent or rate arrears from the beginning of next month.

On the general regulations, I join the hon. Member for Livingston in welcoming the provision in the regulations excluding payments made to haemophiliacs and the Macfarlane Trust. The Minister has traced the history of that change and the representations made from the Haemophilia Society, whose offices I pass every day on my way home just over Westminster bridge in that little strip of Lambeth between here and Southwark. It is a welcome move and the Haemophilia Society is grateful for it, as are we.

In relation to the general matters—these are perhaps the most substantial issues that we are debating—there will be a substantial delay in some authorities implementing the scheme. I do not know—and I do not think that the Minister knows—the exact figure. I know that research has been carried out about what it is likely to be. I also know the figure that was given to the Department in January. Of the 312 authorities that responded, 66 per cent. said that they expected to be ready on time and 54 per cent. said they hoped to be ready but were not sure. Clearly, many authorities will not be ready.

Mr. David Lightbown (Lord Commissioner of the Treasury): That is 120 per cent.

Mr. Hughes: Seventeen per cent. hoped to be ready but were not sure, and another 17 per cent. were certain that they would not be ready. Thirty four per cent. told the Department that they would definitely not be ready or might not be ready. That is just over one third of the authorities. I accept that as the day draws nearer authorities will speed up, because that is in the nature of things.

There are certainly specific problems and I hope that the Minister will have the grace to admit that these problems are not of the local authorities' making. As the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and authorities of all persuasions have made clear, the fault lies with the Government because of the delay in the regulations and the delay in implementing them. The Minister shakes his head as if to say that that is not the case. Looked at objectively, it will be seen that the delay was caused by the Government because they produced the regulations just 10 days before the date of implementation.

The professional agencies and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy are not accused by the Government or by anybody else of being partisan in these matters, and they make it clear that the delay should be accepted by the Government as their fault. Originally, this was to be implemented a year ago, but it was put back. It is very unfair for any blame to be attributed to local authorities.

I made inquiries of colleagues. One of them, Councillor Maggie Clay of Leeds, passed me a letter sent by Leeds city council to colleagues in Leeds and all Leeds councillors. That made it clear that in Leeds the delay was caused by the delay in the regulations. Because of that, the guidance circulars were not received until February, and the two that most affected software were not received until August 1987 and November 1987.

Leeds contracted with a software supplier in September 1986 and the software was to be in two parts. One part allowed preparatory work to be undertaken and the other

was the housing benefit software for implementation in April. Obviously, time must be allowed for manufacturers to produce that software and the planned date for ADC software was October 1988, while the main software was to be released in January to February. Once released to the city or local authority, it has to be tested, staff have to be trained, and it has to be integrated into in-house systems. For all those things three or four months is quite reasonable.

The ADC software for Leeds was delivered a month behind schedule because of the lateness of the regulations. Since then, the council has met the supplier's managing director and everybody has worked closely, and regular monitoring has taken place. The supplier announced on 3 March, just 20 days ago, that the software could be released only on a phased basis between 11 March and 28 April. That means that in some cases it will be released after the regulations are in force.

I hope that the Minister will accept that the delay was caused by the delay in the regulations, which is the fault of Government, and that he will not blame local authorities. The regulations will be some help to local authorities, but I hope that the Government will help them more so that they can get out of a mess that is not of their making. Can the Minister tell the House over what period repayment will be permitted? One of my hon. Friends asked about that in Committee when the parallel statutory instruments were debated last week.

If the Government provide all the necessary publicity and information about why repayments are necessary, what will that mean in practice for local authorities and people? Money will be needed to ensure that those who depend on benefit, and the local authorities who are affected by the regulations, are not harmfully affected.

It is far too late for us to be debating the regulations. Regulations coming into effect in 10 days' time should have been debated a long time ago. We have no option but to let them through, but I hope that the Minister will admit culpability on behalf of his Department and come to the rescue of local authorities, who will need help if they are not to be further disadvantaged by housing benefit changes that, for many people, will be extremely adverse.

11 pm

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): I am delighted to see that the Chamber is looking considerably tidier than it was last night, when we discussed the social security regulations. Last night, I raised a point of order about the state of the Chamber, but clearly the Prime Minister must have whisked through here with her spike and her black bag followed by the Secretary of State for the Environment. We must be eternally grateful to them for the fact that the Chamber is so clean. It is a pity that she did not collect all the Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations on her way through.

It is a pity that, at this time of night, we are debating something of such significance to so many people in so many constituencies. I look forward to the day when Parliament's proceedings are televised, because unfortunately, although these regulations will affect many people, I doubt whether the newspapers tomorrow will report anything of the deliberations on these regulations. That is a sad commentary on journalists, the press and the media. I suspect that I know what the headline political stories will be tomorrow, but they will have nothing to do with the Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations or the Education Reform Bill.

I commend to the House a page that appeared in today's *Daily Mirror*, which is headed,

"Now it's Thatcher, Thatcher, benefit-snatcher".

It is further headed, "Penny pinching the poor". I shall read the article for the benefit of those who do not take the *Daily Mirror*. It says:

"There will be some really nasty news for Britain's worst-off families in a couple of weeks.

They're most of the seven million who get help with their rent and rates. Next month they'll find out how they will fare under the new Housing Benefit scheme.

More than a million will lose all the help they've been getting. Five million will have their payments cut, including 2½ million pensioners. And it's all because penny-pinching Mrs. Thatcher wants to cut the cost of housing benefit by £500 million."

As my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) said, compare that with the largesse that was handed out to the richest of our society the other week.

Late at night, we are debating regulations that will affect some of the poorest people of our country. Yet only the other week we were hearing about the massive tax handouts that were being given to the richest. That is the contrast that makes the policies and priorities of the Government so obscene and so unacceptable to the majority of people in this country.

Regulation 8 deals with the payment of benefit on account when a full assessment cannot be carried out. As we know, normally, housing benefit should be paid by a local authority within 14 days after it has received all the information relevant to the claim such as rent book or bank statement. Where the authority has been unable to make the payment, not because of any delay by the claimant in providing information, the local authority can make a payment on account, which is an estimated payment.

Under the current regulations, if a local authority makes an overpayment, and it is its fault, the local authority can recover only the first four weeks of overpayment. If it is an overpayment made because of a claimant's error, existing regulations allow that to be recovered in full.

It has become clear that a number of local authorities are not yet fully prepared for the implementation of the regulations. New regulation 91A states that up to 30 June 1988 payments on account may be made by a local authority of

"such amount as it considers reasonable".

That is to allow authorities more time to get their systems in operation to make accurate assessments.

The benefit is fully recoverable from the claimant so long as the housing benefit staff inform the claimant that it can be recovered. That is clearly unfair, because it could lead to considerable amounts of money being recovered by the local authority when it eventually makes the correct assessment. The claimant will have budgeted on the basis of the income that he or she has been receiving to date. It may come as a surprise to Conservative Members to know that housing benefit claimants are not well off. The 46,000 who receive housing benefit in Newham are certainly not well off, and they will not be in a position to put money aside in case they have to repay some of it later.

If repayment is by deductions from future benefit, as it usually is, the claimant will be expected to live on a severely restricted income. What experience have

[Mr. Tony Banks]

Conservative Members of living on supplementary benefit or the incomes of people on housing benefit? I see the Government Whip, the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown), sprawled in his usual recumbent position and smiling. Given the capacious size of his belly, he would find it difficult to survive on the benefit levels that people in my borough have to put up with. Shame on you, Sir!

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I share my hon. Friend's sentiments in every respect. Does he agree that it is good news that the Under-Secretary of State who replied for the Government yesterday—the hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate (Mr. Portillo) — has apparently resigned and is now sitting on the Conservative Back Benches? Could it be that he has resigned in protest at the meanness of the housing benefit cuts and the way in which millions of our fellow citizens will be penalised from next month?

Mr. Banks: The young gentleman in question always struck me as far too young to be a Minister. He seems to be retreating as far away as possible from this unsavoury proposal, but he is still just about here.

Mr. Winnick: He is writing his resignation speech.

Mr. Banks: It must be a very long one, as he has been scribbling away all evening. I suspect that he is filling in his multiple share applications.

If a claimant is in no way responsible for overclaiming, it seems extremely harsh to penalise the claimant in the way that the Government propose.

The second important issue that I wish to raise is that of subsidy arrangements. The draft regulations contain no information as to how overpayments will be treated for subsidy purposes. Local authority associations have made strenuous representations to the DHSS that provisional payments should attract the full subsidy of 97 per cent. If no special arrangements are made, are we to assume that overpayments of this kind will be treated in the same way as ordinary miscalculations? If overpayment is due to an official error, it attracts only 15 per cent. subsidy. The Minister will doubtless wish to return to that. No doubt the Government will argue that overpayments of this kind are fully recoverable, so local authorities should not receive the full subsidy, because they can get their money back.

First, speaking on behalf of the London borough of Newham, I believe that it is unfair that the money should be recovered from the claimant, because the fault does not lie with the claimant. Secondly, we are talking about a crisis, certainly in my borough. Many local authorities are not ready to deal with the thousands of claims that they will have to process. One has only to recall the fiasco in November 1983 and in April 1984 and remember what happened to millions of claimants when they were first transferred to housing benefit. We do not want a repetition of that chaos.

As I said yesterday to the young gentleman then speaking on behalf of the Government but now retreating across the Back Benches, many people in my part of London do not even know their present entitlements, let alone what is to hit them on 1 April. As a Member of Parliament who has weekly advice surgeries, I know how many people already come to me not fully understanding how their social security entitlement is worked out, and I know what it will be like in my office in Stratford come 1 April.

Again I ask the Minister precisely what I asked yesterday: what are the Government doing to inform people in areas such as the London borough of Newham precisely what changes will be made and how they will be effected?

The regulations are difficult enough for Members of Parliament to understand, and there is nothing especially intelligent about the average Member of Parliament in comparison with the average citizen of this country, but at least we have good advisers to tell us what the regulations mean. They are difficult to understand and God knows how many people in my part of east London will make sense of the regulations that will affect them so sorely.

If local authorities are not ready to administer the regulations, the Government may ask, "Whose fault is that? The regulations were published a year ago. What have local authorities been doing since then?". I give it to the Minister that he did actually say that local authorities have made the most strenuous efforts to get themselves ready for the changes.

In my borough of Newham, the local authority general purposes committee debated the new regulations as long ago as April 1987, and took a decision to purchase the ICL assessment package, known as housing benefit information system, which was mentioned by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) and by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston. The preparatory work has been done by Newham council staff. However, in February 1988, ICL informed all its local authority HBIS users—about 90 in all—that the schedule for live releases of HBIS software had slipped to the extent that significant parts of the system—that is the capacity to amend or cancel weekly benefit entitlement, and to input manual adjustments—will not be released until 24 April 1988. As we know, the scheme is due to be implemented at the beginning of April this year.

For that reason, which is totally outside the control of the local authority, my borough will be forced to make payments based on assessments under the current scheme, and estimated payments under the new scheme for new claimants. I am advised that the borough's only alternative is to make manual assessments of its 46,000 claimants. The cost of estimated payments could be as much as £50,000 per week. As I told the Minister's colleagues yesterday, that is a dreadful burden for us to meet in Newham, which is the second most deprived local authority area in England and Wales.

It is not the fault of Newham that we may be obliged to make use of the power to make interim payments, nor, I imagine, is it the fault of those other 90 local authorities which are also customers of the ICL HBIS programme. For that reason, I ask the Minister to consider seriously, first, that overpayments made as a result of delays in implementing the new housing benefit scheme should not be recoverable from the claimant; and, secondly, that full subsidy — that is 97 per cent. — should be made on overpayments made as a result of interim payments on account paid between the beginning of April and the end of June 1988. People should be able to reclaim the full payment.

I hope that the Minister will be able to answer those points. Then I can at least go back and say that being here at this time of night to debate with this soulless and heartless Government was not altogether wasted and that we were able to get a small crumb of comfort for the people of Newham, who desperately need everything that they can get, even from this ruthless and heartless Government.

11.13 pm

Mr. Scott: I congratulate Opposition Members on being able to sustain this brief debate despite the fact that they could not keep their troops here to vote against the regulations. Indeed, they have very little quarrel with the totally beneficial effects of the regulations and I am slightly astonished that they did not allow them to go through virtually on the nod.

On the history of these reforms, some Opposition Members seemed to suggest that there was great surprise about the regulations, that somehow they had been sprung upon the House. Their outline has been known for many months, if not years. Reviews have been set up, and the whole system has been debated more than once in the House, not least towards the end of last year, when the whole body of regulations affecting housing benefit were debated at length and approved by the House by a majority of 125. These are tidying-up regulations to deal with two minor matters——

Mrs. Margaret Beckett (Derby, South): Mistakes.

Mr. Scott: They are not mistakes, but minor matters.

Mr. Winnick: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman could have made a speech, but I shall give way.

Mr. Winnick: The Minister should be grateful that he is able to respond to the debate sooner than he would have done had I made a speech.

Does he not recognise that the Opposition have consistently opposed the housing benefit regulations? Does he not recognise now that it is all the more obscene that those who have lifetime savings of over £6,000 will receive no housing benefit at all, and those with savings of between £3,000 and £6,000 will lose part of their housing benefit after a Budget that ensured that the richest 5 per cent. got 40 per cent. of all the tax cuts and concessions? There was once an hon. Member for Chelsea who was highly critical of the Government's economic policy. Had he remained on the Back Benches, he would probably have shared, if only privately, the views that I have just expressed.

Mr. Scott: I do not want to tease the hon. Gentleman too much. He had every opportunity to make a speech during the debate. The word "obscene" seems to spring to his lips with relentless regularity these days. We have debated the principle of housing benefit many times. The regulations are nothing to do with that. To be fair to most Opposition Members, they have not concentrated on the broad principle of their objection to the housing benefit system that we are introducing. Some of their speeches have been pretty peripheral to the impact of the regulations, but they have concentrated on them. But I understand the self-indulgence of the hon. Gentleman, who always likes to allow himself to revert on such occasions to more general principles, as it is obviously too demanding to concentrate on the detail.

This is a storm in a teacup——

Mr. Robin Cook: Does the Minister think that this is a storm?

Mr. Scott: Perhaps a squall would be a more appropriate description.

The debate has constituted an effort to make something out of what is really nothing. These are beneficial arrangements to provide for two things, the first of which is Macfarlane trust payments. The House understands that that is a sensible and compassionate way in which to deal with that circumstance. We are left with the single remaining issue, which is the arrangements that are being made for that small number of local authorities——

Mr. Simon Hughes: How many?

Mr. Scott: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will contain himself for a moment.

It is a small number of local authorities which, for one reason or another, will be unable, when the system comes into operation, fully to implement the system of housing benefit.

Many of those that have said that they will not be able fully to implement the system will be able to make payments to housing benefit claimants which are close, if not precisely very close indeed, to the entitlements. They may have to refine some of the marginal elements, but it will be difficult for any local authority to say that it is not possible now, after the notice that has been given and the time that local authorities have had to make the arrangements, to get close to being able to assess the entitlements of housing benefit claimants.

Mr. Tony Banks: I accept what the Minister is saying, but he would hardly notice a quid, and most hon. Members would not be too bothered about whether they had £1 less or more in their pocket, but to the people we are talking about it is crucial. Therefore, will the Minister say that, even if it is only a small amount, those people will not be required to pay it back, through no fault of their own?

Mr. Scott: I cannot say that to the hon. Gentleman. It will be for the local authorities to try to calculate the payments that are made to claimants as accurately as possible. They will be responsible for reclaiming any overpayments. The Government and local authorities have made arrangements to ensure that the claimants are well aware of the situation that will face them as the new system is introduced. In fact, many local authorities have tended to err on the conservative side to ensure that, if any error is made, it will not lead to any recoupment of benefit from claimants, but rather a payment to top up what they have been paid following the calculations.

The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) took me to task on a number of issues and perhaps some were more justified than others. One of his complaints was that we promised to deliver the regulations in May 1987 but that they were not delivered until November. The hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that the regulations could not be laid fully until the uprating statement had been made last year. Of course the final draft regulations were laid in May 1987 as promised, but the proper regulations could not be put before the House until the uprating statement had been made.

The idea that local authorities have been given insufficient time to prepare for the reforms is a difficult argument to sustain.

Mr. John Battle (Leeds, West): The Minister appears to be making light of the problems faced by local authorities. Is it not correct that some 90 local authorities, including Leeds, which is one of the largest, have contracts with a computer company that has been unable to deliver the systems? Why should the local authorities be penalised when it is patently not their fault?

Mr. Scott: It is for local authorities to make arrangements with such companies as can deliver the sort of software facilities that are needed to implement the reforms. The vast majority of the authorities have been able to make such arrangements. There may be a minority that will be unable for one reason or another — I acknowledge the great efforts that have been made to deliver the whole exercise on time—fully to implement the new system for a few weeks. I do not blame local authorities for that. We are introducing the regulations to provide an easement in the position in which local authorities might otherwise find themselves. I had hoped that the House would be in the mood to accept that that is a sensible and wise thing for which we should provide.

Everyone knew what the position would be upon implementation. I should draw the attention of the hon. Member for Livingston to the fact that the two largest housing benefit authorities in Scotland are Glasgow and Edinburgh. The hon. Gentleman will be particularly familiar with those authorities.

When circulating his slightly unsophisticated questionnaire, I do not know whether he bothered to ask Glasgow and Edinburgh how they were placed regarding the implementation of the housing benefit system. In the past week, after a visit from senior officials from the DHSS, I asked for a report to see how those authorities were preparing. Despite the fact that Glasgow has the largest housing benefit caseload in the country, it has achieved the implementation of the housing benefit system on time. If Glasgow and Edinburgh can achieve the system on time, I cannot believe that there has been insufficient time for other smaller housing authorities with smaller caseloads.

The hon. Gentleman also mentioned that Birmingham had criticised the delay in the regulations and the guidance that had been issued. Birmingham has now confirmed that it is expecting to make all the payments under the new rules well in time for full implementation.

During the debate, it has been alleged that claimants will be unaware that benefit may be overpaid and that recovery will be sought. The regulations and guidance issued to local authorities have ensured that payments on account must be identified as such to claimants. At the time of any payment, claimants must be told that, if there are errors and if overpayment is ever incurred, they will be expected to repay any such payment and that any underpayment will be reimbursed. There is no earthly reason why any claimant should be unaware of the terms upon which any contingency payment may be made.

Mr. Robin Cook: It is the case that the regulations provide that those who are assessed under the regulations will be served with, as it were, a public health warning that this is an interim assessment. But that provides no guidance to the claimants whether they have been overpaid or underpaid and if so by how much. It makes it impossible for them to budget against the time when they are served with the correct assessment. If a tenant were capable of working out whether he was overpaid or underpaid, why would a local authority serve him with a rough calculation in the first place?

Mr. Scott: Even if a local authority cannot get its full computer programme in operation, it should be able to calculate these sums. In practice—the hon. Gentleman must know this as he is broadly familiar with the terms of the housing benefit system—it will be possible for local authorities using simple methods of calculation to get close to the precise benefit that is available to any claimant. Some fine tuning may have to be introduced in the subsequent week or two before full implementation is possible, but I do not believe that any claimant will face a substantial burden of under or overpayment.

We have taken a great deal of trouble to ensure that claimants are told through leaflets and advertising, in the press and elsewhere, and that they are aware that a new system is coming into operation. The vast majority of local authorities will be able fully to implement the system on the date of implementation, and those that cannot will have only a marginal error involved in the payments they make.

This debate has been sustained with great difficulty. I well understand that any mention of housing benefit and, indeed, of social security reforms is bound to provoke the Opposition to some discussion, but——

Mr. Simon Hughes: It sounds as if the Minister is coming to the end of his remarks. I asked a couple of specific questions which he certainly has not dealt with, and I should be grateful for answers. He says that we are extending the debate artificially, but there have been some genuine questions. One was: how long will people have to repay? Another was: will local authorities have their money reimbursed for their expenditure on explaining what is going on?

Mr. Scott: I do not believe that there is any case for the Government providing extra funds to local authorities for administrative costs. The vast majority of local authorities have already implemented this system fully on time. The costs that would be involved in advising claimants of over or underpayments and the handling of that would be so minuscule that it would not contribute to the proper administration of the system to provide small sums. It is for local authorities to decide with claimants who may have been under or overpaid the arrangements whereby that can be adjusted in future. The sums involved will be small compared with the weekly benefits that will be available to claimants. I should not have thought that any great trouble would be involved in arranging either the reimbursing of an underpayment or the recoupment of an overpayment.

Mr. Tony Banks: I am primarily interested in my borough of Newham. I am advised that, because of ICL's failure to deliver the contract, Newham has problems. I want to hear from the Minister how we can deal with that. What will he do so that Newham can ensure that people are not penalised for a mistake that is not theirs, and at least advise everybody fully? What extra resources will the Minister make available to Newham so that we can advise the 46,150 claimants of housing benefit exactly what the regulations mean?

Mr. Scott: The hon. Gentleman has had as much notice of the arrangements for housing benefit as the housing

authorities in Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere. They decided to place a contract with a company which could provide them with the software to enable them to deliver. It is for them and the contractor to arrange these matters.

The vast majority of local authorities have managed to do this in the interests of their claimants, and the vast majority of people entitled to housing benefit will get their proper entitlement when we implement the new system. I do not believe that I have any duty to stand at this Dispatch Box and provide extra resources for Newham to dig it out of a hole because it is incapable of managing.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): If the sum of money will be so marginal, why does not the Minister wipe it off and let the overpayments remain? Would not that be the best way forward?

Mr. Scott: Local authorities should be given every incentive to manage properly the sums of public money that are at their disposal. I can think of many local authorities, many represented by Opposition Members, which would be totally irresponsible in the way that they handle public money. I commend the regulations to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the draft Housing Benefit (Supply of Information) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 14th March, be approved.

Resolved,

That the draft Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 14th March, be approved—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

PETITION

Education Reform

11.30 pm

Ms. Joan Walley (Stoke-on-Trent, North): I beg to ask leave to present a petition on behalf of parents in my constituency, Smallthorne primary school and Norton county primary school. I have many hundreds of names of people who live in Smallthorne, Sneyd Green, Fegg Hayes, Bradeley, Ball Green, Goldenhill, Milton, Longport, Middleport, Packmoor, Cobridge, Sandyford and Rookery.

I am particularly pleased to be able to present the petition during the passage of the Education Reform Bill. It is from parents whose children receive the best education from Staffordshire county council, a local education authority which is committed to education for all children regardless of the ability of the parents to pay for that education. People in my constituency feel that education should be available to everybody and not just to those who are advantaged. They are angry and reject totally the Government's proposals which are going through the House this very week to change the whole nature of the education system.

The prayer of the petition is:

Wherefore your Petitioners pray that your honourable House will refuse to pass legislation which will not maintain and increase opportunities in education for all children, promote interesting and imaginative teaching in schools, promote equality in schools and between children, increase resources for education, and maintain the role of local education authorities to manage schools in combination with governing bodies and the schools themselves.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

To lie upon the Table.

Postal Charges (Highlands and Islands)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

11.32 pm

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I am grateful for the opportunity to raise on the Adjournment the issue of the Post Office surcharges, particularly on the Datapost service, to destinations in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The subject caused much disquiet in my constituency and, indeed, in the Western Isles and in Northern Ireland at this time last year when the Post Office announced a 20 per cent. surcharge on the Datapost service to the Scottish islands—with no mention of the Welsh or English islands—to the Isle of Man and to Northern Ireland. The issue was raised in early-day motions at that time by myself, by the right hon. Donald Stewart, who was then the Member of Parliament for the Western Isles, and by right hon. and hon. Members representing Northern Ireland constituencies. Regrettably, there was no satisfactory response or action by the Post Office.

There was a further outcry at the beginning of March this year when it was announced that the surcharge for the Scottish islands, which this time was extended to the Highlands, was to be 35 per cent., and that for the Isle of Man and Northern Ireland it was to be 25 per cent. Early-day motions in the names of the hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) and my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) have between them attracted 79 signatories protesting about the latest imposition.

The outcry was greater perhaps because it was accompanied by the resignation from the chairmanship of the Scottish Post Office Board of Mr. Ian Barr on the grounds that there was not adequate consultation with him, nor had he been given any costing figures for traffic levels to justify the increase. He described the increase as "discriminative, arbitrary and aimed at enhancing profits without regard to the social responsibility which the Post Office corporately has placed on it."

The Post Office has denied the charge of lack of consultation, and there has been a fairly acid exchange of letters in the columns of the Scottish press. I do not want this debate to be sidetracked on to the rights and wrongs of Mr. Barr's protest, but I make two observations. First, one of Mr. Barr's complaints was that the Post Office definition of "the Highlands" was not clear. It appears that it extends to what we now understand as including Grampian region, excluding Aberdeen. Few Scots would recognise that definition. Secondly, the decision that has been taken is symptomatic of centralised decision-making that pays insufficient attention to the impact of those decisions in remote areas. I say that notwithstanding the personal commitment given by the chairman of the Post Office, which I accept, to keep in mind the interests of rural as well as urban areas.

A debate such as this is not the time to rehearse all the arguments about the relative economic disadvantages of the remoter parts of the United Kingdom. But it is clear that in constituencies such as mine and that of the hon. Member for Western Isles, who may try to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are economic disadvantages because of distance. Costs, especially of transport, are often higher. Surveys have shown that the two largest towns in my constituency, Kirkwall and Lerwick, are among the 10 towns in the United Kingdom with the highest costs in the shops. We fear that an added burden will be imposed on us because of the increased Post Office charges, especially for Datapost.

The Datapost surcharge is on consignments to the Highlands and Islands. It does not include dispatches from the area or within the area. When the Post Office imposed the surcharges last year, it argued that they would almost invariably be borne by those sending the goods and would not be added to costs in the surcharged area. Shetland chamber of commerce responded that, to a large extent, the costs were being passed on and that it was, therefore, a further imposition.

The Post Office has given reasons for the surcharge, and mentioned specifically the need to be competitive in what I accept is a very competitive market. But it strikes me as odd to increase prices to be competitive.

This morning, the hon. Member for Western Isles and I met the chairman of the Post Office, Sir Bryan Nicholson, and his senior colleagues who are most closely involved with the decision to increase the Datapost surcharge. We conveyed to them our worries about the impact of the surcharge on the business life of our communities and other communities throughout the Highlands. In response, they claimed that they at least provide a service, which cannot be said for all their competitors, and that is something for which we are grateful. They also claimed that, notwithstanding the surcharge, they provide a cheaper service. They accepted the point that if, as they claimed, their service is cheaper, more effective marketing of it would help to reduce unit costs.

The Post Office was able to give us some undertakings. Sir Bryan had said that he would have to think about matters before doing so, but the hon. Member for Western Isles and I are grateful to him for managing—perhaps in anticipation of this debate—to get a letter to us this evening. In it, he guarantees that, for at least three years commencing on 5 April next, no surcharge will be levied on Datapost items dispatched from surcharged areas to non-surcharged areas or within the existing surcharged area. Secondly, the level of surcharge, where applicable, will be no more than the existing 35 per cent. of standard Datapost prices. I am extremely grateful for those guarantees. It shows that our representations have had a positive outcome.

Unfortunately, those guarantees do not go all the way towards alleviating our worries about the imposition of a surcharge on goods sent by Datapost to our constituencies. We have asked the Post Office for costings and figures on the level of traffic but were given to understand that such data cannot be given out because it would breach commercial confidentiality. We were told, however, that the Post Office tries to charge a sum that gives it no greater profits on the service to the Highlands and Islands than to anywhere else. The Post Office admits that the surcharge is imposed because of its competitive pricing policy, but that the additional revenue that flows into its coffers from the surcharge has not been measured, and it could not tell us what proportion of overall turnover it constitutes.

No one would readily contradict our suspicion that only a modest amount is added to the turnover by this surcharge; it would be small in terms of the whole Datapost operation. However, it is a serious imposition on

retailers, and on farmers in my constituency who may have to order spare parts urgently and find the service useful for that. For them, this surcharge is a serious additional cost.

When we discuss the operations of nationalised industries in Adjournment debates, it is easy for Ministers to claim that it is not their responsibility to go into operational details. However, it was made perfectly clear to us by the Post Office that the Government set financial targets and it is asked by them to run a fully commercial operation. If it departed from that to take into account, as we hope it will, the special social and economic considerations involved in serving a community such as mine, it would need to be steered by the Government in that direction.

I hope that the Minister will give serious consideration —even if not tonight—to allowing the Post Office some discretion in deciding whether the Datapost operation to areas such as my constituency should be run at the strictly commercial rate of return that it feels obliged to adhere to at present. That would be consistent with other Government policies.

For example, the rural sub-post office network cannot be said to be a great commercial success for the Post Office, but after many representations the Government accepted that there were social reasons for sustaining it. We agree with that; the Post Office can do that because of the backing it gets for it from the Government.

Similarly, the Government are on record as recognising the problems of areas such as the Highlands and Islands. The Highlands and Islands Development Board, itself an act of faith of Government policy, helps to redress some of our economic disadvantages. There is also Government support for trying to ensure that our area will not lose out in any reform of the EEC regional development fund. The Government recognise there is a special social and economic case for helping the Highlands and Islands, and accordingly it would be consistent with their policy to allow the Post Office to reduce the surcharge it has imposed.

I hope, too, that the Minister can assure us that the surcharge is not the thin end of the wedge. A number of my constituents have told me—not least those who are in business—that they fear that this is the start of a two-tier system which could spread throughout the postal service. That fear has been reinforced by the Post Office's decision, in introducing its new parcel Superservice, to create three zones—the Highlands and Islands again fall into the most expensive one.

In correspondence with the Shetland Islands council, Ian Barr, who was still then chairman of the Scottish Post Office Board, said that the zonal pricing had had to be implemented at the behest of the Government. I know that the Minister has denied that in correspondence with that council. What did pass between his Department and the Post Office about this? Did the Post Office need to put up a zonal pricing system to his Department in order to spobtain consent for capital expenditure?

We are not asking for cross-subsidisation between the different activities of the Post Office. However, even within the three zonal bands there must be cross-subsidisation between routes. There is surely a case for cross-subsidisation within the one service, so that areas where the Post Office can make high profits because costs are low help to subsidise the postal service and the Superservice in areas where, I admit, it is far more difficult to provide a service cheaply.

We fear that what is now happening will undermine the flat-rate pricing structure for letter post. The monopoly that the Post Office has in the letter service is something that we greatly value. We have been assured by the Post Office of its commitment to that monopoly and its wish to continue it within the letter service and to have a common tariff. It would be reassuring if the Minister would say that that is also the Government's policy. We fear that the licensing of even one competitor, as has happened with Mercury in the telephone service, could undermine that service if that competitor could provide a speedy service in city areas, which, in turn, would force the Post Office to make investments so that it could compete. Such investment in the urban areas would take away resources for funding a postal service in rural areas.

However much we may grouse, we recognise the valuable service that the Post Office provides to remote areas. We greatly value it. We do not want it to be lost or to become even more costly.

11.46 pm

Mr. Calum Macdonald (Western Isles): I am grateful to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) for allowing me to take part in this debate. He has comprehensively covered a number of points and I wish only to say a few words in support of his remarks, so that the Minister can give a complete answer to the points raised.

The hon. Gentleman and I saw the chairman of the Post Office this morning to discuss the introduction of the Datapost surcharge for the Highlands and Islands. We received a sensitive hearing and he gave us the commitment that the hon. Gentleman mentioned. He made it clear that the ultimate responsibility for setting the guidelines for the Datapost service, within which the Post Office makes its decisions, rests with the Government. In applying commercial criteria to that service, the Post Office is following the Government's guidelines.

We are asking for a balance between the commercial criteria and the economic impact on the Highlands and Islands of the surcharge. A point made frequently during the past week has been the uneven economic development between north and south. During our Budget debates there have been frequent calls for Government action to redress that imbalance. It does not make economic sense and it is not socially healthy for the country. The Government appear reluctant to take the direct action needed to redress that imbalance. Even though they will not do so, we ask them to do nothing to encourage or reinforce it. We urge them to take greater stock of the economic considerations when giving guidelines to the Post Office for the Datapost service.

I should like to reinforce the point made by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on the need for some figures to allow a proper assessment of the imbalance to be made. Apparently, the Post Office does not have the figures necessary to say how the added global values resulting from the surcharge compare with the overall turnover and profit of the Datapost service. The hon. Gentleman rightly referred to our suspicion that, compared with the overall turnover, the added contribution made by the surcharge is very small, but its impact on the Highlands and Islands is relatively much greater.

We call on the Minister to obtain some figures that will allow him to make a judgment. If purely commercial

[Mr. Calum Macdonald]

criteria are to be applied to the Datapost service, there is a danger that those criteria will be extended to other postal services. The surcharge warns us what will happen if the privatisation plans for the Post Office, which have been mooted by some Conservative Members, come to fruition.

11.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. John Butcher): I congratulate the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on the manner in which he has pursued this issue and the courtesies which he has observed in informing the House, and where appropriate me, of the progress which he has made. I am especially grateful for the updating that the hon. Gentleman gave me and my officials on the outcome of his discussions earlier today. The hon. Gentleman may have drawn some encouragement from some of the observations made during that meeting. If any questions remain unanswered, I shall observe the courtesies by writing to the hon. Members for Orkney and Shetland and for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald) on any outstanding points.

I am pleased to respond to the comments of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland. He has forcefully expressed his worry about the Post Office's recent decision on surcharges on items sent to the islands and certain parts of the highlands using its Datapost services. Some of that concern may be misplaced. It must be clearly understood that these surcharges have nothing to do with the ordinary letter service. We make judgments about that service in terms of the social element, the national service to all parts of the country and the price at which it is provided.

The concern is over the Post Office's high-speed courier service, Datapost. Datapost, which is the responsibility of Royal Mail Parcels rather than Royal Mail Letters, is a competitive commercial service which is used mainly by business rather than by domestic customers. It is not covered by the statutory letter monopoly. It is in competition with the services of private couriers. Decisions about Datapost services and prices are for the Post Office to make in the light of commercial factors. It is not for the Government — these are the words that the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland was dreading — to make these decisions, nor is it for us to intervene in decisions which the Post Office has taken.

The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland briefly mentioned the recent resignation of the chairman of the Scottish Post Office board. I believe that this is not a matter on which it would now be appropriate for me to comment. I am aware that the circumstances of Mr. Barr's departure were well publicised in a high profile exchange between Mr. Barr and the Post Office. Appointments to the Scottish Post Office board are the responsibility of the Post Office, and the Government are not involved. The resignation of the chairman of the board is a matter for the Post Office and the individual concerned.

Mr. Macdonald: I wonder whether the Minister would clarify that point. He says that it is not for the Government to lay down guidelines for the Datapost service. Is that because the legislation says that they must not or because it is their policy not to?

Mr. Butcher: I hope to come to that point in a moment. There are overall considerations that the Government ask the Post Office to bear in mind, particularly considering the distinction between the different kinds of services — for example, the universal letter service and the more specialist services in higher added-value areas where there is competition. It is right to make that distinction.

There was a clue in what was said by the hon. Members for Orkney and Shetland and for Western Isles, who voiced veiled misgivings about the opacity of the accountancy practice. The Post Office would dearly love to have more and clearer data — that is accountancy information—service by service, on which to make more detailed management judgments. I suspect that the Post Office is determined to put that deficiency right. It is improving its management systems very effectively and, when all is said and done, it is one of the few postal services in western Europe — indeed, in the OECD countries — that are not just breaking even but making a small profit.

Therefore, my answer to the hon. Member for Western Isles is that the Government can indeed legitimately make observations on what he has called guidelines. What we do not do, however, is cut right down into individual tariffing policy. Another day, or perhaps in correspondence, we can examine the assertion of the gentleman who resigned in such a high profile manner and perhaps the Government's position, which may not entirely agree with the way in which the reported remarks were made.

In the time available to me I report that I asked questions parallel to the questions that the hon. Members for Orkney and Shetland and for Western Isles have asked about the pattern of traffic to the Scottish islands since last year's surcharge, since that may give us some clue about the effect of surcharges. We cannot judge the effect of the present surcharge, but since last year's surcharge traffic to the Scottish islands has been extremely buoyant. Traffic on the routes rose by 25 per cent. between April and July and by 50 per cent. between April and November. Even after taking into account the strong growth rates in Datapost generally, that suggests that adverse customer reaction was negligible and that the service remains highly competitive in terms of both price and reliability.

Traffic on other Post Office services to the islands has also grown steadily, although generally in line with the growth rates for the United Kingdom as a whole. Therefore, it would not be accurate to assert that thus far there is evidence of a deterioration in the general or business traffic.

Mr. Macdonald: That is is not the point.

Mr. Butcher: The hon. Gentleman says that it is not the point, but I think that I can legitimately put the figures before the House by way of background to the general question.

Like me, the hon. Gentleman will be anxious to discover that the business community, remote as it is, and with the other high costs that it may have to bear, is still vigorously using the growing services in the Post Office. Thus far, the evidence is that it is. Given that users within the remote areas do not pay the surcharge unless they are posting to an area of high surcharge — we are talking mainly about incoming sensitive, fast-reaction business mail—it would appear that those who do business with the hon. Gentleman's constituents on that basis have thus far not been deterred from expanding the traffic by using the Datapost service.

We look to the Post Office to act commercially and, where it operates in competitive markets, to compete

fairly. It has been a matter of long-standing policy that it is primarily for each nationalised industry to work out the details of its prices, while having regard to its markets and overall objectives, including financial targets set by the Government. That is part of the answer to the questions asked by the hon. Gentleman. Of course we look at external financing limits and it is that EFL, whether it is positive or negative, that drives the business plans of most of the nationalised industries where they are still reporting to the House on their performance set against those figures.

That general principle is subject to the policy that the industries should avoid arbitrary cross-subsidisation between different groups of consumers. The Post Office, like other nationalised industries, should seek to ensure that its prices are sensibly related to the costs of supply and the market situation. I should add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you will probably be vividly and personally aware, that none of that policy is new. It was set out in the 1978 White Paper on nationalised industries, which was produced, almost by way of a valedictory effort, by the previous Labour Administration.

That does not mean that the Post Office should set a different price for each and every item or customer, calculated on the basis of the particular costs involved each time. That would be neither practicable nor sensible. However, it does mean that in determining prices for a service such as Datapost—or the Superservice business parcels service to which reference has been made—where there are readily identifiable differences in supplying the service to different groups of customers, the Post Office should aim to reflect this in the prices charged. I hope that the hon. Members can decode that paragraph when looking at *Hansard* tomorrow and get close to the answer to the question that they both raised.

The Post Office must also take account of the market conditions. That means that it must have regard to the pricing structures of its competitors. It does not mean that it should simply charge what its competitors charge. The Post Office's prices should reflect the level and structure of its own costs and, for many reasons, those might be very different from those of its competitors. In fact, there is evidence that Datapost is competing successfully in that market segment.

The two hon. Gentlemen did not go on to voice concern about the implications for postal services generally in the highlands and islands. However, I suspect that they are each aware of the fact that the general postal service is looked at in a different light and that the universal service is still the prevalent consideration.

Therefore, the Post Office has not turned its back on its proud tradition of public service and commercialism and public service——

The motion having been made after Ten o'clock on Wednesday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

Adjourned at two minutes past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 24 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Royal Assent

Mr. Speaker: I have to notify the House, in accordance with the Royal Assent Act 1967, that the Queen has signified Her Royal Assent to the following Acts:

1. Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Act 1988
2. Local Government Act 1988
3. British Railways (London) Act 1988

PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming adjourned debate on the Question, [10 December], That the Bill be now considered.

Debate further adjourned till Wednesday 30 March.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF LONDON (SPITALFIELDS MARKET) BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

NORTH KILLINGHOLME CARGO TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

ST. GEORGE'S HILL, WEYBRIDGE, ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

SOUTHERN WATER AUTHORITY BILL *(By Order)*

Orders for Second reading read.

To be read a Second time upon Wednesday 30 March.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

Order read for resuming debate on Question [15 March], That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Debate to be resumed upon Wednesday 30 March.

Oral Answers to Questions

NORTHERN IRELAND

Information Policy Unit

1. **Mr. Livingstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his Department's responsibilities for the information policy unit and pyschological operations in Northern Ireland.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney): My Department has no such unit.

Mr. Livingstone: I thank the Minister for his response. Will he explain why members of the security services have been involved in exercises entailing the use of Government facilities to forge documents; the passage of arms, including guns and bombs, to members of the civilian community, to be used against members of the security services and individuals in Southern Ireland; and political disinformation programmes such as "Clockwork Orange" during the 1974 election? Who was authorising all that if there was no such unit?

Dr. Mawhinney: The House is becoming aware—indeed more than aware—of the allegations constantly made by the hon. Gentleman. We would be interested to see the evidence to support what he has said.

Mr. Dalyell: Who authorised the bugging of the hay yard in the case of Michael Tighe, as adumbrated in Mr. Stalker's book? On what and on whose authority was that done?

Dr. Mawhinney: I do not believe that that has anything to do with the question.

Cross-Border Co-operation

2. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on cross-border co-operation.

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. John Stanley): Cross-border co-operation takes place over a wide range of activities. We shall continue to look for ways to develop it further.

Mr. Townsend: I am glad to be told that the respective chiefs of police are to hold a meeting at last, but will my right hon. Friend explain why meetings recently arranged were either postponed or cancelled? Is not the closest possible co-ordination and co-operation between the two police forces absolutely essential, and does not the absence of that close co-operation greatly benefit the IRA?

Mr. Stanley: I entirely agree with what my hon. Friend has said. We very much welcome the fact that a meeting of the full conference is to take place tomorrow, which will be attended, as my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said earlier this week, by both the Chief Constable and the Commissioner of the Garda.

Mr. Alton: Has the Minister, through the Intergovernmental Conference, been able to take part in discussions with police chiefs from the Garda about the possibility of solidarity being shown with RUC members,

when they are involved in incidents at funerals in Northern Ireland, by having members of the Garda present on those occasions?

Secondly, has any further consideration been given to the question of a joint security commission?

Mr. Stanley: I am not aware that the first point has been raised through the secretariat machinery, but the hon. Gentleman makes an interesting point which will no doubt be reflected on.

The joint security commission is not part of our proposals. However, I stress to the hon. Gentleman and the House that we have made substantial progress on cross-border security co-operation and are continually assessing how to improve it further. We now have better co-operation on racketeering, better communications, better information exchange, better bomb disposal co-operation and certainly better operational co-operation than before the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed.

Mr. Conway: Does cross-border co-operation cover more than just Government agencies? Has Irish Television been prepared to release any broadcast footage of the disgraceful murders last weekend in the Province? If so, does that not show the reluctance of television companies this side of the water, to their great shame?

Mr. Stanley: I am glad to be able to tell my hon. Friend that my understanding is that the Irish broadcasting authorities have released the films in question.

Mr. McNamara: Does the Minister of State agree that, although cross-border co-operation has concentrated on security matters — for necessary and understandable reasons — co-operation on economic and social matters is equally important? Have the Government agreed to approach the EC for funds for the International Fund for Ireland, not only to ensure continued support for the fund from the United States, but to improve conditions in some of the most disadvantaged areas in Europe?

Mr. Stanley: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his comments. I very much endorse his opening remarks. We envisage the process of co-operation extending beyond security into political, economic and cultural matters. It is very much the wish of both Governments that we consider ways of securing some form of direct EC participation in the working of the International Fund for Ireland, which I know would be very much welcomed in the United States.

Irish Ministers (Meetings)

3. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to meet the Irish Prime Minister.

5. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he next hopes to meet the Irish Foreign Secretary; and what matters will be discussed.

6. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what items will be on the agenda of the next Anglo-Irish Conference.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Tom King): I have no present plans to meet the Taoiseach, but I expect to meet Mr. Lenihan in a meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference tomorrow. It is not normal practice to disclose the whole agenda in advance, but it will certainly include cross-border security co-operation.

Mr. Parry: I am sorry about the right hon. Gentleman's reply. When he meets Mr. Lenihan, will he discuss the recent murders in Gibraltar and the Province? How can the Anglo-Irish Agreement reduce this violence? I voted against the agreement, for reasons which differed from those of Ulster Members. Many people, including myself, are concerned that the recent slaughter and carnage may spill over into the mainland, to cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow.

Mr. King: Obviously, every hon. Member shares the concern about recent violent events: the attempted terrorist outrages, such as the one in Gibraltar, the terrorist attack at the funeral in Milltown and the various killings that have occurred. No amount of signing of agreements will abolish evil men. Our duty is to work together as Governments and people to try to isolate and deal with the men of violence.

Mr. Flannery: If and when the Secretary of State meets leading figures of the Irish Government and discusses the recent killings in Northern Ireland, will he discuss with his opposite number the killings in Gibraltar, which sparked off a series of killings? *[Interruption.]* Does the right hon. Gentleman remember as clearly as most of us that the Republic of Ireland Government immediately raised these issues, which deepened divisions between the two Governments? Therefore, the Irish Government are bound to want to discuss those matters as well as the murders in Northern Ireland.

Mr. King: That was an outrageous supplementary question. I do not know what the hon. Gentleman's supplementary question would have been if 200 people had met their deaths in Gibraltar that day. As has been said in a letter to the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), the bomb which was discovered in the car park in Malaga was said by the Spanish police, with their experience of terrorism, to be the most powerful bomb that they had ever seen in their lives. They had never before seen anything in Spain to compare with it. Obviously, no one welcomes death, but I have no hesitation in recognising the problems faced by the security forces in preventing outrages of that kind. I would not compare that with terrorist attacks.

Mr. Grocott: Rather than restating the established position, does the Secretary of State not think that the agenda for tomorrow should be as wide and as open as possible, with a willingness to learn some lessons from the events of the past few weeks? There should be openness and acceptance that there really has been a sudden and dramatic deterioration in relations between London and Dublin and between the communities in Northern Ireland.

Mr. King: I have spent most of my life learning about issues and events that arise. The right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) is nodding agreement. Certainly I would be the first to say that I bitterly regret the sequence of incidents that have taken place. Every sensible hon. Member would rather that they had not happened — most recently, and most obviously and tragically, the events of Saturday. There are lessons to be learnt from all of that by every single person involved, as the hon. Gentleman rightly said, within the communities in Northern Ireland and within the Governments of the Republic and of the United Kingdom. I hope that we will not disappoint the hon. Gentleman. We

do not wish in any way to restrict our discussions tomorrow. We shall have as open and as wide-ranging discussions as we can.

Mr. Hayes: Will my right hon. Friend make it quite clear to the Irish Government that the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholics in this country find it deeply offensive—*[Interruption.]*—I speak as a Catholic—that Roman Catholic priests in the Province officiate at masses and funerals with paramilitary overtones? Will he ask the Irish Government to use their good offices to make it quite clear to Cardinal O'Fiaich that it would greatly help ordinary men, women and children in Northern Ireland if he stopped that action?

Mr. King: The Catholic Church has made it absolutely clear that it does not accept any paramilitary trappings or associations within its churches or in their grounds. Of course, there is a problem after funerals have left the churches and are no longer within their jurisdiction.

I have said to the House that I regret some of the phrases and comments of certain priests, but I would not want to make that comment without coupling with it the warmest respect and a certain humility at the courage and outspokenness of Bishop Cahal Daly and the clear statement that he made.

Mr. Wilkinson: When my right hon. Friend meets the Irish Foreign Minister, will he express in the strongest possible terms his regret at the decision of the Irish Government to allow the bodies of the terrorists killed in Gibraltar to land in Dublin and the solemn propaganda procession from Dublin to Northern Ireland thereafter to take place? Will he also make it quite clear that Her Majesty's Government reserve to themselves alone the right to police Northern Ireland and every other part of the United Kingdom according to their own lights and interests?

Mr. King: In regard to the second half of the question, of course is correct. That is precisely why in the Anglo-Irish Agreement the operational independence of the Chief Constable is clearly defined. That is regarded as an important and indeed essential element within the agreement.

I hope my hon. Friend recognises that the Irish Government certainly did not seek the arrival of the bodies of the terrorists in Dublin. As to whether they had the power to refuse them, the decision ultimately was for the families, who made their own arrangements without any Government support. Certain hon. Members suggested that the British Government should take responsibility for them, but we did not think that that was right. It was a matter for the families, and they made their arrangements.

Mr. Peter Robinson: Will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to report to the House on the progress that he feels has been made under the Anglo-Irish Agreement in real terms? The Prime Minister set the goals of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of peace, stability and reconciliation. Have the deaths decreased during the 28 months of the agreement? Is there more stability in Northern Ireland? Are the communities less polarised than before? Would the Secretary of State comment on that?

Mr. King: The hon. Gentleman is a master of the destructive intervention. He seeks to destroy. I had hoped, building on the contribution that he made to earlier exchanges on Monday, that his thoughts were turning to how we might build a constructive relationship. Of course, he knows the answer to his own questions. He knows that at present we are facing an acute terrorist threat—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) should listen. I am answering the question. There has been sectarian violence, and the deaths caused by Loyalist and Republican extremists are far too high. It must be the determination of all hon. Members to seek to reduce the level of violence.

Rev. Martin Smyth: When the Secretary of State meets representatives of the Irish Republic, will he explore, in the light of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the comment of the Irish Prime Minister that there is no place for devolution in Northern Ireland, and that of the Irish Government's representative in America at the St. Patrick's day celebrations that the Hillsborough agreement is going to work?

Mr. King: I think that there is wide misunderstanding of what the Taoiseach said about devolution. Under the agreement, the Irish Government are in no position to put forward proposals about devolution involving the majority community. Their role is to comment on the position of the minority community. If the hon. Gentleman cares to consult the agreement, he will find that that is the position. What Mr. Haughey made clear in his statement to the Dail—and I should have thought that all hon. Members would welcome it—is that it is a matter for the British Government and for the parties within Northern Ireland to consider ways forward. It is certainly an opportunity for the Irish Government to comment, and I should have thought that that was the right way forward.

Mr. Gow: Does my right hon. Friend recall that the Social and Democratic Labour party in Belfast and the Irish Government in Dublin have both expressed their disagreement with the welcome announcement yesterday by the Royal Ulster Constabulary that in future funerals are to be properly policed? Is my right hon. Friend aware that tomorrow at the Intergovernmental Conference there will be further disagreement between himself and the representatives of the Irish Government, because the Irish Government have been given the right to put forward views and proposals about how policing should be carried out in Belfast? Is he aware that after the meeting tomorrow there will be further disagreements between Dublin and London?

Mr. King: I do not share my hon. Friend's pessimistic approach to these problems. The Irish Government can put forward views and proposals on a whole range of matters, but it is for us to take the decisions. It will be an opportunity to discuss different aspects. My hon. Friend, in paraphrasing it, said that there had been opposition from both the SDLP and the Irish Government to a statement by the RUC that funerals will be properly policed. I think everybody agrees that funerals should be properly policed, but the question is: in what way? My hon. Friend will have seen the Chief Constable's statement. He is carrying out his review against that background as a matter of urgency. I assure my hon. Friend that his concerns and those of some of my hon. Friends, as I made clear at this Dispatch Box on Monday, about the incidents that occurred are proper concerns. The

incidents that occurred were wholly unacceptable and require an immediate review of the policing to be followed at any future funeral. That review is being carried out.

Mr. McNamara: When the Secretary of State meets Mr. Lenihan tomorrow, will he discuss with him both the security issues involved in west Belfast and the great amount of social deprivation that exists there? Would not this be a marvellous occasion for the International Fund for Ireland, the two Governments and the European Community to deal with an area which Mary Holland said had largely been bypassed by the Anglo-Irish Agreement and which Bishop Cahal Daly, to whom he rightly paid tribute, said was a social desert?

Mr. King: I certainly recognise the problems that are faced by west Belfast, including the problem of unemployment. I wish to see what can be done to improve employment generally in the Province. West Belfast is one of the worst and most difficult areas. The hon. Gentleman will agree with me that what makes west Belfast acutely difficult to tackle is the problem of terrorism and the fact that the IRA and Sinn Fein, while pretending to be concerned about unemployment, blow up factories, intimidate employers and make it acutely difficult to provide more chances of employment for the people whom they claim to represent.

Health and Social Services

4. **Mr. McWilliam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he has given to the draft proposals from the Eastern health and social services board to effect savings of £7·6 million in 1988-89.

13. **Mr. Sean Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he has given to the draft proposals from the Eastern health and social services board to effect savings of £7·6 million in 1988-89.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Richard Needham): The Eastern health and social services board is at present consulting on a wide range of possible options to allow it to live within its budget for 1988-89. The board will not be considering these until 14 April, and in these circumstances I cannot at the moment comment further.

Mr. McWilliam: Is the Minister aware that the board is considering cuts in gynaecological and surgical services at Lagan Valley hospital, the closure of the accident and emergency service at Ards hospital, the reduction of accident and emergency services at Mater hospital and the closure of Throne hospital with an overall loss of 100 surgical beds? Is he further aware that the board has demanded that all hospitals reduce their demand for blood products? Will he join Opposition Members in demanding that the money necessary to prevent cuts is made available as a matter of urgency?

Mr. Needham: Some 99 per cent. of the proposals put forward by the Eastern board—they are only proposals — to be considered and determined fall within the strategic plan that the board has accepted. I agree that, because of the levels of funding available this year, many of the proposals have been brought forward. Nevertheless, in addition to the rationalisation referred to by the hon. Gentleman, the Eastern board is bringing forward proposals for new development costing in excess of £2 million.

Mr. Kilfedder: As a result of Government cuts in health and social services, the North Down and Ards areas are threatened with a reduction in the number of doctors and nurses and the possible closure of a number of wards and hospitals, including Cultra house and Crawfordsburn hospital. Will the Minister therefore reconsider the cuts and provide sufficient money to ensure that the standards that applied before he took office are maintained?

Mr. Needham: Given that the level of provision in the Northern Ireland Health Service is 23 per cent. higher than that in England and Wales, that we spend £539 per person in Northern Ireland compared with £438 here and that we have 50 per cent. more beds and double the number of home helps, I would hope that we shall continue to give a high level of service in health care in Northern Ireland. One of the hospitals to which the hon. Gentleman referred is an old hospital in poor condition, and we hope to replace the beds by much more professional and better provision than exists at the moment.

Mr. McGrady: Does the Minister agree that his additional allocation of £5 million from the housing budget will not go any way towards alleviating the financial distress of the Eastern health board and the other boards in providing a reasonable level of medical care in Northern Ireland? Does he further agree that by his own Treasury's raid of the housing department he has put into total disarray the housing strategy that he and his Department agreed for Northern Ireland, and that the disrepair will now outstrip the ability of the Housing Executive to carry out its work? Furthermore, does he agree that the transfer of finances from the health and housing budgets to the security budget is an imposition on the ordinary sick and innocent in Northern Ireland and is totally unjustified?

Mr. Needham: It would be foolish not to admit that the pressures on the law and order budget in Northern Ireland have some effect on the remaining funds available in the Northern Ireland block. That inevitably affects the amount that we can spend on health. Furthermore, the results of violence mean that services in the Northern Ireland Health Service have to be devoted to neurosurgery and aftercare for those who have been injured and therefore cannot be used for dealing with the ordinary sick. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we spend twice as much money in Northern Ireland on the housing budget. In the circumstances I thought it right, because of the restraints on capital on the health side, to transfer £5 million to the health budget. I think that that will be welcomed by the boards. Although it will not go the whole way, it will go some way towards improving the services.

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: Will the Minister do his best to see that the Antrim hospital is completed as soon as possible, and will he also do his best to see that when the contracts go out for that hospital as much local labour as possible is used in building it?

Mr. Needham: I should like to thank the hon. Gentleman for his support for the Antrim hospital. The Northern board has a coherent strategy for acute care. It has a large number of acute cottage hospitals at the moment that cannot remain viable in terms of equipment or staff. The Antrim hospital is a crucial and important new development in the Northern board, which will improve services for the people there. I can assure the hon.

Gentleman that we shall be starting the building of the hospital at the end of this year and that it will be completed on time.

Rev. William McCrea: Does the Minister agree that throughout the House there are many people who believe that there is an urgent need for extra funding for the whole Health Service, particularly in Northern Ireland? Does he agree also that there is anger in the Province at the moment at the removal of money from the Housing Executive budget so that it can be handed over to the health budget —in other words, robbing Peter to pay Paul?

Mr. Needham: There would have been just as much anger had I not done so. I repeat to the House that the amount of money that has been made available to the Health Service in Northern Ireland is over 20 per cent. more than that made available in the rest of the country. If we look at the levels suggested in the report of the Select Committee on Social Services, we can see that we are achieving those levels in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Jim Marshall: Does the Minister recognise that his words today will bring little comfort to all the people in the Province, across the political divide, who are concerned about the level of health provision in Northern Ireland? Why does he not take this opportunity to swallow his pride, and respond to those wishes from all the people in Northern Ireland and make the simple announcement that more resources will be available?

Mr. Needham: Swallowing my pride is unlikely to make the resources available. I am sure that the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Marshall), who is speaking from the Opposition Front Bench, realises the problems within the Northern Ireland block and knows that we spend 40 per cent. more through public expenditure per head in Northern Ireland than the rest of the country. A total of 70 per cent. of the gross domestic product of Northern Ireland is in the public sector. We have an unrivalled example of good services in health. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will also accept that the present priority of law and order inevitably means that there are other pressures, so that we are not always able to do everything that we would want.

Security

7. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security station in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: Since I last answered questions in the House on 25 February, 12 people have died as a result of the security situation in the Province. They include two soldiers, one policeman, five civilians and four members of the Provisional IRA. A further three members of the Provisional IRA were killed whilst on a terrorist mission in Gibraltar. Against this serious background, the security forces have achieved some significant results.

Since the beginning of the year a total of 56 people have been charged with serious offences, including one with murder and six with attempted murder. In addition, one person was charged earlier this week with the three murders at Milltown cemetery on 16 March and with three sectarian murders committed between November 1984 and May 1987. A total of 247 weapons, approximately 65,000 rounds of ammunition and 2,700 lb of explosives have been recovered in Northern Ireland. I also understand that the Gardia Siochana has recovered some 138 weapons, over 88,000 rounds of ammunition and 600 lb of commercial explosive.

Mr. Duffy: As the Secretary of State comes under obvious pressure to return to hard-line policies, will he bear in mind the earlier opinion expressed by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), which I share, that it was the adoption of such a hard-line policy in Gibraltar that started the present phase of violence? Will he also bear in mind that the restoration of saturation security presence at funerals will, on past records, always end in violence? Will he be especially wary of those advisers who are probably less motivated by a desire to find a way of breaking out of the present mounting cycle of violence than they are simply by blood lust and revenge?

Mr. King: I have to say that, while I understand the second part of the hon. Member's supplementary about the very difficult problem of the policing of funerals and the difficulties with which the House is familiar, which are issues that exercise the Chief Constable very much indeed, as his statement yesterday made clear, I do not accept in any way the premise of his question. The hon. Gentleman speaks with enormous authority about something at which he was not present, on which the inquest before a jury has still to take place and in which certain military personnel were in aid of the Gibraltar police seeking to prevent a very serious terrorist outrage. How he can interpret that in the way that he does as some present hard-line policy under my control within Northern Ireland quite defeats me.

Mr. Marlow: Last week in the House I asked my right hon. Friend whether the IRA was being allowed to police its own funerals. He told the House—*Hansard*, column 1250 — that I had fallen prey to "damaging and pernicious propaganda." Did my right hon. Friend fall prey to propaganda, or was he deceived, and, if the latter, who deceived him and what is he going to do about it?

Mr. King: My hon. Friend used the word "police". There is only one police force in Northern Ireland, the RUC, and, as the Chief Constable has made clear, we will not countenance breaches of the law or usurpation of the police function. I make that absolutely clear. May I also say to the House—I hope that my hon. Friend will bear with me and agree with me on this — that it is an absolute obscenity that a funeral, of all the ceremonies in life, should require a police presence. It is because of the utterly unscrupulous approach of paramilitary organisations that seek to exploit such occasions for propaganda and terrorist purposes that it is necessary to take the steps that we do. I am sure that my hon. Friend would far rather see a funeral, of all occasions, pass off with dignity and respect and without political propaganda.

Mr. Maginnis: Will the Secretary of State, bearing in mind how the Government of whom he is a member were able to change the method by which unemployment figures were presented, to make them more meaningful, we believe, try to change the method by which he presents figures to the House about trouble in Northern Ireland? He constantly tells us about the number of people charged with crimes, but gives us no idea how ineffective the courts are within the civil law in dealing with those crimes or of the number of convictions.

Will he also comment on the fact that when he answered my question about cross-border co-operation he

asserted that the Irish Government had charged someone with the murder of Corporal Thomas Hewitt in Belleek? Will he now tell the House that the same Government, and the same judicial procedure, had that person released without even being brought before the courts? May we have meaningful figures in future?

Mr. King: I have some sympathy with the hon. Member in the point that he has made, because it is very difficult indeed to find the best way of presenting these figures. The difficulty that I face, to be quite frank, is that this very week we have had the sentencing of Martin Meehan, the conviction and a substantial gaol sentence for the kidnapping of a TA soldier on 12 July 1986—and I remember that incident very well. We have had just today the conviction of some people involved with the UDR arms theft, and that, of course, was some time ago as well. I think that it is more accurate to give the House the charging figure, but I will look at the point that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Since the Royal Ulster Constabulary's armoured Land Rovers play an essential role in the control of public order, can my right hon. Friend say what steps are being taken to get on top of the new molten copper weapons that the IRA is now using against these Land Rovers? Will my right hon. Friend confirm that when he seeks the support of the entire community to turn down the graph of violence that must include everybody, including the media and especially the BBC, whose explanations for not handing over the film were meretricious and unacceptable?

Mr. King: On my hon. Friend's first point, which is very serious, several steps are being taken, and among the work that is actively being pursued are, initially, security procedures. Material investigation is also taking place to try to insure against and prevent what my hon. Friend correctly identifies as a serious problem.

On my hon. Friend's second point, I welcome the fact that yesterday the BBC and ITN, and today RTE, agreed to provide all available tapes to the RUC investigators.

Mr. Molyneaux: At the risk of receiving a further rebuff, may I ask the Secretary of State again whether he will explain how the stand-off decision was taken, what wider considerations preceded the issue of the Chief Constable's directive, and what part was played by the Maryfield secretariat in those deliberations?

Mr. King: I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman seeks to pursue these matters when he has already alleged a meeting which I think he now admits did not happen —I hope that he accepts that. The decisions on policing were taken by the Chief Constable, who informed me on Tuesday evening of the decisions that he had reached. I have absolutely no doubt that he consulted widely. Those consultations included myself—I make no secret of that. The Chief Constable took a decision, which I have no doubt was made in conjunction with his senior officers, which seemed to him appropriate in the circumstances. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not seek to undermine the operational independence of the Chief Constable which I respect and which I hope the right hon. Gentleman will support.

Fair Employment

8. Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received concerning his fair employment proposals.

Mr. Stanley: Representations from 87 individuals or groups were received in response to the consultative paper published in September 1986 and from 63 individuals or groups in response to the draft of the guide to the effective practice which was published in its final form in September 1987. A number of comments have been made in relation to our new fair employment proposals announced by my right hon. Friend on 2 March, including a statement welcoming them in principle made by the Irish Foreign Minister.

Mr. Hayes: While I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's proposals, will he be particularly careful to ensure that fair employment legislation is specifically targeted at genuine discrimination and that he does not create a complicated bureaucratic superstructure for positive discrimination, which would be quite counter-productive and against his laudable aims?

Mr. Stanley: I assure my hon. Friend that it is exactly our intention that we should enshrine it firmly in legislation and ensure that employment recruitment in the Province is based entirely on the principle of merit, and on nothing else.

Mr. McCusker: Bearing in mind that at the centre of those proposals is the proposition that employers should keep registers of the religious affiliations of all their employees, will the Minister consider the suggestion that, to set an example to private employers, he should instruct DHSS officers in Northern Ireland to start keeping registers of the religious affiliations of the unemployed in Northern Ireland? We may learn a lot from those statistics.

Mr. Stanley: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that our fair employment proposals apply as much to the public sector as to the private sector.

Mr. Bellingham: Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is imperative to encourage employment in places such as west Belfast and the Bogside of Londonderry? Will he tell the House what specific measures he is taking to encourage small businesses and self-employment in those communities?

Mr. Stanley: As my hon. Friend knows, a later question has been tabled on that matter. We have announced some far-reaching measures to try to increase the number of training opportunities and the number of opportunities for the self-employed, and to encourage small businesses in a wide variety of ways.

Health and Social Services

9. Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had on additional funding for health and social services provision in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have recently met the chairmen of the four health and social services boards to discuss this issue. I have also discussed it with local representatives of the Royal College of Nursing and will be meeting a number of other groups in the near future.

Mr. Lloyd: The Minister has already given a number of figures and statistics about the quality of health care in the north of Ireland, but what does he think about the statistics produced by the four health and social services boards? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have made very slow progress at this Question Time. Since the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes) cannot find a seat in her accustomed place, perhaps she would like to sit somewhere else.

Mr. Lloyd: Will the Minister comment on the statistics of the four area health and social services boards and on the fact that, in the financial year 1988-89, they are underfunded by £14 million a year? What will he do about that?

Mr. Needham: I am sure that the hon. Lady would be welcome to take a seat on our side of the House, if she so wanted.

As I explained earlier, funding in the Health Service in Northern Ireland is 23 per cent. per head higher than in the rest of England and Wales. Although there is always room to spend more money on the Health Service, we are well funded. There are savings that we could make and we shall still provide excellent health care for all the people of Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Ashley: The Prime Minister's support for the armed services is well known, but is she aware that service personnel who have been seriously crippled and damaged by negligence before December 1986 can neither sue for negligence nor obtain any kind of ex gratia payment because of rigid and dogmatic Government policy? Will the Prime Minister recognise that any Government who are not prepared to fight for these neglected casualties are open to the charge of having no memory, no stomach, no spine and no guts?

The Prime Minister: I know the particular case to which the right hon. Gentleman refers. He is aware that it is not possible to make all new legislation retrospective, for reasons that he will understand. I believe that that is possibly why he has taken up the matter with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. This particular case came to my notice only within the past 24 hours and I am looking into it further.

Mr. Quentin Davies: Does my right hon. Friend agree that there is no more fundamental duty for any citizen than to contribute to the maintenance of law and order and to do everything possible to prevent crime, particularly violent crime and murder? It is, therefore, the duty of every citizen to co-operate with the police and to supply such evidence as he or she may have available that is relevant to investigations. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that duty is indivisible and that it affects every human being, including cameramen, employees of broadcasting corporations and the management of those corporations? Does she agree that it is disgraceful that the broadcasting corporations have not seen fit to see matters in that light and that it is particularly—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is enough. It is unfair to ask several questions at one time.

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend that upholding the law cannot be left only to the police and the courts and that it is the duty of every citizen to give information and evidence and, if necessary, to bear witness, and they should not need to be prompted to do so. However, I am very pleased that the evidence now seems to have been provided.

Mr. Steel: In view of the fact that a meeting is to take place tonight at 10 o'clock our time at Ford's headquarters in the United States with trade union representatives from Britain, will the Prime Minister accept from me, as one who has been in touch with them during the week, that it is—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are making very slow progress.

Mr. Steel: —worth making a last-minute plea to Ford and the Transport and General Workers Union to secure 1,000 jobs for Scotland? Will she invite other party leaders to join in such a united plea?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, we want the jobs. We want the business. We would like to have both. It is a matter for great concern that the trade unions, over a period of five months, disagreed, and disagreed publicly, and that so far they do not seem to be unanimous on the course that they wish to take. They must sort out their own problems and then take their particular case to Ford and see whether they can win back the jobs that they have so severely jeopardised.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: Does my right hon. Friend agree that Ford might be helped to change its decision not to locate its plant in Dundee if sponsored Members of the TGWU were to back the Government's call to help Ford? Would not the Labour party support that if it were not more concerned with the 1·2 million block vote in the coming leadership election?

The Prime Minister: It would be a great advance if the trade unions could speak with a single voice and if they all recognised that many companies now wanting to invest in Britain require a single union, and in many places—for example, Nissan at Sunderland, and places in Wales—a single union is normal. That appears to be the way of the future and I hope the trade unions will realise it so that we shall get business and jobs.

Q2. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Griffiths: Will the Prime Minister, in the middle of her busy day, share with me a sentence from a pensioner constituent of mine in which he said that this Budget was the most unjust, un-Christian, provocative Budget ever produced? He is a pensioner who has lost £9·20 a week because of the Government's changes. Moreover, a Bristol mother, Ms. Felicity Gorden, will lose £47·74 a week because of the changes introduced by the Government in

social security regulations. The Prime Minister thought that the most significant thing about the parable of the Good Samaritan—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Briefly, please.

Mr. Griffiths: —was that he had money in his pocket to help those in need. Will she now, in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, advocate that all those who have received money beyond their wildest dreams from the Chancellor in the Budget should give it back to help those people, or does she prefer the parable of Lazarus and the rich man?

The Prime Minister: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman did not notice that in the Budget the age allowance for pensioners reached the highest level since it was introduced, so that marginal relief is not phased out until they reach an income of some £10,000. I remind the hon. Gentleman that his policy would dry up the prosperity upon which increasing pensions depend.

Mr. Speaker: I appeal to the House for brief questions, please.

Q3. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. MacKay: Was my right hon. Friend not appalled by the TGWU's negative, destructive response to the proposed agreement for a single union deal between the Amalgamated Engineering Union and Ford at Dundee? Does she agree that there is more than a little whiff of hypocrisy in the air when we find today that that same TGWU has negotiated two separate single union deals in Wales?

The Prime Minister: Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend. There are a number of factories and companies where it is quite normal to have a single union, and there are a number of companies which, if they are making an investment in Britain, make it a condition that there should be a single union. Those particular companies do very well indeed and I hope that their example and success will be more readily followed by the trade union movement and that we shall not see any more squabbles, such as the demarcation disputes that we have seen recently, so that we shall get more investment. That is the way to get more jobs and manufacturing exports.

Mr. Kinnock: While the Prime Minister is on the subject of American companies and jobs, I thought that she might refer, at least in passing, to the extraordinary relationship that she managed to establish very recently with Boeing.

Does the Prime Minister know that as a result of her social security cuts next week a single newly unemployed 24-year-old will get only £26·05 a week? Does she think that is enough for anyone to live on?

The Prime Minister: Our record on social security—*[Interruption.]* is excellent. The right hon. Gentleman is quite well aware—indeed, we fought the election on it—of the differing arrangements that we have made for those between the ages of 16 and 18. I remind him that expenditure on social security as a whole is now £46 billion a year, while it was £16·5 billion during the lifetime of the Labour Government. It is going up by an extra £2 billion.

Mr. Kinnock: That is all very well, but hundreds of thousands of people still get only £26 a week. Could the Prime Minister, in order to help this very large number of young people, place in the Library a copy of the budget that she would recommend for living on £26 a week?

The Prime Minister: The points that were made by the right hon. Gentleman in his reply to the Budget would have completely dried up—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let us hear the answer.

The Prime Minister: The points that the right hon. Gentleman made in his reply to the Budget last week, and the way in which the Labour party voted, would have completely dried up the money that enables us to pay £46 billion to social security and £22 billion to the Health Service. Indeed, if we went back to government by the Labour party we would need a fantastic number of cuts in the Health Service and in pensions.

Mr. Kinnock: I will ask the Prime Minister to give an answer in terms that even she cannot slide out of. Will she tell these young people how they can live on £26 a week?

Hon. Members: Answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order. There is no point in hon. Members shouting "Answer" as the Prime Minister has not started.

The Prime Minister: I point out to the right hon. Gentleman that social security payments have gone up in real terms—*[Interruption.]*—and greatly exceed anything that happened to them in the lifetime of the Labour Government.

Mr. Michael Morris: May I say, "Thank you" to my right hon. Friend for being so supportive to the family of the late Corporal Howes, who was a constituent of mine. My right hon. Friend doubtless reflected on the security situation at that time at Northolt. Is she aware that it brought back for some of us memories of Malaya, Aden and Cyprus? Does the serious security situation that we undoubtedly have not call for stricter security measures now? Some of those may be intrusive on a personal basis and may include house-to-house searches; certainly they should include the end of processional funerals.

The Prime Minister: We are considering the security situation. I heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland answer a question earlier about the decision of Chief Constable with regard to funerals, and policing them.

I agree with my hon. Friend in what he said about the relatives of the two soliders who were murdered in Northern Ireland. We all found it utterly repugnant and deeply moving, but their families will have to bear the burden year in and year out. We all give them our deepest sympathies and condolence.

Mr. Tony Banks: The right hon. Lady got some good publicity out of it.

Hon. Members: Withdraw!

Mr. Speaker: Order. I call Mr. Hume.

Mr. Hume: In the light of the Prime Minister's statement of Tuesday, directed at constitutional parties in Northern Ireland and relating to the bringing to justice of people who commit crimes, may I tell her that the implications of her statement were deeply resented by

every member of my party, all of whom are in the front line of the battle against violence? I repeat for the nth time that when it comes to bringing to justice the people who commit crimes in Northern Ireland the police have our full and unequivocal support. I add only one qualification to that: that they behave impartially. That is not an unreasonable request in the light of experience in Northern Ireland. I ask the right hon. Lady to practise what she preaches by telling her right hon. Friends, particularly her right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, that no one is above the law in Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister: I entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman. I am pleased with what he has said. I am sure he will agree that the RUC is impartial in everything that it does. I hope he will go on to encourage more Roman Catholics to join the Royal Ulster Constabulary, because that would make its task a great deal easier.

Mr. Bellingham: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I shall take it after business questions.

Business of the House

3.31 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): May I ask the Leader of the House to state the business for next week?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 28 MARCH—Completion of remaining stages of the Education Reform Bill (4th Allotted Day).

Motion relating to the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations.

TUESDAY 29 MARCH—Progress on remaining stages of the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Motion on the terms of reference and membership of the Select Committee on televising of proceedings of the House.

WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH—Until about seven o'clock completion of remaining stages of the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Remaining stages of the Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]*.

THURSDAY 31 MARCH—The House will meet at 9.30 am, take questions until 10.30 am and adjourn at 3.30 pm until Tuesday 12 April.

The House may also be asked to consider other business as necessary.

Mr. Dobson: Given that the Government's legislative programme is already in such disarray that we understand that the Palace has been warned that the next Queen's Speech may have to be deferred until December, will the Leader of the House cut his losses and withdraw and abandon altogether the Housing (Scotland) Bill, which, if passed, would harm the people of Scotland and his party's electoral chances in that country?

Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that it is unacceptable for the Scottish poll tax regulations to be discussed for only one and a quarter hours, late at night, when they give snooping powers to the poll tax registrars that are not found in the original statute on which they are supposed to be based? Does he also accept that such slipshod drafting at the Scottish Office makes it all the more important that the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs should be set up and allowed to get on with its work? How much longer must the people of Scotland wait for the Tory Whips to put their side of the House in order?

Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to ensure that the Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]* is debated at some reasonable hour? We all understand that it is a pay-off for P and O's contribution to Tory party funds, but a fundamental attack on the employment rights of seafarers should not be debated in the dead of night.

Talking of the dead of night, will the Leader of the House tell us whether the orders setting up the Select Committee on televising the House are to be debated in the early hours of the morning? Is there any chance that the Committee will meet before Easter to start its important task?

I recognise all the problems about the timing of debates next week, but does the Leader of the House agree that a simple solution to all the problems would be to withdraw the Housing (Scotland) Bill and then abandon it?

Finally, when does the right hon. Gentleman expect to be able to announce an inquiry into the leak of the Prime Minister's letter on testing to the Secretary of State for Education?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman has asked me a number of questions about the business for next week and other general matters. He suggests that Government business is in disarray. I do not know whether he has seen the article in the *New Statesman* today, written by one of his runners, which seems to indicate that the hon. Gentleman thinks that the Opposition are doing a good job. If he is under that illusion, he is happy with his thoughts.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to drop the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The answer is, no; it is an important Bill and we intend to proceed with it, as I announced a few minutes ago.

The hon. Gentleman also raised the question of the community charge registration regulations. I have already made clear to the House that we regard the points at issue as minor and technical. Of course, it will be open to hon. Members to raise the matters in the debate. We propose that the debate should run for up to one and a half hours, which is more generous than if the prayer had been taken in the normal way.

As to the Scottish Select Committee, that is in the hands of the Committee of Selection. I have done what I can, and I hope that the deliberations of the Committee of Selection will be successful.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the Merchant Shipping Bill. I believe that it is right that it should be taken next week. I think that the hour at which we shall proceed will be reasonable.

As to the debate on the television Select Committee, I regret that that will be late at night, but there is a lot of business to be got through and it is not unreasonable if it is to be dealt with as soon as possible. That is the most convenient time that I can find. As soon as the Committee is set up, I will be happy for it to meet.

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I welcome what my right hon. Friend has said about getting on with the appointment of the television Select Committee. The blame for the delay does not attach to him. Has my right hon. Friend noticed the unhappy tendency on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to slide out of the Chamber on these occasions and to subcontract the job of asking the question on business to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), who reads out a bad list clumsily? Would it not be better if the Leader of the Opposition showed a bit of leadership for a change?

Mr. Wakeham: I would welcome the Leader of the Opposition if he were able to be present for business questions, but he is always very courteous and explains to me why he cannot be here. I accept that he has competing claims on his time, particularly over the next few months. I think that the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) does his best, and I am all for encouraging him.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): In arranging the business of the House, will the Leader of the House take account of the interest of those of us who wish to ask oral questions on Scottish legal affairs? As the business is presently arranged, hon. Members with an interest in these

matters have to choose between asking a general question on Scotland or a legal question. I understand that between 1974 and 1987 there was a separate and distinct opportunity to ask questions on Scottish legal affairs. Will the Leader of the House consider reinstituting that practice because of the large number of hon. Members who have an interest in these matters?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise the difficulty for hon. Members on the Liberal Benches who have to make up their minds about the question which they will ask before they ask it. I will be happy to have discussions through the usual channels if the arrangements are not satisfactory. If there is any way of improving them, I shall do so.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Does my right hon. Friend recall that I asked him on 11 February whether he would reinstitute the limit on speeches that existed in the previous Parliament? He said that he recognised that there was need for that. Is he aware that if the limit was reinstituted there would be considerably more opportunities for Back Benchers to make speeches? He said that he was having discussions through the usual channels. How are those discussions progressing?

Mr. Wakeham: Slowly, but hopefully we are making some progress. I am in favour of bringing the proposals forward, but I want to ensure that I have as much agreement on the matter as possible.

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Will the Leader of the House please put off the business relating to the Housing (Scotland) Bill so that we can have a full debate on the poll tax regulations? Is he aware that the regulations are vital to the substance of the poll tax in Scotland? My constituency is one of only two in Scotland in which constituents will benefit from the poll tax—even so they voted for me at the general election. Does the Leader of the House realise that my constituents are worried about the regulations and want a longer debate than the one that the right hon. Gentleman is providing? My constituents and the people of Scotland believe that it is outrageous for the matter to be tacked on at the end of a day's business and dealt with in only one and a half hours.

Mr. Wakeham: I thought that I had been forthcoming in providing a debate that would be longer than the debate on a normal prayer. However, I have already been pressed on that point by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), who spoke from the Opposition Front Bench, I am unlikely to be more forthcoming to the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) than to the Opposition Front Bench spokesman.

Mr. Richard Alexander (Newark): Has my right hon. Friend had time to note the campaign by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents for a change in the law regarding British summer time? Has he noted that the campaign calls for clocks not to be put back when they are put forward on the 27th? Has he also noted that the RSPA believes that putting the clocks back at the end of summer time has caused 60 child deaths and probably about 500 adult deaths? Whether we accept those statistics or not, is this not a serious matter which perhaps should be debated in the House at an early date?

Mr. Wakeham: The question of British summer time is under active consideration by the Government. For this year and next year the present situation will remain unchanged. That will allow the Government to consider and consult on what arrangements should be adopted subsequently.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): I know that the staff in the House of Commons are hard pressed at times, but could a couple of carpenters be made available to make these Benches longer? I find it most distressing when the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) comes in to the Chamber and pushes hon. Members like me around. It also seems unfair that one third of the right hon. Gentleman's party had to stand throughout Prime Minister's Question Time. Can something be done to prevent the bullying and ruffian tactics of the right hon. Member for Devonport?

Mr. Wakeham: I am surprised that a big fellow like the hon. Gentleman should need my protection in these matters. As we approach the end of Lent, I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman might be more successful in losing a little weight and that might help him with his problem.

Sir Geoffrey Pattie (Chertsey and Walton): Has my right hon. Friend any plans for an early debate on the Griffiths report on community care?

Mr. Wakeham: I arranged last week for copies of the report to be placed in the Vote Office. At this stage I can give no firm undertaking about the timing of a possible debate. However, I will bear the point in mind.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): Will the Leader of the House give further consideration to a debate on the Griffiths report at the earliest opportunity because it is causing concern?

I appreciate that there is tremendous demand and pressure on time in the House, but the Leader of the House and others are aware of the concern for more time to be made available to debate the general situation in Northern Ireland. Has consideration been given to that? Would it be possible to have a debate about the possibility of bringing our laws into line with the laws of the Republic of Ireland with regard to terrorist propaganda on the media?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot say more about the Griffiths report than I have already said.

As for the second point, the hon. Gentleman knows that I have had a number of discussions with hon. Members from every party in the House about Northern Ireland legislation, over quite a long time. There are no proposals for change at present, but I am happy to continue discussions, and to find out whether there is a generally agreed way forward.

Sir John Farr (Harborough): I wonder whether my right hon. Friend, as part of his duties as Leader of the House, will take an opportunity to examine the proceedings of Standing Committee C. On Wednesday, it was decided by nine votes to eight to take the unusual step of sitting on Tuesday mornings and afternoons, Wednesday mornings and afternoons and Thursday mornings and afternoons.

I know that my right hon. Friend's immediate reply will be that he is rather glad not to be on that Committee—

[Sir John Farr]

as, indeed, am I. What is most important, however, is that the decision to put the Question in regard to this unusual——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that the matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the House.

Sir John Farr: I conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that the Question was put when a number of hon. Members were on their feet——

Mr. Speaker: Order. That is just the point. I am afraid that it is not the responsibility of the Leader of the House.

Mr. Roy Beggs (Antrim, East): In planning future business, will the Leader of the House take account of the real concern throughout Northern Ireland, in all the area health boards, about the limited funds available for the services that they provide? Will he recognise the need for rationalisation of hospital services for the whole Province, thereby avoiding inter-board conflict as the boards chase funds to maintain existing services? If the right hon. Gentleman could provide time, I feel that it would be beneficial and cost-effective in the long term for all of us.

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Gentleman would like to be here tomorrow morning for the Easter Adjournment debate, and if he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that he will be able to make his points then.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): When we debate the Merchant Shipping Bill next week, will my right hon. Friend ensure that the Minister responsible makes a statement on the safety aspect of the industrial dispute that is now paralysing the Channel ports? Does my right hon. Friend agree that, while it is of course inappropriate for the Government to become involved in arguments about manning levels, nevertheless no one has yet answered the fundamental point put forward by the officers and seafarers that certain aspects of the proposed rest and shift patterns may present serious dangers to the ferries? The Government need to make a clear statement to ensure that any proposals put forward by P and O are in accordance with the merchant shipping regulations of 1982.

Mr. Wakeham: I take my hon. Friend's point, and I shall refer it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. I am sure that he will say whatever is appropriate in next Wednesday's debate.

Mr. Merlyn Rees (Morley and Leeds, South): Does the Leader of the House recall that, on a number of occasions before and after the general election, I asked him whether we could have a debate on the Select Committee report on the procedures and methods of the Boundary Commission? Does he consider that important — not least if there is a problem of seating with a House of 650?

The way in which the Boundary Commission now works is outside the control of the House, and it keeps increasing the number of Members of Parliament without any link to us. We ought to consider this matter; it is of great importance.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that it is an important matter, and I shall have a word with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary about it.

Rev. William McCrea (Mid-Ulster): Last night in my constituency there was a further attack on the members of the security forces, the Army and RUC patrol, in Pomeroy. The continual — indeed, continuous — attack by the Provisional IRA has caused great fear in the Province as a whole. Will the Leader of the House arrange business to allow a proper, full-scale debate on the security position in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Wakeham: I hope that I do not say anything that shows that I do not believe that the security situation is extremely serious, but I do not believe that it would be right to change the business next week to have a debate on that subject.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): I wonder whether you can help me, Mr. Speaker. I notice that the Scottish Nationalists, who have expressed an interest in causing great trouble on these occasions, seem to be——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Questions should be directed to the Leader of the House, not to me.

Mr. Foulkes: I wondered whether you had named those hon. Members while I was out, Mr. Speaker.

Is the Leader of the House aware that the business to be considered late on Monday night is not technical and minor but vital? It is an outrage that a matter affecting the administration of the poll tax will be dealt with in one and a quarter hours, late at night, without adequate time for discussion. The 50 Scottish Labour Members will want to take part in the debate, but that will be impossible. Surely the Leader of the House can think again. There is all the time after Easter, when we shall be happy to spend a full day — two, if necessary — discussing this important matter.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman should recognise that the measure was originally tabled as a prayer. Because of the way in which I have arranged the debate, the time is slightly extended rather than reduced.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): Some weeks ago I raised with my right hon. Friend the matter of the Short money allocations to minority parties. In view of the statement yesterday by the leader of the Liberal party that the BBC was right to stick to its principles over the film in Northern Ireland and the fact that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) said that this was a disgrace, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind this further split in the amoeba-like qualities of the SLD and arrange for Short money to be divided accordingly?

Mr. Wakeham: I hope that I shall come to the House shortly with proposals on financial assistance to Opposition parties. I have a fairly clear view as to how to proceed. We shall have to wait and see whether the Opposition parties agree.

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): The right hon. Gentleman will be well aware that there is growing realisation in the House as to how disastrous the introduction of television cameras may be to the proceedings of the House. The climate has certainly changed in the past few weeks——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): My hon. Friend will get a star part.

Mr. Faulds: Will you be quiet for one moment, you loquacious, arrogant——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I said nothing.

Mr. Faulds: We all have our tribulations, and how I sympathise with you, Mr. Speaker. You have all of them; I have only one or two.

Mr. Tony Banks: But my hon. Friend would not need a wig.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Gentleman should change places and move down the Gangway.

Mr. Faulds: I should welcome a move nearer you, Sir, by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), but not, for God's sake, on to the Labour Front Bench. I am trying to make an extremely serious point.

As the House will recognise, there has been growing realisation of the damage that the ridiculous introduction of television cameras will do. Therefore, is it satisfactory that the only chance that the House has to debate the composition of the Committee is late at night?

There are at least three good reasons why the debate should be in prime time next season. First, there is increasing opposition to the proposal. Secondly, the composition of the Committee in terms of the parliamentary Labour party's contribution was based on the choice of one hon. Member opposing the introduction and five backing it. It is extraordinary that the one who was chosen to oppose the measure has been in the House for only a few months and will not be nearly as effective as some other hon. Members. Thirdly, it is unacceptable to debate late at night this major issue, which will affect the reputation and public perception of how the House conducts its business, because late at night most of us—the healthy ones—have much better things to do.

Mr. Wakeham: I have already said that I am sorry that this business has to be taken late at night, but that is the best proposal for dealing with it next week. I shall certainly be here. I wonder whether the length of the hon. Gentleman's question reveals that he might have better things to do at that time. I hope that he will be here with us.

Mr. John Stokes (Halesowen and Stourbridge): Does my right hon. Friend recollect that some time ago I asked him what part Her Majesty's Government will play in the celebrations this summer to commemorate the 400 years since the Spanish Armada was defeated, a very great occasion in English history? Is he aware that beacons will be lit from Plymouth to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and I hope that there will be a parade of troops, at Tilbury. What will the Government be doing?

Mr. Wakeham: That is a very important question. The best I can do is to invite my hon. Friend to have a drink with me and discuss what he thinks the Government should do.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Leader of the House acknowledge that there will be questions to the Department of Energy on Monday? We have heard quite a lot in the House about safeguarding jobs in Scotland and the desire of the Secretary of State to bring jobs to Scotland. We accept and acknowledge that. Will the Leader of the House remind both the Secretary of State for Energy and the Secretary of State for Scotland that they have a statutory responsibility for the electricity and coal industries in Scotland? May we have a statement on Monday on the progress of negotiations between the SSEB and British Coal in regard to safeguarding mining jobs as there is tantamount to one union operating in the mining industry?

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland know full well their statutory responsibilities and they will discharge them. However, I shall refer the hon. Gentleman's question to them.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Will my right hon. Friend find time next week for a statement by the Government on the implications for the sovereignty of the House and for jobs in Britain of the instructions given yesterday in Brussels to a senior Government Minister that the Rover Group and British Aerospace merger should not go ahead unless the terms of the deal were approved in detail by the EEC and until there is a six-month review? As this is obviously a serious matter, and has been widely commented on in almost all this morning's papers, will the Government say what has happened, why it has happened and what are the implications?

Mr. Wakeham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry said something after his meeting yesterday. I shall refer my hon. Friend's point to him to find out whether it is necessary for him to say anything further next week.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): Will there be a statement on whether other Cabinet Ministers will be spending their time picking up litter from parks when it has been specially put down for that purpose? Is the Leader of the House aware that, while the publicity-crazy Prime Minister was happy to do that, if other Cabinet Ministers were to engage in the same task they might cause less damage to the country than they do when they work in their own Departments?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman has included rubbish in many of his questions in the House. However, this is the first time that I have heard him do it so directly. I thought that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister was right to take the initiative and to try to help in the big task of clearing up litter throughout the country.

Mr. Bowen Wells (Hertford and Stortford): Will my right hon. Friend explain carefully to the House why he has not yet been able to set up a Select Committee on Procedure? There are matters such as the way in which we deal with European questions, including the one that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) has just mentioned. European legislation is poorly dealt with in the House and there are great implications. There is also the issue of Members' behaviour. Many hon. Members believe that that should be reviewed and fines imposed on those who abuse the Chair. There is also the way in which the guillotine operates to prevent Back Benchers from taking part in, for example, the debate on the Education Reform Bill last night when most Back-Bench Members' amendments were not reached.

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise that my hon. Friend has a number of points which he would like to be discussed by a Select Committee on Procedure. I have said that I should like such a Committee to be set up, but I cannot add anything more to what I have said about the matter in previous weeks. We are doing the best we can.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Mon): I was disappointed by the reply that the Leader of the House gave on Monday when a question was put to him about the use of the Welsh language in the Welsh Grand Committee, because since I have been in this place I have always regarded the right hon. Gentleman as a reasonable man. I ask him to look at early-day motion 768 on the use of the Welsh language in the Welsh Grand Committee.

[That this House mindful of the fact that the Welsh language is a native language of one of the nations of Britain, and is spoken by hundreds of thousands of people in Wales and many other people in other parts of the United Kingdom, calls for the use of the Welsh language to be permitted in the proceedings of the Welsh Grand Committee, using simultaneous translation facilities.]

It shows that this is not a party issue. The motion has been signed by hon. Members on both sides of the House. It is not even a linguistic issue because the motion has been signed by English, Welsh and Scottish Members of Parliament. This question is of great importance to the House. In his reply on Monday, the right hon. Member suggested that it was a matter for the House, not for him. Will he therefore reconsider the holding of a debate on this question?

Mr. Wakeham: In all charity, I have to say to the hon. Gentleman that if he was disappointed by the reply that I gave on Monday he will have many disappointments in his career in the House of Commons, because I thought that I was as reasonable as I could be in the circumstances.

The Government share the desire of hon. Members to safeguard the Welsh language, but I do not believe that it would be practical to conduct any aspect of the business of the House in a language other than English. I am sure that hon. Members will agree that there are other more practical means of supporting the Welsh language, which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales is now actively considering. If the hon. Gentleman were able to be present tomorrow for the Easter Adjournment debate, perhaps he could make a speech on the subject, if he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I allude to the question that was put by the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells). Today there is to be further discussion under the timetable motion of the Education Reform Bill. It would be very helpful if hon. Members could put brief questions to the Leader of the House.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Before the Government were sidetracked into signing the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which enables Ministers of the Irish Republic to pressurise Ministers of this country in private, there was a proposal that a parliamentary tier should be added to the then Anglo-Irish Council. When it was suggested that such a parliamentary tier should be created, my right hon. Friend's predecessor used to say that this was a matter for the House of Commons, not for the Government. It looks as though we need a new initiative and, indeed, an opportunity for parliamentarians on both sides to argue in public about Anglo-Irish relations, so should not this proposal be resuscitated? Will my right hon. Friend say that it is a matter for the House and not the Government, because he is the Leader of the House?

Mr. Wakeham: I am quite happy to confirm to my hon. Friend that it is indeed a matter for the House. If there is a strong desire in all parts of the House, we shall see how we go from there.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Has the Leader of the House seen early-day motion 864?

[That this House notes with disbelief the hesitation of certain broadcasting authorities to make available to the Royal Ulster Constabulary film relevant for a murder investigation in Northern Ireland; and hopes that, even at this late stage, some sense of civic and moral responsibility will prevail.]

Does he not agree that it ill becomes Members of Parliament, speaking in the safety and security of the House of Commons, to pontificate on the civic and moral responsibility of men and women who often place themselves in great danger to report to the public what is happening throughout the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland, and around the world? Will he go and see the Prime Minister, take with him the hon. Member for Bristol, West (Mr. Waldegrave), try to knock some sense into her and show her the statement by the National Union of Journalists, issued this week, that says that if journalists are perceived to be collectors of evidence to give to the authorities and that if their impartiality is called into question they will be placed in very great danger—in even more danger than they are now? If the Prime Minister's real motive is to deny to the public of this country information about the barbarity of terrorism, the only victors will be the men of violence who believe that political change can be brought about only by violence.

Mr. Wakeham: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman's desire would be the same as the Prime Minister's — to bring to book the people who perpetrated those terrible murders in Belfast on Saturday and to speed it up in every possible way. The RUC called yesterday on the BBC and ITN and took possession of film of the events surrounding the murder of the two soldiers in west Belfast on 19 March. I hope that this material will be of considerable assistance to the RUC in the major murder inquiry that it has now instituted.

Mr. Simon Burns (Chelmsford): Will my right hon. Friend have a clear idea after Easter of when the Criminal Justice Bill will return to the Floor of the House so that hon. Members may have an opportunity to debate and vote on capital punishment?

Mr. Wakeham: I shall report to the House as soon as I am able to do so, but I cannot give my hon. Friend any news today.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): Could there be an early debate on the danger of solvent abuse to young people? Is the Minister aware that about three youngsters die each week from solvent abuse and that in recent weeks two have suffered this tragedy within the city of Leicester —one being the 14-year-old son of a most respected councillor? Will he please ask the Home Secretary what steps have been taken, what steps he is taking and what steps he proposes to take in order to meet a menace that is, alas, growing all the time?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sorry that I cannot promise the hon. and learned Gentleman a debate next week, but I certainly undertake to report to the Home Secretary on the point that he raised.

Mr. Edward Leigh (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Given my right hon. Friend's wider responsibilities as Leader of the whole House, does he agree that if parliamentary democracy is to operate efficiently, and that if minority rights are to be respected, it is vital that the decisions of the Chair should be respected? Is it not a matter of concern to my right hon. Friend, therefore, that a senior Member of this House, a member of the Chairmen's Panel, voted against his motion to suspend an hon. Member who had been named by Mr. Deputy Speaker during the Budget statement?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree with my hon. Friend that it is vital for the proper running of this House that the decisions of Mr. Speaker are upheld. I hope that all hon. Members will support Mr. Speaker in his very difficult task.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Will the Leader of the House arrange for a statement to be made on the seizure of the film from the BBC and ITV? The right hon. Gentleman must recognise the jeopardy in which every BBC and ITN reporter, camera man, crew man and sound recordist is placed. It is a very important issue that cannot be swept to one side.

Will the right hon. Gentleman also arrange for a debate on the Jarvis plc report that was published this week and sent to every hon. Member?

There have been leaked documents from the Secretary of State for Transport about the Settle to Carlisle railway. It is a long-standing issue. I have asked the Leader of the House on at least three occasions for a statement. The matter ought to be cleared up, since one Government Department has produced a useful report that advocates retention of the line while the Department of Transport is busy trying to sabotage it and get it closed.

Mr. Wakeham: I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would be pleased that the BBC and ITN handed over film taken at the event in order to assist the RUC in its major murder inquiry. I believe that that was the right and proper way to proceed.

As for the Carlisle to Settle railway, the recent Jarvis report is a helpful contribution to the debate, and the Secretary of State will take it fully into account before reaching his decision.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): If my right hon. Friend decides to disburse taxpayers' funds to minority political parties, will he take into account the fact that the Scottish National party Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) had no sooner been allowed to return to the House after his expulsion from it than he stated that he intends to increase parliamentary disruption and guerrilla tactics and to destroy democracy? He is supported in that view by his two colleagues. If those who wish to disrupt Parliament do not want to take part in the democratic process, I suggest that they should not be funded to do so.

Mr. Wakeham: The question of the Short money will be a matter for the House, not for me, to decide. My hon. and learned Friend referred to press reports about threatened disruption of the proceedings of the House. I cannot believe that any Members who have been elected by the democratic process would seek to rely on unparliamentary means to achieve their objective.

Mr. William McKelvey (Kilmarnock and Loudoun): Would the Leader of the House make a progress report —if that is the proper term—on the fate of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs? I understand that in response to the letter that he received from my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), the Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, he wrote to the Chairman of the Committee of Selection. Would it be possible to divulge the contents of that letter so that we might have some hope?

Mr. Wakeham: The letter that I wrote was to the Chairman of the Committee of Selection. It is up to him to decide how to proceed, having received that letter. It is not a matter for me.

Mr. John M. Taylor (Solihull): In considering shorter speeches, will my right hon. Friend direct his attention to shorter questions, and perhaps give the House some guidance?

Mr. Wakeham: The short answer is yes.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): In view of the concern about parliamentary behaviour, would not next week be a good time to discuss early-day motions 228, 253, 272, 273, 286, 622 and 627?

[That this House notes in the book, Campaign, by Rodney Tyler, the Selling of the Prime Minister: from behind the doors of Downing Street and Conservative Central Office—A unique inside account of the Battle for Power that the author on page 1, chapter 1, paragraph 1, sentence 1, states 'It was an extraordinary turnaround in fortunes from the moment on 27th January 1986 when Mrs. Thatcher secretly confided to a close associate that she might have to resign . . .' and on page 3 that 'On the eve of the crucial Westland debate she herself felt shakey enough to doubt her future' though some around her later sought to dismiss this as late evening anxieties of the sort that had disappeared the following morning). It is certainly true that if Leon Brittan had chosen to, he could have brought her to the brink of downfall, by naming the real culprits inside Number 10. Instead, he chose to remain silent', and calls on the Prime Minister to give a full account of what transpired between 3rd January and 27th January 1986, at Number 10 Downing Street, in relation to the selectively leaked Law Office's letter concerning the Westland Affair.]

[That this House notes that the Member for Aldershot on page 136 of his book Heseltine: the unauthorised Biography, states in relation to the Westland Affair that 'John Wakeham issued an order of the day which contained the trite, if effective message, that it was time for all good men to come to the aid of the party. We did and calls on the Leader of the House, The Right Honourable Member for South Colchester and Maldon, to explain when he first knew the role of the then Trade and Industry Secretary, The Right Honourable Member for Richmond, Yorks, in the matter of the disclosure of a selectively leaked Law Officer's letter.]

[That this House notes that in his book Mrs. Thatcher's Revolution, published this week by Jonathan Cape and Co., Mr. Peter Jenkins writes, on page 200 'Brittan himself refused to enlighten the Select Committee on any point of substance. However, he is reputed to have told close friends subsequently that not only has she known perfectly well what had happened but that, on the day following the leak, had expressed her satisfaction to him at the way things had been handled. However at that time, the downfall of Heseltine had

[Mr. Tam Dalyell]

not been achieved. . . . He (Mr. Brittan) might point the finger at her (Mrs. Thatcher). Potentially he now had the power to destroy her'; and calls on the Prime Minister to give the House a full account of her conversations with the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Right honourable Member for Richmond, Yorks, over the period from 3rd January and 27th January 1986, in relation to the selectively leaked Law Officer's letter concerning the Westland Affair.]

[That this House notes that in The Thatcher Years—A decade of Revolution in British Politics, published by BBC Books, Mr. John Cole, on page 170, considering the selectively leaked Law Officer's letter in the Westland Affair, writes 'why did he (Sir Robert Armstrong) not give her a quick interim report when he discovered that the leak was an inside job, authorised by her office? Why did Leon Brittan not tell her? Or the private secretary concerned? Or his chief, who sits in the same room? Or her press secretary? And why did she never ask?'; and calls on the Prime Minister to inform the House of the answers to these questions.]

[That this House notes that, in the book 'Not with Honour—The Inside Story of the Westland Scandal', on page 142, Magnus Linklater and David Leigh write that 'Instead, following Havers's complaint, she spoke privately to Brittan about the leak. Although this is something the Prime Minister has failed to disclose, to widespread disbelief, the evidence comes from an authoritative source, who told us: "The Prime Minister knew about the leak. She was pleased it had been done. There was a meeting between Brittan and her after the complaint from Mayhew. Only the two of them were present . . . Brittan assumed she knew of [the leak's] origins. You must draw your own conclusions." One of Brittan's friends adds, "Nobody thought it was a problem. The complaints were out of the public domain and any inquiry was expected to be a formality. Leon wasn't worried at all about it."'; and calls on the Prime Minister to give a full account to the House of the meeting between herself and Right honourable Member for Richmond, Yorks, referred to therein.]

[That this House notes that in an article by Mr. Paul Foot in the Daily Mirror, dated 28th January, a Ministry of Defence official, Mr. Paul Newbegin, is quoted as having admitted witnessing the shredding and incinerating of the log book of HMS 'Conqueror'; is concerned that if this statement is true, the Ministry of Defence is guilty of having established an entirely bogus investigation into the disappearance of the log book when the facts of its deliberate destruction were already known; further notes the parallel between this case and that of the leaked Solicitor General's letter in the Westland Affair, when a similar investigation was launched despite the availability in advance of all the salient facts; and calls upon the Secretary of State for Defence to set up an immediate inquiry with the genuine purpose of furnishing Parliament with a full explanation of this bizarre series of events.]

[That this House calls for a debate on the conduct of honourable and right honourable Members of the House, considering the position of back bench members who resort to unparliamentary language and Heads of Government who misuse Law Officer's letters and then display lack of candour about what they have done.]

Would the Leader of the House expand on his answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) about the letter from the Prime Minister's private secretary, Mr. Gray, to Mr. Jeffrey of the Department of Education and Science? When I asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science about that letter in the debate on the Education Reform Bill, as reported in column 233 *of Hansard*, he replied—at his most charming and with that famous smile of his—that I should address such questions to the Prime Minister. When I went to the Table Office, the learned Clerks told me that the Prime Minister has blocked every question on this issue.

The Leader of the House says that he has nothing to add, but he has said nothing, so I do not know what he has nothing to add to. There is an easy solution to all this: go and ask Mr. Ingham what he did.

Mr. Wakeham: I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman, but I have nothing further to add.

Mr. Tony Marlow (Northampton, North): If I or any of my right hon. or hon. Friends were to put up for the leadership of the Conservative party against the Prime Minister, it would certainly be futile, it might well be selfish, and it would certainly be self-defeating. If we were to have a debate on the subject, would the leadership of the Government have the arrogance and the anti-democratic graceleseness to say so?

Mr. Wakeham: I have to say to my hon. Friend that there is a certain hypothetical ring about his question.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Does the Leader of the House have a view on why Privy Councillors should be given priority in being called in debates?

Mr. Wakeham: By and large, I think the traditions of the House have stood the process of time and provide us with the best way to proceed. I am always open to suggestions, however, and I consider them carefully—especially those made by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Has my right hon. Friend had the opportunity to see early-day motion 864 on the tapes of the funerals at Andersonstown last week?

[That this House notes with disbelief the hesitation of certain broadcasting authorities to make available to the Royal Ulster Constabulary film relevant for a murder investigation in Northern Ireland; and hopes that, even at this late stage, some sense of civic and moral responsibility will prevail.]

Has he also had an opportunity to look at the article in *The Independent*, in which it is pointed out that the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton), who is the Liberal party spokesman for Northern Ireland, agreed that the tapes should be handed over but that an hour or so later he was contradicted by his leader, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel)? In the light of the seriousness of the situation in Northern Ireland, may we have a debate on this matter—particularly so that the Liberal party can explain its new-found unity on the position in Northern Ireland?

Mr. Wakeham: I find it inconceivable that any responsible person should think that the BBC and ITN should not hand over the films, given the seriousness of the situation in west Belfast. But I have no ministerial responsibility for the views of the Liberal party.

Several Hon. Members rose——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I again remind the House that we have a timetable motion on the subsequent business and I therefore ask for brief questions.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): In view of what the Prime Minister has said about single unions at Dundee, will the Leader of the House ask her whether she would now be in favour of a single union at GCHQ?

In view of the creative litter-placing that took place last Wednesday, will the right hon Gentleman also ask her whether the Secretary of State for the Environment will come to the Dispatch Box to explain who will pay for the placing of that litter? Will the councillors be surcharged for wasting ratepayers' money? Will the BBC be asked to deliver all its untransmitted film, including the shot in which, unfortunately for her, the Prime Minister missed one of the pieces of carefully placed litter and picked up some genuine rubbish?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not think that anything in the hon. Gentleman's diatribe requires me to say anything other than no.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Is the Leader of the House aware how insulting it is both to Scottish Members of Parliament and to the people of Scotland that we will have only an hour and a half to debate the regulations dealing with the whole procedure of implementing the unwanted and unfair poll tax? Is not that a reflection of the fact that the Minister is incapable of putting a proper case and that the Government have no arguments in favour of the tax worthy to put to the House?

Mr. Wakeham: The reason why an hour and a half is adequate is that the points at issue are minor and technical —[HON. MEMBERS: "Rubbish."] I know that Opposition Members do not accept that, but I am not prepared to shift from that ground.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): Does the Leader of the House realise that his dismissal of the regulations as minor and technical will be deeply resented in Scotland where people are only too well aware of the serious civil liberties implications of the regulations? Does he not realise that the Scots will see him as acting like a thief in the night, trying to slip through highly controversial regulations without proper debate or analysis of their impact on the Scottish people?

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure that the points that the hon. Gentleman made about me were exactly flattering. Clearly he did not listen to the answer that I gave a moment ago. I said, not that the community charge registration regulations were minor and trivial, but that the points at issue were minor and trivial.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): Is the Leader of the House aware that only this morning Standing Committee E, dealing with the poll tax legislation for England and Wales, was debating clauses that affect Scotland? One clause added a new exempted category—visiting forces. The Minister was pressed about the category of severely mentally handicapped people as early in the Committee's proceedings as February, but he has still not found time to discuss the matter with his Scottish colleagues. The regulations, which are described as minor and technical, are to go before the House at 10 pm on Monday, yet the matter is still being discussed in Committee.

Mr. Wakeham: I am not sure that I would be in order if I were to discuss the proceedings of a Standing Committee, but I shall certainly refer the hon. Lady's point to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Will not the Leader of the House accept that the Scottish poll tax regulations are virtually incomprehensible to lay people, and about as readable as a Russian novel? Does he not accept that most people will not understand what is required of them, and will he join me in advising everyone in Scotland who receives a form to go to the registration officer or send the form back without further question?

Mr. Wakeham: No; and I think that the hon. Gentleman's points are more appropriate to the debate than to business questions.

Dr. John Reid (Motherwell, North): May I caution the Leader of the House against spending too much time bothering about the proposed consistent disruption of the House by certain Members of the Scottish National party? In order to disrupt, they would have to be here and, judging by the SNP's past record, there will be precious little attendance or disruption.

Would the Leader of the House therefore spend more time addressing himself to the question that has been raised about the poll tax regulations? He may recall that I raised this matter last Thursday. On that occasion the Leader of the House described as "minor and technical" the fact that the regulations were unlawful. How can a Government who place so much stress on the necessity to act within the law then decide to allow one minute for each Scottish Member to discuss the imposition of unlawful regulations in Scotland so that they can push through what is already widely regarded as an unfair poll tax?

Mr. Wakeham: I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I do not treat these things lightly. I know that he raised the matter with me previously. I have given the matter long thought and decided to do what I have announced to the House this afternoon. I do not think that I made a mistake in doing so.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Will the Leader of the House accept that, if by any chance he believes that what is being put through on Monday night is minor and technical, he is suffering from a severe delusion? What is being put through in an hour and a half on Monday night is the whole business of registration and the designation of a responsible person within a household. Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that if this thing is to be bludgeoned through without explanation or debate and in the midst of total confusion, it will be no surprise when literally millions of people in Scotland follow the advice of Opposition Members and send the forms back? Indeed, the Government have invited them to send the forms back if they do not understand them. They will be sent back and the Leader of the House will bear responsibility for that. Seventy five per cent. of Scottish opinion is totally opposed to the poll tax. It can command 15 per cent. support. In fact, 15 per cent. of Scottish Tories are demanding a campaign of non-payment. Yet, in an hour and half on Monday night, this gobbledegook is to be shuffled through. The forms will be sent back, and the Government will be responsible.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman is under a bit of a misapprehension as to exactly what is happening on Monday night. If he is at the debate, he may find out.

Mr. Dennis Turner (Wolverhampton, South-East): I wonder when the Leader of the House will find time for another debate on rising crime. In the west midlands and my constituency many thousands of people live in fear and frustration. In the west midlands, despite an appeal by the committee of the west midlands police authority and the police chief, we are still awaiting fulfilment of the promises that have been made with regard to improving our community policing. We are short of resources. From the Autumn Statement we learned that the Home Secretary and the Government are committed to investing more funds in the police. May we have an early debate so that we may know, certainly in the west midlands, whether we will be able to offer something tangible and concrete to the people of our conurbation?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman has raised an important matter. He will recognise that the Government have allocated an extra £500 million in the coming financial year for the fight against crime and for the upholding of law and order. However, I cannot promise an early debate on the subject because we have a lot of other matters with which to deal. However, he might like to try his luck tomorrow in the Easter Adjournment debate.

Mr. Paul Flynn (Newport, West): May I draw the Leader of the House's attention to early-day motion 738, which has been supported by hon. Members on both sides of the House?

[That this House calls for the return of British Standard Time in order to provide an extra hour of daylight that will reduce the number of road accidents, probably by 600 fatal and serious accidents every year according to research findings, reduce crime and energy consumption and increase opportunities for tourist and leisure activities.]

Yesterday, the motion was supported by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents because it says that the restoration of British standard time will reduce fatal and serious accidents by 600 per year. The evidence from the Policy Studies Institute shows that British standard time or a combination of British standard time and double British summer time would produce prodigious savings in fuel and lighting, ease trade communication with the continent, and expand the availability of leisure facilities, especially for the very young and elderly. In view of the savings to be made in resources and human life, and in view of the long period that would be necessary to make the change, does not the Leader of the House consider that to be a prime and urgent priority?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was in the House when I answered a question on that subject earlier. In case he was not, I will repeat what I said. The question of British summer time is under active consideration by the Government. For this year and next year the present situation will remain unchanged. That will allow the Government to consider and consult on what arrangements should be adopted subsequently. I know that the hon. Gentleman will find a way of making sure that his views are expressed to the Government at the appropriate time.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): May I draw the Leader of the House's attention to early-day motion 868 concerning the problems facing the Kurdish people in Iraq?

[That this House is alarmed at the continuing persecution of Kurdish people in Iraq; records its horror at the way all Kurdish people have been treated in their struggle for a Kurdish nation; demands that Her Majesty's Government request the United Nations to send an independent mission to Iraq to seek safeguards for the Kurdish people and that the International Red Cross be requested to send essential supplies to save the lives of Kurdish people in Iraq.]

Can he find time for a debate on foreign affairs when such matters can be raised, but, in the meantime, will he communicate urgently to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister the need to put pressure on the United Nations to send a team of observers to Iraq to see what has happened there and on the International Red Cross to send urgent medical supplies?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that today the Committee of Kurdish Organisations in Britain has delivered a letter to the Prime Minister pointing out that already 21,000 have died in Halabja following cyanide and other chemical weapon attacks on the town by the Government of Iraq? The very least that the British Government should, indeed must, do is to demand an end to all chemical warfare and an end to the attacks on the Kurdish people and put pressure on all international agencies to bring urgent humanitarian relief to end the tragic loss of life.

Mr. Wakeham: I understand the feelings expressed in the early-day motion to which the hon. Gentleman referred and that was made clear by my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office in answer to a written question on 11 March. We deplore the denial of human rights wherever that may occur. The International Red Cross cannot enter or act within a country without the permission or invitation of that country's Government. However, I shall certainly refer the hon. Gentleman's point to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May I draw the Leader of the House's attention to early-day motion 874 relating to the impending execution of Michael Lucas tomorrow in South Africa?

[That this House deplores the execution of Tsepo Letsoara in South Africa on 18th March and the impending execution of Michael Lucas on 25th March; expresses its grave concern that the apartheid regime is resorting increasingly to the use of the death penalty against opponents of apartheid; recalls the interventions made by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Sharpeville Six; and appeals to the Foreign Secretary to intervene immediately with the South African authorities to ensure the commuting of the death sentence on Michael Lucas and all others on death row for their alleged involvement in activities relating to the opposition to apartheid.]

May we please have a debate immediately after Easter on the situation in South Africa so that we can make sure that the views of the House with regard to the possible judicial murder of the Sharpeville six is communicated in a direct way to the South African Government in view of the failure of the Prime Minister to intervene directly with P.W. Botha?

Mr. Waldegrave: I do not accept for one minute what the hon. Gentleman said about my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, nor do I accept the terms of early-day motion 874. We are prepared to make appeals for clemency on humanitarian grounds only in exceptional cases, and the case of Mr. Lucas does not meet our criteria for representations. We will, of course, be having a foreign affairs debate in the not too distant future, but I cannot promise a date for that debate now.

Points of Order

4.28 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that you and the House are in some difficulty following the business statement. It is clear that the Leader of the House has no idea what the motion on the poll tax, which is to be debated on Monday, is about. He has repeatedly said that it is of a minor and technical nature. However, it sets up the whole registration procedure for the poll tax.

I shall not rehearse all the arguments on that because, Mr. Speaker, you would be right not to allow me to do so. However, I do believe that you and the House are in difficulty. The Leader of the House has made a statement about something that he does not understand and knows nothing about. When asked about the Committee stage of a Bill that affects that motion, again he knew nothing about it. In those circumstances, is it within your power, Mr. Speaker, to ask the Leader of the House to take the regulations away, think about them again, do his homework and, when they are properly drafted and worked out, tell us what he is going to do?

Mr. Speaker: As the hon. Gentleman well knows, I am not responsible for the order of business in the House. I am sure that the Leader of the House understands fully what it is about, and I shall look forward to hearing what it is all about.

Mr. Julian Brazier (Canterbury): During the course of Questions to the Prime Minister the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) made an outrageous allegation that was very clearly audible on the Benches on this side and which I ask you to call upon him to withdraw, Mr. Speaker—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I may say to the hon. Gentleman that I heard a disturbance, but I heard no words that were disorderly.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): What was it?

Mr. Brazier: The allegation that the hon. Member for Newham North-West made was that the Prime Minister had only attended the funeral of the two corporals so brutally murdered in Ulster—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. This seems to me to be like a continuation of Question Time. Sadly, the noise at Prime Minister's Question Time has greatly increased and I deeply regret it. It is not always possible at this end of the Chamber to hear what goes on below the Gangway or across the Chamber. If that remark was made, I would certainly regret it, but it was not a disorderly remark. It was not part of the proceedings of the House because I had not called the hon. Member to speak.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the House referred to the statutory instrument on the collection of the poll tax in Scotland. It is the subject of a report by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. In the ordinary course of events those reports are not debated, because it depends upon the Leader of the House tabling them for debate. The Leader of the House commented that it was because of a prayer limited to an hour and a half that the debate was to take place. Can I make it clear that the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments would certainly

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

welcome a debate on its 18th report, which covers several instruments in addition to the poll tax instrument referred to?

If the Leader of the House is concerned that this is only a prayer and that the time is therefore limited to an hour and a half, and if he wishes to spend a whole day on the report, I am sure that that will be welcomed by members of the Committee and Members on both sides of the House, so that we can have an in-depth investigation and demonstrate that this is not a minor and technical matter. The Joint Committee has made a very serious report. It is an all-party Committee empowered by the House to make sure that the House receives a report if there are serious deficiencies. Those serious deficiencies have been reported. It is misleading for the Leader of the House to suggest that a report of this nature is a trivial matter when serious considerations are involved.

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Further to the points of order raised by my hon. Friends the Members for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Maxton). You bear a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, for trying to maintain the reputation of the House. We sit here and receive virtually constant lectures from Government supporters about law and order, the traditions of the House and maintaining the order and dignity of the House. But Opposition Members feel that what the Government are doing — taking powers in regulations which greatly exceed the powers given in the basic statute and giving a public official extra-parliamentary, unlawful snooping powers against the people of Scotland — will do more damage to the reputation of the House than all the yah-booing of the centuries.

We ask you, Mr. Speaker, to see whether you can prevail upon the Government to treat this matter seriously. It is crucial that the House should not be expected to give to public snoopers powers that they do not possess in statutes. If we are not going to jib at that, God knows, we are not going to jib at anything.

Mr. Speaker: I understand the strong feelings about this matter, but the House knows that it is not in the power or the authority of the Chair to do what the hon. Gentleman has requested. The matter will be debated, and that is the time at which these arguments should be strongly made.

Mr. Ken Livingstone (Brent, East): I am asking your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) has misled the House in reply to a question of mine about the scale of psychological operations in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker: No. I say to the hon. Gentleman that no hon. Member misleads the House. The hon. Member may inadvertently have said something with which the hon. Gentleman disagrees, but he has not misled the House.

Mr. Livingstone: That was why I did not say something stronger. I thought that "misled" might have been in order. If it is not, I withdraw it. It may well be that the hon. Gentleman has been misguided inadvertently by his civil servants. Given that I cannot say that someone has lied to the House, what must I now do to expose what has happened? Do I raise it with you, Mr. Speaker, or through some motion that I put forward?

Mr. Speaker: Do not raise it with me, because I am not responsible for what is said from the Front Bench. The hon. Gentleman must consult his hon. Friends about the parliamentary ways in which he can achieve his objective.

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your guidance on a matter relating to sub judice that arose this morning in one of the Standing Committees. When a Member——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman cannot raise with me in the Chamber what goes on in Standing Committee. If he is alleging a breach of privilege or anything of that kind, he should write to me. He cannot raise with me what goes on in Standing Committee, because that is a matter for the Chairman of the Standing Committee, not for the Speaker in the Chamber.

Mr. Mullin: I accept what you say, Mr. Speaker. It relates to sub judice in reference to the continued claiming by Home Office Ministers of sub judice when questioned on anything relating to the Birmingham pub bombings. I have in front of me the sub judice resolution, which says that——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that the hon. Gentleman is now doing what I have said that he cannot do. These are matters which he must raise with the Chairman of the Standing Committee, not on the Floor of the House. I cannot help him with what goes on in Standing Committees. It is not within my authority or power to do so.

Mr. Mullin: This matter has been raised on the Floor of the House on a number of occasions. I am just inviting you to elaborate on it in the light of the wording of the text of the resolution of the House on sub judice matters, which says that sub judice should be claimed only according to the discretion of the Chair if there is

"real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceedings."

I cannot see that anything that is said in the House constitutes a

"real and substantial danger of prejudice"

when any judgment that may or may not be made will be made by five Law Lords, who could not possibly be influenced by anything that anyone in this place or anywhere else had to say and whose impartiality is not challenged.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Gentleman well understands the sub judice rule and the reason why we have it in the House. The hon. Gentleman is expressing a view on whether what is said here may or may not influence the Law Lords, but I am bound by the sub judice rule laid down in our rules.

Mr. Mullin *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman wants to come and discuss this matter I shall be very happy for him to do that, but not on the Floor of the House, especially on a day when we have a timetable motion, with a very large number of hon. Members who wish to take part in the debate. I will see the hon. Gentleman about it privately.

Adjournment (Easter)

Mr. Speaker: I remind the House that on Thursday 31 March up to nine Members may raise with Ministers

subjects of their own choice. Applications should reach my office by 10 pm on Monday next. A ballot will be held on Tuesday morning and the result made known as soon as possible thereafter.

BILL PRESENTED

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK (TOBACCO SMOKING)

Mr. George Foulkes, supported by Mr. Roger Sims, Mr. Sam Galbraith, Mr. Alan Amos, Dr. Lewis Moonie, Mr. Jeremy Hanley, Mr. John Maxton, Mr. Henry McLeish and Mr. Alastair Darling, presented a Bill to amend the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 so as to provide for the control of smoking in places of work, and for connected purposes: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 29 April and to be printed. [Bill 134.]

Orders of the Day

Education Reform Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered.

Clause 99

FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES WITH RESPECT TO HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

4.39 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold): I beg to move amendment No. 253, in page 95, line 38, leave out from beginning to end of line 43 and insert 'The following section'.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 254 to 260, and Nos. 240 and 242.

Mrs. Rumbold: Government amendments Nos. 242 and 253 to 260 inclusive are all designed to clarify the borderlines between secondary and further education. The 1944 Act defined further education as including all full-time and part-time education for persons over compulsory school age, but it also stated that further education could be provided only in accordance with further education schemes that had been approved by the Secretary of State. This meant that the dividing line between the schools and further education sectors could be determined in each case by what was set out in the scheme. In particular, it made it possible to determine that a school that provided for those over 16 was still a school, because it was not specified in the local education authority's scheme as being part of its further education service. Instead, it was provided by the local education authority in pursuance of its duty under the 1944 Act to secure the provision of sufficient secondary education.

The further education schemes procedure set out in the 1944 Act is repealed by clause 99. This means that we need to find an alternative mechanism for setting the boundary between the schools and further education sectors. As drafted, the clause does not quite do that. It draws on the 1944 Act in defining further education as including all education and training for persons over compulsory school age, but this needs to be qualified to ensure that post-16 provision in the schools sector remains classified as secondary education, and not further education. This need is most obvious in relation to sixth-form colleges, which are currently classified as schools. Since sixth-form colleges cater for only 16 to 19-year-olds, they would fall wholly within the definition of further education in the clause. Obviously, this could cause considerable confusion, so we have decided that the position needs to be sorted out.

Government amendments Nos. 242 and 253 to 260 are designed to rectify the problem. As schools, sixth-form colleges may not, under existing law, provide for part-time students or students over the age of 19, other than in exceptional cases. Government amendment No. 255, which is the key amendment in the group, therefore provides that full-time education for 16 to 19-year-olds is not to be regarded as further education if it is provided by

[Mrs. Rumbold]

an institution which does not provide part-time or post-19 education other than in exceptional cases. This means that provision in sixth-form colleges is to be considered secondary education, not further education, and the colleges themselves are to be considered schools, not FE colleges, which effectively has been the understanding of most of the local education authorities up to now, although it has not been strictly following the 1944 Act.

Most of the other amendments in this group are consequential, defining the terms used and tidying up the drafting. Government amendment No. 242 is significant, however. It allows a breathing space for any institutions which are now classified as FE colleges, but which do not have significant numbers of part-time and post-19 students and would therefore fall to be classified as institutions of secondary education under Government amendment No. 255. As far as we know, only two colleges are in that position. Their authorities have been notified of the Government's intentions. Government amendment No. 242 will give them until the end of 1989 to make whatever changes to the pattern of their enrolments are necessary to continue to be classified as further education colleges. The two colleges in question are New college, Swindon and Alton college in Hampshire.

The amendments are not designed to change the institutional pattern. They are designed solely to recognise and legitimise the pattern that already exists. It is self-evidently important that we have secure definitions of secondary and further education which do not overlap, and which allow all concerned to know where they stand. Government amendments Nos. 242 and 253 to 260 make it clear where the dividing line between the sectors is to be. I hope that they will be welcomed.

Government amendments Nos. 240 and 241 relate to clause 184, which specifies when the various clauses in the Bill will come into effect. They provide that the clauses on further education should take effect on Royal Assent.

Clause 99 is fundamental to the further and higher education sections of the Bill, in that it sets the framework of definitions and powers relating to further and higher education. It therefore needs to be brought into effect as soon as possible.

The amendment also brings the clauses on delegation in FE into line with the clauses on delegation to schools, which again come into effect on Royal Assent. It is still our intention to require all schemes — for both the school and further education sectors — to be submitted for approval by September 1989. Bringing the clauses into effect on Royal Assent will encourage local education authorities and colleges to set to work promptly on drawing up the schemes required by clause 116. I commend the amendments to the House.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish): On the whole, Opposition Members welcome what the Minister has just said because it brings clarity, but there should be a little more probing so that we could have a little more information. However, as the guillotine falls on this part of further education at 6 o'clock, we feel that it would be far better for the House to allow that probing to take place in the House of Lords and for us to move on to the next group of amendments, when we can have a much more wide-ranging debate on the problems for further education that are presented by the Bill. Therefore, the Opposition do not want to say anything more about the amendments.

4.45 pm

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Like my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett), I should like to be brief by asking just two questions. First, in the Paul Gray-Tom Jeffrey correspondence, the Prime Minister referred to an "elaborate and complex" system. Those are the words of Downing street. Have the Education Ministers been able to satisfy the Prime Minister about the complexity and elaborateness of their system, and have they won that, albeit narrow, part of the argument?

Secondly, I went to the Table Office to do what the Secretary of State suggested I do — to ask the Prime Minister by what alchemy her letter arrived on the table of my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). The Secretary of State will not be entirely surprised to learn that the Table Office finds that all questions to the Prime Minister are neatly blocked on this issue, so it is back into his court, at some convenient moment, to enlighten us.

Mrs. Rumbold: These amendments relate to further and higher education, and I was discussing the statutory provisions under which the amendments will operate.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): I beg to move amendment No. 436, in page 96, line 3, after 'further', insert 'and continuing'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 388, in page 96, line 32, after 'shall', insert—

'in formulating any local scheme under this section'.

No. 389, in line 40, at end insert—

'(6A) A local education authority shall have a duty to consult the Manpower Services Commission, any institution within the PCFC funding sector in their area, and the PCFC and thereafter to publish a local scheme in relation to further and higher education courses for the purpose of co-ordination the efficient and flexible provision of such courses for, or available for use by persons living in, their area.'.

No. 469, in line 40, at end insert—

'(6A) It shall be the duty of a local education authority to make arrangements for the adequate provision of adult and continuing education services for their area in accordance with the provisions of this section'.

No. 390, in line 41, at end insert

'for the purposes of a local scheme drawn up in accordance with this section—'.

No. 437, in line 42, at end insert 'and continuing'.

No. 391, in line 44, at end insert

'and to coordinate the provisions of such facilities by institutions within the PCFC funding sector'.

No. 470, in page 98, line 1, at end insert—

'(9A) In carrying out any duties in relation to adult education, a local authority shall—'

No. 471, in line 1, at end insert—

"(9A) In carrying out any duties in relation to adult education, a local authority shall, in determining such arrangements, have regard to the needs of sections of the community who are disadvantaged as users of the education service'.

No. 472, in line 1, at end insert—

'(9A) In carrying out any duties in relation to adult education, a local authority shall—

(a) in determining such arrangements, consult with local voluntary organisations and such other persons as they think fit;
(b) in determining such arrangements, include and publicise arrangements to support voluntary organisations carrying out activities covered by (a) above;
(c) make facilities available to enable the provision of initial and in-service training of full-time and part-time staff, including as appropriate volunteers and members of voluntary organisations'.

Dr. Hampson: It is with great pleasure that I find myself leading this section of amendments on further education. It gives me the opportunity to say in passing how extraordinary many of us find it that, with all the skills that the Opposition Front Bench can muster, they manage to end up this evening in all three sections of the guillotine without a single lead amendment. It is gratifying, therefore, to see that they have all added their names to my amendment. Obviously that means that my amendment is of such power and obvious common sense that I trust that my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench will accept it.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Is the hon. Gentleman going to vote for it?

Dr. Hampson: Indeed. Amendments Nos. 436 and 437 are admirable and innocuous, although I would hesitate to say the same about some of the other amendments that are attached to amendment No. 436.

We found ourselves in a similar position last night when, for some peculiar reason, the Opposition again found themselves incapable by their tactics of managing to establish an amendment that would have highlighted in a vote some of the key central feelings of hon. Members of all parties about the main parts of the Bill. It is a pity——

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): This is the intervention that I sought to make yesterday in the speech of the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), but he refused to let me intervene. Is it not the case that there was a substantial revolt on the Government Benches on the question of the voting procedures for opting out, which, because of incompetence in the way in which the amendments were moved, was never revealed?

Dr. Hampson: I hesitate to follow the hon. Gentleman on the question of the competence or otherwise of the Opposition. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science would not want me to go down the road of opting-out, except to say, for future reference in the other place, that at least a score of my hon. Friends felt that some adjustment in terms of a simple majority would have been a good thing.

I admit that this small and reasonable amendment is more symbolic than of substance. Although it is symbolic, it is important to hon. Members of all parties. I pay tribute especially to Gerry Fowler, who is now the rector of North East London polytechnic, and who was the Minister of State, Department of Education and Science three times. He epitomised the political law of diminishing returns. He was three times in the same job, each time for a shorter period than previously. For a number of years he and I travelled the country arguing for what was then fashionably called recurrent education. The education system must be geared to the increasing pace of change of industry's requirements. Professional people and the entrepreneurs of whom we on this side think so highly must improve their qualifications and come up to date with the latest knowledge, whether in the realms of management or on the shop floor.

We are seeking to legitimise the new consensus that has emerged in favour of continuing education, ranging from retraining and updating to second chance opportunities for people who missed out at school and to managers who require the latest skills. Information technology is an obvious example of an area where such training is essential. If Britain is to retain its position as a leading economy, people must have the opportunity to update and improve their skills in information technology.

The Bill is the first piece of education law that mentions the term "continuing education". It does so only in brackets in new section 41(2), which states that further education must include

"in the case of vocational education or training, continuing education or training for persons already in employment".

It is a pity that that is in brackets and that it comes after vocational education and training, because, in a way, it subsumes that. It falls under the scope of clause 99, which deals with the duties placed on local education authorities with regard to further education.

We have changed the definitions in this piece of legislation. The category of further education used to be divided into advanced and non-advanced. If we had kept that, further education, as a catch-all phrase, would have been adequate, but we have now switched to further education, meaning non-advanced education, and higher education. The use of the word "continuing" implies that the provisions are limited to non-advanced education. Officials may believe that that is appropriate for a specific reason. After all, further education is now the main responsibility of local education authorities. They still have other responsibilities in mixed economy colleges, which have a large element of higher education, although they are owned by local education authorities.

Ministers are mistaken in not changing the requirements in respect of mixed ability colleges to give them a fairer crack of the whip. The funding council should be obliged to recognise the requirements of those colleges. This is the only part of the higher education system for which local authorities have direct responsibility. The Bill may be intended to have specific regard for such training below degree level.

The reference in new section 41 to further and continuing education is a broad definition. It refers to continuing education across the spectrum of post-school learning. There may be an alternative. For example, the Bill states that a local authority shall have power to secure provision of facilities for higher education. That makes me suspicious, as the Bill refers only to higher education and not to continuing education.

Let us be open and give a full blessing to continuing education. Let us not be half-hearted. Let us recommend it as something that every part of the system must pursue. A system must be put together, bearing in mind the needs of individual areas. In many northern areas, for example, industry has declined and there is a need to introduce new industries and to update the work force. We ought to consider the entire spectrum of provision and say, "What have we got in our colleges? What can the mixed economy colleges, such as Bradford, offer? What role can universities play? Where does the Open University fit in?"

[Dr. Hampson]

Failing the creation of a new regional structure, the institutional body to tackle this issue should be the local education authority. Although universities might not like that, local education authorities should consider the spectrum of continuing provision in all the institutions in their areas. This requirement should be placed upon them, rather than simply a requirement to have regard to continuing provision in further education colleges.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: It is a little churlish of the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) to complain that we allowed him to open the debate on this group of amendments, rather than to be pleased about doing so. We can spend a great deal of time playing parliamentary games as to who has the lead amendment, but it would be more useful to people if we spent our time on the substance of the issues.

The hon. Member for Leeds, North-West also claimed that we had failed to exploit the opportunity that there might have been a revolt on the Government Benches. Conservative Members made that virtually impossible when they voted for the guillotine motion. If there had been any possibility of revolt, the Government Whips would have ensured that the earlier debate would have continued and that there would have been no possibility of a vote on an issue which might have caused a minor revolt. The hon. Gentleman should also reflect on the performance of his colleagues in Committee. Time after time, they said that they were going to do something, but, as soon as the Minister looked at them, they backed off. It ill becomes the hon. Gentleman to make such remarks.

This is a major opportunity for us to discuss further education. This is the third day that we have debated the Bill on the Floor of the House. It reminds me of the funfair in the local park to which I looked forward as a child. There was great excitement when it arrived, but it turned out to be disappointing. The national curriculum could well be that roller coaster which was exciting when one was on it for a moment or two—it might have made some people sick—but, a day or two later, it had disappeared. The opt-out section could be the coconut-shy, when most people missed with their aim and those people who won a coconut found that it was rather mouldy. The further education provisions remind me of the lucky dip, where one rummaged around in the sawdust and ended up with the suspicion that very little had been put in. That is the tragedy of the Bill.

It is a tragedy that further education has been treated so scantily in the Bill. Further education is probably the area in which this country's performance is worst at present. If the Government were serious about raising standards, they should have concentrated on improving continuing education rather than on school provision and higher education.

Dr. Hampson: There have been complaints about underfunding of schools and higher education, but, throughout the Government's term of office, no one has complained about the growth in spending on further education. That may have come mostly through the MSC, but it has been the most substantial increase in funding of further education provided by any Government since the war.

Mr. Bennett: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to Tuesday's debate, he would have heard us say how ridiculous it is that, whereas the Manpower Services Commission has grasped the nettle by doing something for 16 to 19-year-olds, the Department of Education and Science has sat back and done nothing. It certainly gave youngsters no financial incentive to stay on in education rather than be lured away to training. We have seen little development in that area. For example, access courses tend to be dominated by initiatives from local authorities rather than the Secretary of State. It is sad that almost all the initiatives for 16 to 19-year-olds have come from the Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission rather than the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

5 pm

I have some reservations about developing the concept of further education within the confines of a narrow box. There are too many boxes for education in Britain. Primary, secondary, further and higher education are put into separate boxes. Those boxes may be necessary for bureaucratic convenience, but it is important that they do not get in the way of educational developments, and, in particular, the education of the individual. I fear that the emphasis that the Bill places on the break between further and higher education will get in the way of good educational development.

We support the amendment that seeks to emphasise further education as part of continuing education. We also want to emphasise the need for local development plans to co-ordinate the activities of further and higher education within a locality. One of the worrying things about removing higher education from local authorities is that such co-ordination will be more difficult in many areas. In an area such as Greater Manchester it is important that there is good co-ordination between the provisions made by the local authority further education colleges and those made by public sector higher education and the universities. We need some mechanism for planning the development of courses in all those institutions.

I hope that when the Minister replies he will tell us how the Government envisage introducing a proper planning mechanism so that there is no overlap of courses between further and higher education institutions and no failure to provide courses because further education institutions see them as the work of a higher education institution and vice versa. Therefore, it is important to develop a co-ordinated plan to make sure that good quality further and higher education is provided on a regional basis.

In particular, I want to press the Government on the problem of mixed colleges. We have received many representations, from places such as Salford, Glosscott and Stockport colleges of further education, about the many advanced courses which should be funded by the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and which run side by side with courses which will be financed by the local authority. Such mixed colleges are fundamental to the development of education in Britain. It is attractive to have people on non-advanced courses, such as engineering, working in workshops alongside people in advanced courses. That encourages people to stay on and complete their education.

Despite many requests in Committee, the Government made no clear statement about the way in which they would guarantee funding for at least the group of 10 mixed colleges and the many other colleges of further education

which have some advanced work. It is important to develop the ladder of expectation that can come from such mixed colleges.

Dr. Hampson: I endorse that point entirely, but let me draw attention to the reverse of that—the position in the polytechnics, particularly in Leeds where the polytechnic has many non-advanced level courses. The polytechnics are currently in the process of trying to set their fees for next year and it is fundamental that they should have some information on the funding of the non-advanced section of combined courses. In Committee, we mentioned the Farnley language centre in Leeds, where much of the work is non-degree level but it leads on to degree level. We asked about the funding of such courses within the polytechnics.

Mr. Bennett: That is helpful. The hon. Gentleman might have been reading my notes because the next problem that I intend to deal with is that of mixed colleges where further education work dominates, but where there may be a big proportion of higher education work, and in the next group the opposite applies. Not only do the polytechnics in many cases have non-advanced work going on, but there are many higher education colleges in exactly the same position. The Government have not given us sufficient assurances that the non-advanced work in such colleges will be adequately funded.

Let me deal now with who has responsibility for basic education. I could read out amendment No. 470, but I simply ask the Minister to spend a little time, when he replies, setting out how he sees the development of basic education in Britain. The Government are often keen to trumpet the number of adults who are not literate or numerate as a criticism of the school system, but they are nothing like as enthusiastic about setting out what should be done in further education, and sometimes in higher education, to ensure that adequate courses are available to encourage the development of literacy and numeracy.

The Government, in their White Paper, recognise that there will be a substantial reduction in the number of 18-year-olds who will be available to enter higher education. They rightly point out that we should be making up that shortfall by increasing the participation of working-class youngsters, women and the ethnic minorities, and also by developing access courses for the many adults who missed out the first time round.

There have been some extremely good initiatives from the Inner London education authority and Manchester to develop access courses. Although the Government have paid lip service to such initiatives, they have done little to encourage the development of such courses or to provide the funding to make it possible for people to go on such courses. I hope that when the Minister replies he will tell us to what extent the Government will provide grants for people on access courses and how he will ensure that such courses continue during the changes in higher education which will take the public sector away from the local authorities. I hope that he will also preview what will be said in the ILEA debate on Monday and tell us how he will guarantee the continuation of the excellent access courses which have been run London-wide by ILEA. I press him to tell us how access courses will be improved and expanded under this legislation over the next few years.

Let me deal now with continuing education for those who do not want to obtain degrees in higher education but who want to study for their own pleasure at quite high levels. How will the Minister fit in work done by the Workers Educational Association, the extra-mural departments of universities and the adult education carried out by many local authorities? The Bill does not set out how they will be funded and co-ordinated.

Many people outside the House have pressed the Government to place a duty on local authorities to provide further education. There is still no fundamental legislation that places such a duty on local authorities. Many people outside hope that the Government will take this opportunity to do that.

We shall listen carefully to what the Minister says when he replies, but for the Opposition the further education section is very much a lucky dip with not much in the barrel except sawdust. We want a development of further education in Britain which will release the talents of all those who missed out at school, who did well at school or who simply want to study for its own sake.

Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas (Meirionnydd Nant Conwy): The amendment gives us an opportunity to stress once again the definitional and institutional problems that face the various categories of post-16 education in England and Wales. It gives us an opportunity especially to stress the need for the Government to recognise clearly the importance of all the different modes of post-16 education.

The major weakness of the Bill, as other hon. Members have pointed out already, is that it does not deal adequately with the needs of the curriculum in further and higher education. In those sectors the Bill has directed itself to institutional issues. It has not considered the inter-linking between the various levels of teaching, or between institutions. The Government are obsessed with the notion that the so-called national curriculum in schools will make a qualitative difference to the measured output of those schools.

Significantly, the Government have not given similar attention to the curriculum, in the broadest sense of that word, or to the structure of institutions at 16-plus. In this area the Government are apparently satisfied with the content of education and with the institutional basis. By neglecting this area they are once again allowing the chaos that we described in Committee, and earlier on Report, to continue. Within that chaotic, unplanned and uncoordinated provision, these institutions and the mode of education that have had status traditionally are being allowed to continue at the expense of the rest of the system.

Where are the Government's market principles in secondary education in relation to post-16 education institutions? Where are the principles of the liberating curriculum and the independent control by consumers, which are apparently so important in the secondary education sector, within the sector for adult, advanced or continuing education—however we may describe it?

The simple way in which the Government can tackle this issue, which successive Governments have failed to address—so it is high time it was dealt with—is to have one label for 16-plus education. So long as there is a variety of labels there will be confusion of understanding and of funding at institutional level. That is not to say that within that name there will not be a variety of provision. The argument about post-16 education is that it deals not only with early vocational and non-vocational training but with recurrent training. This can mean anything from an adult student going to an adult literacy class to improve

[Dr. Dafydd Elis Thomas]

his or her ability to cope with English, perhaps as a second or third language, in an inner city to—I am not saying that provision extends up or down—someone who is taking an Open University continuing education course. This might be a short course for his or her own educational experience, or a more long-term course to improve his or her career prospects. That illustrates the range of the system, excluding those undertaking part-time higher degrees.

That range of provision within the system needs to be integrated and planned, as well as movement between sectors within that system. In particular, all aspects of that system should be regarded as equally valid. If all consumers are equal as consumers, in the Government's rhetoric, then in this area, of all areas, all consumers of a range of educational products—here I am borrowing the Government's language—should be regarded as equal in the range of provision, funding and especially the status of their courses within the overall system.

That is why those of us who have emerged from that particular educational tradition have always felt aggrieved that adult and continuing education provision in England and Wales—and to a lesser extent in the Scottish system—has been marginalised. The Government are missing an opportunity in the Bill to follow their own ideology. I see that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary is agreeing with me.

5.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): I am surprised by the argument.

Dr. Thomas: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman is shocked that I am deploying his arguments.

The Bill was the Government's opportunity to take on the already massive explosion in adult education at all levels, which needs to continue. A major fallacy of the Government's approach in this sector is that they believe, as they do apparently in relation to secondary education, that a national curriculum will somehow directly affect the economic performance of Britain. The rhetoric coming from the Government says that, by changing the curriculum, suddenly an enterprise culture will be created and the performance of the British economy will shoot up. If that sort of rhetoric is valid in relation to secondary education—I shall not enter that debate now—it is valid for the post-16 sector.

The educational opportunities afforded to people directly and immediately affect their position in the job market. That is why I fail to see why the Government have not taken this on board and come to grips with it. In their activities in relation to MSC-funded courses, they have faced the issue, for example, in the curriculum content. I have mentioned TVEI before and other MSC courses. The change in curriculum content has deliberately and successfully put a stop to that lack of direction between education and training. In the rest of the post-16 system, however, the Government have failed to integrate that level of provision. I ask the Government to take away the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) and supported by Opposition Members, and to reconsider all this before the Bill is debated in the other place.

I am a bit concerned that the only concession that the Government are prepared to make in the Bill is to the Church of England, as we heard last night. I am all in favour of concessions to the Anglican Church, but we know why it is happening. The Government are in an ideological battle with the Anglican Church and they have to make some concessions to it on religious education.

The Government should equally be prepared to assess the defects of their Bill which may not be linked immediately to their short-term political battles with any of their major adversaries.

They should look particularly at the fact that in drafting the Bill their attention was fixed fully on secondary education, to which the opting-out proposals and the national curriculum rules are directed. Further education has been neglected for a long time in local government and Government policy. The Government have created new free-standing institutions. We shall be debating them later. Between the provision of these new institutions in higher education and the secondary education sector, which seems to be of concern to the Government in this part of the Bill, there is a mess of potage of educational provision. The Government have not addressed themselves to it. In Wales the free-standing institutions will be in a better relationship to the rest of the system than they are in England.

I welcome this "potage" — or cawl as we say in Welsh. It is right to have a variety of provision, but what is important is that the variety of provision, from access courses to higher education provision, should be treated equally. The way to do that is simply to designate the sector for continuing adult education. It would be part of the central educational experience of everyone at 16-plus. Once the Government have done that they will have made a significant shift in provision. It will not cost them much at first, but that sector will be recognised as equally important with the primary, secondary and so-called higher education sectors. The Government should accept that the 16-plus area of educational experience has validity. They should have the grace to be generous in responding to the amendment of their hon. Friend. They should consider it carefully and show us the grace that they have shown to the Anglican Church.

Mr. Ashdown: I am delighted to follow the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas). He eloquently made many of the points that I want to make.

The points made by the hon. Members for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy and for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) show clearly, yet again, why this cannot be referred to as a great reform Bill. Such a Bill would provide the sort of liberties and freedom in the further education system to which they referred, but it does not. Wherever one looks in it one finds what the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish called "putting things in boxes." The Bill stops movement across the system from vocational to academic courses and from training to education—yet it is supposed to give liberation. The Bill does not exhibit the reformist zeal that would provide a system of higher education that was freer and gave pupils the ability to go to institutions of their choice, carrying the funding for that with them.

I say to the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish that one of the areas in which the Bill fails so spectacularly is the way in which it preserves the artificial divide between education and training. A great reform Bill would bring

together education and training under the same Ministry and abolish what is increasingly becoming an artificial divide, for all the reasons that the hon. Gentleman suggested.

I remember that, when I took part in the debate on the City, we referred to Chinese walls in firms that prevented people from knowing what was going on on the other side. The Government are building Chinese walls in the higher education sector: between education and training and between some aspects of further education and others. There has been some movement away from that. The movement towards the National Council for Vocational Qualifications is a welcome step that will begin to break down those walls. Why do the Government not take this extra step and build a system that would allow the sort of freedom that they say is their goal elsewhere?

I agree with all the amendments under discussion. The amendment of the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) is important. Among the things that we will require in an education system that will serve Britain's future needs is a massively expanded continuing and adult education sector. I saw an article the other day that showed this. I ask the House to accept a difficult concept known as "out-datedness". The article's argument was well backed with good reasons.

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): How about obsolescence?

Mr. Ashdown: Not quite.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent) *rose*——

Mr. Ashdown: If one is aged 40 or more today and has had no further education since leaving school or university at 18, one is in the same quartile of out-datedness as Archimedes and Pythagoras, so fast has the world moved since we were at school. The same will be even more true of the future. The article went on to say that if one was 45 and had received no further training or education since school or university, no less than seven eighths of the skills one had learnt are now out of date and inapplicable to the job one is in.

What we desperately need for Britain's future is an adequate system of retraining and upskilling—a word that I know that the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) does not like. It is not very elegant, but it covers the point well. All this will require a massive input into continuing education. Britain's future needs must place far more emphasis on adult retraining and continuing education than the Bill gives them. Here again, it falls short of the reforms that are necessary in the education system.

I strongly support the remarks of the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West; and the Opposition amendments, giving a role to the LEA and some status and publicity for youth provision, are also important. I hope they will all be considered.

We have here a tremendous opportunity. Pupils in post-16, post-18 and adult education should be given an entitlement that they can take with them to the institutions of their choice. I should have thought that that was entirely in keeping with the Government's philosophy, but there is neither echo nor substance of it in the Bill. There is a case for tying the YTS into a system of qualifications that would then be applicable in the education system—both further and higher, if necessary. That would be a system built in part on national qualifications or credits that might be assembled. People might start off in vocational training and come out as late developers through the academic system of higher education. That is the sort of system that we want, but there is no evidence of it in the Bill.

Where the Bill has anything to say about funding, it points in the opposite direction. I am delighted that the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State is to answer the debate. He it was who throughout the Committee chided us for seeking to support what he referred to continuously as the nanny state. Now he is operating in the guise of the nanny state.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Under the great nanny in Downing street.

Mr. Ashdown: Indeed. She presides over us all.

I invite the Minister to look at page 114 of the Bill and cast his mind back to 18 February 1988 when we debated why the Government had decided that further education colleges should be funded purely on the basis of a plan by the LEA which would determine the number and type of students at each further education college. That is quite unlike the funding basis for schools, which is a per capita arrangement. Confining further education colleges within such a nanny-operated straitjacket is wrong. The local education authority will play the nanny and decide how many students there will be; the colleges cannot then make more effective financial provision in order to take more students for the same cost. In short, they cannot do any of the things that the Government supposedly want done in every other part of the Bill.

The hon. Member for Leeds, North-West, like me, was outraged by this clause. I draw the Minister's attention to the debate in Committee on 18 February, when his hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), in answer to a point made by the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West, said:

> "I shall undertake to look at those points with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and consider what changes we may make."—[*Official Report*, Standing Committee J, 18 February 1988; c. 1565.]

I have not heard the result of that consideration, and I doubt whether the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West has. Was that a promise idly given, not to be fulfilled, or has this matter been considered and will the Minister answer it when he replies? The Bill has been changed not one whit. The Government, who pretend to give us freedom, have confined the further education colleges in a straitjacket of the LEA's making. They are preventing the freedom and operation of market forces that would be beneficial.

The Bill fails consistently because of the damage that it will do to education and because of the opportunities that are missed in it. The chance has been missed to create a genuine system of education and training that would allow cross-over, give flexibility and allow funding on the basis of numbers of students who choose to go to those colleges. Students should be free to go to them and carry their funding with them when they do. None of that appears in the Bill. That is why it is important to vote for the amendments, which go some small way towards improving the Bill to bring that about.

5.30 pm

Ms. Hilary Armstrong (Durham, North-West): We are dealing with one aspect of education which is lacking in

[Ms. Hilary Armstrong]

the Bill. It demonstrates that the Government see education in narrow terms. It is a tragedy that they have failed to address one of the greatest difficulties in the education system. Government Back Benchers talk almost as much as we do about the need for much better educated and trained people. Yet the Government have failed to address that need during their term of office and they have allowed the Manpower Services Commission to pull the rug completely from under the Department of Education and Science.

The DES has almost abdicated responsibility for work for those over 16. The Government still think that the only proper activity for the 16-plus age group is in sixth forms. If we restrict our vision of what is good education to A-level studies, we have missed the most incredible opportunity, but we are also selling exceptionally short the young people, the skills and the potential of the nation.

Several of my hon. Friends have talked about the Government seeing further education as being in boxes because they regard it separately from the main stream of education. They see it as being separated from higher education. The Minister and I have talked on several occasions about the link between further and higher education and between continuing and higher education. The lack of a close link means greater inequality in access to higher education than in any other area of life. I shall not repeat the figures because I am sure the Minister is sick to death of my quoting them. But we must address that problem, and we cannot do it just at higher education level. We have to deal with it throughout the education system. I have argued strongly for access courses, but we must encourage and enable many more young people to be involved in meaningful education after the age of 16. Education should mean something to them, to their lives and to their communities.

The Bill fails to address the regional differences in need and experience over the past 20 years. In the north-east, and some other areas, deindustrialisation has decimated past training and the Government have tried to lay on top of that what is almost artificial training through YTS. I am not decrying much of the experience that many young people have gained from YTS, but it does not supplant the training experience that used to be available. The training of the past would not meet the needs of British industry or manufacturing today. Training which is separated from education will never match the needs of the 1990s. Therefore, we plead with the Government to expand their understanding of what further education means.

The Government should examine the funding for students and for potential students. They should also consider differential funding for part-time and full-time work. Again, I argued strongly in Committee that much could be done through part-time work and that many opportunities are being missed because there is an enormous disincentive for people to go into part-time education, particularly if they are in receipt of benefit. We want the unemployed to be drawn back into education. My experience of working with mature women who want to return to education is that when they get over the hurdles and become students they are the most encouraging students to teach because of their commitment, dedication and determination to get on. We should not put all those hurdles in their way.

I am arguing for more planning and co-ordination across the boundaries between school and further education, between voluntary classes in tenants' associations, the Workers Educational Association, and so on, and the maintained sector and between further and higher education. We have good experience where that has happened. There are some remarkable examples of good practice, despite the enormous hurdles. We need from the Government a signal that they understand the nature of the hurdles and that they are determined to find ways round them.

That demands a close examination of funding for courses and students. The prevarication of the Government has been appalling. Students can only be confident about continuing education if they have substantial financial backing. The Government must consider differential funding for part-time and full-time education. They must also plan.

Because of the attack on their services, local authorities have not got the confidence to begin to plan. In post-16 education we need planning not just within but across authorities. We need much more support for regional planning of further education for the 16-plus age group. I do not differentiate between education and training, but regional planning is essential if we are serious about enabling young people to continue their education.

The only experience young people have had of training and education in many regions has frequently been negative. In areas like mine there is a very low stay-on rate and historically there are few women in the work force. That is changing, and it has to change. The level of skill and the qualifications for measuring skill are appallingly low. In such areas we need to raise skill levels and provide opportunities to develop skills.

There is so much that the Government have missed. We have been arguing this week that all parts of the Bill should be linked. The move to tertiary education has been crucial in encouraging young people who saw education as having nothing to offer them to stay in education. That has been very important, particularly in my area. Ministers may remember that there was great resistance from schools with sixth forms to the setting up of Consett tertiary college.

On Saturday I spoke to a teacher who is now a lecturer at that tertiary college. She was formerly a teacher in one of the sixth form colleges. She told me that she opposed the change root and branch and supported the argument against the college. She told me that she feared that they would have gone for opt-out if it was available then. She said, "I now know that I was absolutely and totally wrong. My experience of teaching at the college has been exciting and interesting." She told me that the range of students that she is involved with is much wider and that the opportunities available to her as a teacher have meant that her teaching has improved beyond all bounds. She said that she was worried that other areas might oppose such an idea in the way that she did at first. If that were the case, opportunities for young people would diminish.

We have recounted the arguments before. I am worried that the Government have not responded to those arguments and they have not recognised the sincerity with which they have been made. We want the best opportunities for the widest possible number of young people and adults. The Government must provide a structure that will enable that to develop. At the moment the Government are centralising, and that means that the

necessary adaptations and responses will not be made at local and regional levels. That would be tragic. We want the Government to reconsider and produce the right structure in the post-16 sector.

Mr. Rowe: I am very cautious about speaking in an assembly that has already had such cogent things to say about being out of date.

Mr. Win Griffiths (Bridgend): That has never stopped the hon. Gentleman before.

Mr. Rowe: No, and I take courage to speak from the knowledge that if I am out of date, so are many other hon. Members.

As I was not a member of the Committee, I am somewhat puzzled by the debate. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will be able to reassure me when he replies. I understood that the schemes that local education authorities are required to create will be annual schemes in the sense that they can be altered every year to take account of changing local circumstances. In that respect, they do not seem to be anything like as restrictive as Opposition Members have suggested.

As a governor of one of the largest further education colleges in Kent, I believe that there are wide opportunities — which are extended considerably by the Bill — for colleges to find support from local business or in other ways almost where they will. The college to which I have referred established its own company last year and is looking forward to considerable freedom of movement and activity. We hope to be able to perform in a far more entrepreneurial way than ever before. Nothing in the Bill will prevent that from happening.

I want to ask my hon. Friend the Minister a question that was put to me by a member of staff at an FE college. According to the member of staff's reading of the Bill, and to my reading of it, staff members are excluded from being part of the governing body. If that is the case, they are the only section of teaching staff throughout the education system who appear to be debarred from sitting on the governing body. I hope that we have misunderstood that, although clause 127 seems to give that impression. I hope that my hon. Friend will reassure me about that or make changes if I am correct. I cannot see any reason why members of the teaching staff should not be allowed to sit on the governing body if they are appropriate in other ways.

My hon. Friends are in difficulty with the Bill because most of the major changes that we would like to see in the way in which further education is delivered, particularly to adults, throughout their lifetime, depend on funding changes which I do not believe are part of the Department of Education and Science's responsibility. I have already put the proposition to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment that the method of funding that he introduced in his training White Paper for the long-term unemployed should be adopted more freely for everyone who has been unemployed for, say, more than three months.

5.45 pm

It should be possible to change the social security regulations so that the unemployed who wish to take approved training to acquire the kinds of skills that are in short supply in this country are allowed to continue to draw unemployment benefit. I realise that that is not a point to which my hon. Friend the Minister can respond. However, I believe that that is probably one of the most important elements in freeing the further education system so that it can serve those who perhaps need it most, namely, the unemployed.

Mr. Jackson: This has been an interesting and worthwhile debate, and I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds-West (Dr. Hampson) on the lead that he has taken in promoting it. The debate is a tribute to his pertinacity and, as he pointed out, a tribute to the flaccidity of the official Opposition.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Where is the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson)?

Mr. Jackson: Unhappily, my hon. Friend is not in the Chamber, but I am sure that he is pursuing his pertinacity pertinaciously elsewhere.

In his absence, I congratulate my hon. Friend on the concessions that he has obtained from the Government. I refer to Government amendments Nos. 233 and 234, which give effect to the commitments that we made in Committee. That answers a point made by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who referred to the points covered by those amendments.

On behalf of the Government I want to state that we agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West and all other hon. Members who have spoken in the debate about the importance of continuing education. However, the amendments tabled by my hon. Friend are not necessary to achieve his objective. He said that his objective was to legitimise continuing education. The fact is that continuing education is already legitimate and widespread in our system, and that is a very desirable fact.

That point is outlined in clause 99, which will add a new section 41 to the Education Act 1944. New section 41(2) says that vocational education or training includes

"continuing education or training for persons already . . . engaged in a vocation as well as education or training for entry into any employment or vocation)."

That is in the Bill; it is recognised and it is legitimised. That is what my hon. Friend was seeking.

I draw the attention of the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett) to that passage, because he made the extraordinary statement that there was no provision for that in the Bill.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: I said that there was no duty.

Mr. Jackson: There is a duty on local authorities to provide further education.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West also asked for local schemes to be created. Clause 116 provides for local authorities to draw up schemes for further education. Of course, there is guidance to come, and that will include reference to the concerns expressed by my hon. Friend.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) made his point about local schemes well in his brief intervention. I notice that he is wearing the tie of a well-known further education college somewhere near Slough. I can offer him the reassurance that he seeks about teachers as members of governing bodies of further education colleges. Clause 99 already requires local education authorities to have regard to relevant further and higher education provision in their areas. I think that that answers my hon. Friend's point about the importance

[Mr. Jackson]

of continuing education in the context of higher education. The amendments that he has put down are not necessary to meet the points that he seeks to promote.

A more fundamental point is that we should seek to avoid over-specification in the Bill. There is something of a contradiction, and I make no apology for reiterating a point that I have made many times before. Hon. Members on both sides of the House make two points about the Bill quite regularly, frequently in the same paragraph, if not in the same breath. On the one hand they say that there is too much centralisation, and on the other they say that we should centralise more.

Clause 99 lays a general duty on local authorities to promote further education, and that includes, among other matters, adult education. We feel that it is a mistake to single out particular categories of further education for special mention in the statute. There are varying needs in different areas, and we should not intervene too much and impose too many directions, instructions and specifications on how local authorities fulfil their duty to deliver further education.

Dr. Hampson: Let me make two points. Does my hon. Friend accept that there is a point in being consistent? If he is really going to make a stand about not putting too much in, why has he put in, in brackets, the "aside" definition on page 96, which includes the words "continuing education"? I see no logic in putting that in if it is not included elsewhere.

Does my hon. Friend accept that law can be declaratory, that it can influence attitudes in a climate, and that we should now be trying to signal to the world that continuing education is at the heart of the higher education system as it will develop at the turn of the century? Schedule 4, which amplifies clause 99, gives a list from (a) to (h), but does not mention continuing education. What is wrong with putting the words in to send a signal?

Mr. Jackson: There is a case for listing a number of matters in the legislation, but we believe that it is necessary to keep the specification to a minimum, and that is the basis on which we are proceeding. Local education authorities have a duty to pay regard to the need for continuing education in their areas. That need varies from area to area, and we must leave it to their discretion.

Mr. Ashdown *rose*——

Mr. Jackson: We are timed, and I have a number of points to make to answer the debate.

The hon. Members for Denton and Reddish and for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) returned to the general theme discussed on Tuesday, that of 16 to 18 provision. It was a pity that the hon. Member for Meironnydd Nant Conwy was not able to be present on that occasion. [HON. MEMBERS: "He was here."] I apologise to the hon. Gentleman.

The congratulations of the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish to the Manpower Services Commission and the Department of Employment have been noted, and I shall pass them on. I join him in congratulating local authorities on their initiatives to promote access. We have great confidence that local authorities will fulfil their duty to promote further education. We do not consider it desirable to undermine them in that duty by intervening in the way that the amendments urge us to do.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett *rose*——

Mr. Jackson: We are up against the guillotine. I must try to answer the points that have been made.

Running through many of the contributions from Opposition Members was a call for planning mechanisms. The Government agree strongly about the importance of strategic planning by local education authorities in further education. I emphasise the word "strategic". Too often, "planning" can be rather an abstract term that distracts people from doing. In that context, I note with interest the decisions reported in today's newspapers from Hereford and Worcester in respect of its further education provision, which will give further education lecturers the opportunity to deliver more of such education to those who need it.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) made an interesting intervention, in which he questioned the Government's liberatory radicalism and urged us to be more liberatory and more radical. Let me draw his attention to the liberatory potential of financial delegation of further education colleges. Meanwhile, in the exercise of new thinking on the Opposition Benches — and the Opposition certainly need it — I noticed the hon. Gentleman's conversion to the idea of vouchers. That is a most interesting and impressive development, which leads to a new line of criticism that we have not heard before: that the Bill does not go far enough. That is a rather refreshing line of criticism, coming from the hon. Gentleman.

We believe that there is a need for strategic planning in further education. We set that out in the consultation paper that was published in August, and widely welcomed. We pointed out that further education numbers are very difficult to predict. They fluctuate. That is one reason why it is necessary to avoid the rigidity of over-specified planning, but some of the Opposition's suggestions lead us in that direction.

The relationship between further and higher education has been touched on. The new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council will have to work closely with the local education authorities, and we consider that to be very important. A strong mutual interest will have to be recognised. The local education authorities will have an interest in the higher education that will be delivered in their further education colleges, and the PCFC will have an interest in the provision of further educaton in higher education institutions. This will enable them to work together, and they will have every inducement to do so, particularly at regional level, where they will be able to develop structures.

The subject of access courses is very important. I agree strongly with what has been said by a number of hon. Members — notably the hon. Member for Durham, North-West (Ms. Armstrong), the sincerity of whose views we very much appreciate. We welcome the increasing participation in higher education by more and more of the population, but, as the hon. Lady rightly pointed out, a problem will emerge in the mid-1990s as the 18-year-old age group diminishes.

The Government are addressing the issue of access in that context. We are in discussion with the Committee of

Vice-Chancellors and Principals and with the Council for National Academic Awards about the recognition of access courses. We have commissioned a study by the development of adult and continuing education unit, which is funded by the Department, and we shall be pursuing the matter. Although access is improving all the time, there is more to do. In the meantime, nothing in the Bill will impede the development of access. It is one of the issues that the new PCFC will need to address at national level, and I am sure that it will wish to consider the hon. Lady's point about the funding of part-time education, as compared with that of full-time education.

The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy expressed surprise that the Government were not following their ideology. I think that he has misunderstood our ideology. He believes that it is one of centralisation, and he tells us that he wants more centralisation in further education. Our ideology, however, is one of the devolution of power. That is why we believe that local education authorities have a continuing duty to provide further education. In contrast to the hon. Gentleman, who describes the position as a "mess of potage", we believe that the local authorities are doing a good job and that they should continue to do it. We do not believe that their elbows should be jogged as they do that work.

Mr. Straw: We listened carefully to the Minister, which is more than can be said of the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson), who was not present for the Minister's opening remarks and who spent a large part of the rest of the time chattering to the Under-Secretary of State for Transport—the hon. Member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley) — who came in to be entertained by the debate.

The Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science speaks with a forked tongue. Time and again in the debate we have been told to accept the good faith of Ministers and not to write undertakings into legislation. Even if we accept the Minister's good faith—which goes without question in respect of this Minister—he will not be a Minister for ever. Moreover, what he says cannot be enforced in the courts. If we are to make a reality of continuing education, it is crucial that the provision is written into the Bill. Local authorities would welcome that, because they know that from it would flow an undertaking from the Government to help to fund the education that local authorities have a duty to provide, just as the Government have to help to fund five to 16 education. For those reasons——

It being Six o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution yesterday, to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair,* That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 194, Noes 305.

Division No. 230] **[6 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Cook and
Mr. Adam Ingram.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Redwood, John
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann

Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Ashdown: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You may recall that in the last debate, in answer to a series of questions put in the debate and in Committee by myself and by Conservative Members——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will defer his point of order until I have put the Question, as I am required to do by the order of the House.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments moved by a member of the Government up to the end of clause 109.*

Amendments made: No. 254, in page 96, line 3, leave out 'that is to say' and insert—

'(1A) Subject to subsection (1B) below, in this Act "further education" means'.

No. 255, in page 96, line 9, at end insert—

'(1B) Full-time education suitable to the requirements of senior pupils over compulsory school age shall not be regarded for the purposes of this Act as further education if it is or is to be provided by an institution which does not provide part-time senior education or post-school age education to a significant extent.

(1C) In this Act—

(a) "part-time senior education" means part-time education or training for senior pupils over compulsory school age; and

(b) "post-school age education" means full-time or part-time education or training for persons of or over nineteen years of age.'

No. 256, in page 96, line 10, leave out from beginning to 'in' in line 11 and insert

'References above in this section to education and training or (as the case may be) to education or training include'.

No. 257, in page 97, leave out lines 32 to 34.

No. 258, in page 97, line 34, at end insert—

'(6A) In section 67 of that Act (determination of disputes and questions), at the end there shall be added the following subsection—

"(4A) If in the case of any institution a question arises as to whether any current or proposed provision of part-time senior education or post-school age education by that institution amounts or would amount to the provision of such education to a significant extent, that question shall be determined by the Secretary of State."'.

No. 259, in page 97, line 39, leave out from 'In' to end of line 45 and insert

'section 114 of the 1944 Act (interpretation)—

(a) in subsection (1)—

(i) after the definition of "further education" there shall be inserted the following definition—

"Higher education" has the meaning assigned to it by section 99(1) of the Education Reform Act 1988;"; and

(ii) after the definition of "parent" there shall be inserted the following definitions—

"Part-time senior education" has the meaning assigned to it by section 41 of this Act;"

"Post-school age education" has the meaning assigned to it by section 41 of this Act;"; and

(b) after that subsection there shall be inserted the following subsections—'.

No. 260, in page 97, line 50, at end insert—

'(1B) For the purposes of this Act, an institution which provides part-time senior education or post-school age education shall be regarded as providing such education to a significant extent if the provision of such education by the institution is not merely incidental to the provision of education which is not part-time senior education or post-school age education.

(1C) For the purpose of determining whether an institution is a school as defined by subsection (1) of this section, the provision by the institution of part-time senior education or post-school age education shall be disregarded if the institution does not provide such education to a significant extent."'.—*[Mr. Jackson.]*

Schedule 5

THE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATIONS

Amendments made: No. 138, in page 173, line 28, leave out 'had'.

No. 139, in page 174, line 13, leave out from 'board' to end of line 14.—*[Mr. Jackson.]*

Clause 104

ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT

Amendments made: No. 120, in page 101, line 14, leave out 'if any'.

No. 121, in page 101, line 16, leave out 'any' and insert 'the'.

No. 122, in page 101, line 18, leave out 'any such' and insert 'the'.

No. 123, in page 101, line 22, leave out '(if any)'.—*[Mr. Jackson.]*

Mr. Ashdown: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologise for seeking to raise a point of order at an inappropriate moment, but the Minister, in reply to the question posed by myself and Conservative Members about a serious matter relating to the funding of further education institutions, said that the Government had answered the question with amendments Nos. 123 and 124. The Minister may have misunderstood the nature of his own amendments as they did not address the question about which a promise was made. You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may agree that it might be appropriate for the Minister to give an undertaking that, if it is impossible for the correct answer to be given now, it should be given later in the form of a letter.

Mr. Jackson: The hon. Gentleman is correct. I had misunderstood his reference. In fact, the amendments do not cover his point. The point was misunderstood and its interpretation in the Bill was a misunderstanding. It is true that the hon. Gentleman is owed a letter which should be circulated to every hon. Member on the Committee. I shall ensure that that letter is sent, and I apologise for the fact that it was not sent sooner.

Clause 110

UNIVERSITIES FUNDING COUNCIL

Mr. Win Griffiths: I beg to move amendment No. 423, in page 105, line 32, at end insert

"(1A) The Council shall establish a sub-committee on matters relating to Wales.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 424, in page 105, line 34, at end insert

'and at least five who shall serve on the Welsh sub-committee and be appointed after consultation with the Secretary of State for Wales.'

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

No. 425, in page 105, line 35, after 'members', insert
', of whom at least two shall be members of the Welsh sub-committee,'.

No. 273, in page 106, line 23, at end insert—
'(10) This section shall not apply to Wales.'.

No. 426, in clause 111, page 106, line 25, at end insert—
"(1A) The Council shall establish a sub-committee on matters relating to Wales."

No. 427, in clause 111, page 106, line 27, at end insert

'and at least five who shall serve on the Welsh sub-committee and be appointed after consultation with the Secretary of State for Wales.'.

No. 428, in clause 111, page 106, line 28, after 'members', insert
', of whom at least two shall be members of the Welsh sub-committee,'.

No. 274, in clause 111, page 107, line 38, at end insert—
'(10) This section shall not apply to Wales.'.

No. 275, in clause 178, page 156, line 18, leave out first 'and' and insert
'108, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133 and 134.'.

6.15 pm

Mr. Griffiths: I have the privilege of speaking from the Opposition Front Bench because of the unavoidable absence of my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) and my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd). I pay tribute to the work of the University of Wales and its constituent colleges, to the Polytechnic of Wales and to all the local authorities involved in providing further and higher education in Wales for the way in which they have coped over the years with the cuts in Government funding.

During the debate in Committee on the establishment of a Universities Funding Council, the Minister of State for Wales reiterated an undertaking already given by the Secretary of State for Education and Science that there would be a Welsh sub-committee of the UFC. He further assured us that there would be close consultation between the Welsh advisory body and the Welsh sub-committee of the UFC. However, no Government amendments have been tabled to activate that promise.

Amendments Nos. 423, 424 and 425 were tabled to overcome that omission. Although it is good to have the Government's promise to establish the Welsh sub-committee, the best assurance by far would be for it to be written into the Bill so that any change of mind would require parliamentary assent rather than a departmental nod and wink in the shadows of Elizabeth house, or Gwydyr house.

We have only to look at the sorry saga of chronic and serious underfunding of the University of Wales in the 1980s to realise the urgent need for a Welsh sub-committee. In an exercise undertaken last year to examine the funding of the University of Wales on a real value basis for the period between 1985 and 1990, using the University Grants Committee's calculations on the inflation of university costs, the picture from 1985 to 1990 is dripping with the blood of cuts for all colleges of the University of Wales.

The calculation for the five years show that Aberystwyth suffers a 13·6 per cent cut, in Bangor it is 18·5 per cent., in Cardiff, 13·5 per cent., in Swansea, 14·5 per cent., in UWIST, 6·5 per cent., in the University of Wales College of Medicine, 2·8 per cent., in St. David's Lampeter, 7·3 per cent. and in the university registry, 7·1 per cent. Overall, the real cut in the funding of the University of Wales was calculated at 12·3 per cent. The comparative cost for England was shown to be 6·7 per cent., and for Scotland, which fared only a little better than Wales, 11·2 per cent. The cuts in university budgets have bitten deep everywhere, but nowhere is the wound more gaping than in the Celtic fringe.

Unfortunately, those calculations do not tell the whole story because the figures used for 1989-90 assume an increase of 4·5 per cent. over the funding for the previous year. The current estimate provided by the Universities Grants Committee is a cash increase of 1·7 per cent. in the recurrent grant for Wales compared with 2·9 per cent. for Great Britain. That is well below the inflation of university costs. Thus, the calculation made last year that some 400 academic and non-academic jobs would be lost in the University of Wales may have to be revised upwards.

The University of Wales is having to cope with massive cuts administered by the University Grants Committee with what seems to be little regard for the vital role it plays in Welsh education, and, in particular, for the provision of higher education opportunities through the medium of Welsh. It also appears that little account is taken of the needs of a university that has a federal structure and a campus covering thousands of square miles. That federal structure grew out of the unique involvement of all classes in Welsh society in the establishment and growth of university education in Wales.

It would be a travesty if the Government were not prepared to honour their promise to establish a sub-committee for Wales of the Universities Funding Council by supporting these amendments. They ensure that five members of the UFC would be appointed, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Wales, and that at least two of whom would have experience of higher education in Wales. It would provide an opportunity to undo the damage that was inflicted on the colleges of the University of Wales in the 1980s, when the cuts bit more deeply into the Welsh sector than they bit into the English and Scottish sectors, although, heaven knows, they have been treated badly enough.

The Government now have an opportunity to back their promises with a legal commitment. If they really care for Wales, they should grasp the opportunity that we have provided for them.

Amendments Nos. 426, 427 and 428, which relate to the establishment of a Welsh sub-committee of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, are of a different order from those which relate to the UFC. We want to take this opportunity to clarify the position of further and higher education in Wales and in England. The Bill that covers English polytechnics and eligible colleges establishes legally and financially independent institutions. Apart from stating that the Polytechnic of Wales and eligible colleges—six in all—would be excluded from the PCFC, but with an option to join later, perhaps at the diktat of the Secretary of State for Wales, nothing else was said until new clause 44 arrived while the Bill was being considered in Committee. That is now contained in the Bill as clause 179.

This afterthought, which allows the Polytechnic of Wales and the eligible colleges in Wales to be incorporated as companies limited by guarantee but with no share capital under the Companies Act 1985, means that they

remain under the aegis of the local education authorities and hence, ultimately, the Welsh Office. It came, however, only after a great deal of disquiet had been expressed by further and higher education practitioners in Wales. I quote from the Welsh Office's consultative paper on "Corporate Status for Further and Higher Education Institutions", published on 30 November 1987. Part D, "Welsh Office Views", states:

"There is a risk of the Welsh higher education sector being seen as not as good or not as advanced as that in England if the recommendation of the 'Good Management and Practice' Report in favour of corporate status is ignored."

The position, however, is that while the Welsh Office is taking on board the recommendations of the Government and local authority associations joint efficiency study report "Managing Colleges Efficiently" and the National Advisory Body's good management and practice report "Management For a Purpose", the Secretary of State for Education and Science is not. Instead, the recommendations of the Lord Joseph-inspired reports are being kicked out of the window by the present Secretary of State in favour of freebooting higher education corporations.

Why is there this difference of approach? The Minister of State, Welsh Office boasted in Committee that we in Wales had the best of all worlds, of which the bottom line is inclusion in the PCFC, if the proposed Companies Act 1985 and section 100 of the Education Act 1944 arrangements for Wales do not work out.

In Committee I asked the Minister what the practical implications of the Welsh arrangements would be. I asked whether an English polytechnic college would be able to set up an annex in Wales, so to speak, and seek students for courses while the Polytechnic of Wales and Welsh incorporated colleges would be unable to do the same in England. If that is the case, it is plainly unacceptable. The Minister, however, forgot to answer. It was at the end of the day's proceedings. I believe that the House and all those involved in the further and higher education sector in Wales should have a clear answer to that question.

The impression given by the evolution of the Bill's clauses relating to further and higher education in Wales is that some sort of power struggle was going on between the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for Wales over the place of Welsh colleges in the Bill, which the Secretary of State for Education and Science once again lost—not by a knock-out this time but on points, as the option remains in the Bill for the Secretary of State for Wales to take the Welsh colleges into the PCFC. The Welsh colleges, therefore, had the better option of following the recommendations of the "Good Management and Practice" report. Hence, the Secretary of State for Wales, having won the battle for keeping the colleges, had to produce a clause that was consonant with the "Good Management and Practice" report.

In placing amendments Nos. 426, 427 and 428 before the House, we seek clarification of the Welsh Office's view of the working of the two systems side by side and of whether, in its judgment, the risk of the Welsh higher education sector being considered to be not as good or not as advanced as that in England still holds true. Answers, please.

Mr. Brynmor John (Pontypridd): I shall refer only to amendment No. 426. The Polytechnic of Wales is in my constituency. In many ways it is the epitome of what the Government want. It is technologically based. It has a high reputation in science and technology and it has close links with local business. It is progressive in its efforts to co-operate with local industry. However, it has lost out because of neglect by the Welsh Office. The unit of resource for each student in the Polytechnic of Wales is some hundreds of pounds less than even the lowest of the English polytechnics. Capital investment must be high in science-based polytechnics. Therefore, the Polytechnic of Wales is losing out very heavily.

The Minister may say that the Welsh Office is looking after it and that it is under democratic control because the county council and the further and higher education authorities are looking after it. That is good in theory, but the reality is that the Polytechnic of Wales has traditionally been badly served and badly treated. Its finances are suffering because of the way the Government are running them. If the setting up of a sub-committee of the PCFC for Wales is the way in which equity can be assured, so be it. If retention of the present system would bring about equity, so be it. However, I insist that the Polytechnic of Wales should not be as unfairly treated in the future as it has been in the past. It is an unwanted and an unwarranted slur on a very fine institution and it is holding back its development.

Dr. Thomas: My favourite amendment to the Bill reads:

"This section shall not apply to Wales."

The purpose of the amendment is to delete the relevant provision for the Universities Funding Council. We should consider the allocation system for Wales as one system. I have argued this before in another context. When the Minister of State replies to the debate, I ask him to say whether he agrees to or dissents from the proposal that, whatever legal arrangements may be made, he will abide by them. There is the parliamentary fiction that the Government may accept Opposition amendments, but we know that the Government yield only to the Church of England. They will not yield to our arguments tonight. The Bill will be pushed through in its present form. The Government did not accept the amendment for Scotland, so they are unlikely to accept the amendment for Wales.

6.30 pm

How will the system that the Minister is establishing function? What will be the relationship between the sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council, the existing, or remaining, Welsh Advisory Body and the Welsh Office? How will the arrangements operate in practice? The LEAs, the Welsh Joint Education Committee, and the Welsh Language Educational Development Committee of the WJEC all have an interest in these matters. How does the Minister envisage the system operating on the ground?

Once the Bill has been forced through, there will be an opportunity for joint planning of the whole of higher education in Wales. Presumably, the Minister of State will ensure that some of the good men and perhaps two or three good women, although that is increasingly unlikely given the nominations put forward by the Welsh Office, nominated to the Universities Funding Council sub-committee for Wales will happen to be the same good men and women as might be sitting on the WAB, or what remains of the WAB. Those good men and women and true may tend also to be members of the Welsh Joint Education Committee and at least one of them might also find himself on the Welsh Language Educational

[Dr. Thomas]

Development Committee. Already there is the potential for a great "quangocracy". Wales is run by a great quangocracy with each of its members responsible to the Minister of State, or his Secretary of State, whom he is educating very well in Welsh life and culture.

The Minister of State is the most intelligent education Minister so far to be seen at the Welsh Office. While that may not be difficult, and while some of my hon. Friends may not like it, it happens to be a fair description — *[Interruption.]* No, at the Welsh Office. He is a well-known literary figure in his own right. He is a writer of sonnets in his spare time. Because of his great expertise and experience in education and cultural matters, he is in a unique position to manage the Welsh education system as a coherent whole. Therefore, he should respond positively and say, "Yes. We intend to manage the system properly rather than having bits of it run by the UGC and bits by the WAB, so that we do not have the cross-binary disagreements that we recently had on the question of the provision of teacher training."

I understand that the provision of teacher training figures is now the responsibility of the Welsh Office and that the Welsh Office tells the chair of the UGC what the figures are. I hope that we can reach that position in all the other sectors of higher education in Wales and that we have effective cross-binary planning. It will be the first time in the history of British education that we will have had effective cross-binary planning, and in the Minister of State we have the pioneer who can lead the field.

Mr. Ted Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney): I wish briefly to underline the excellent contribution made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) in his maiden speech from the Front Bench.

We know that the favourite pastime of the Secretary of State for Wales is writing and issuing press releases. We have now reached a new low; we are now almost legislating by press release. All that we had to go on to begin with on this matter was a press release of 1 December 1987 containing a three-paragraph announcement by the Secretary of State that it had been agreed to establish a Welsh committee. That is our only basis for considering the role, function and powers of the committee — three paragraphs in a press release, presumably elaborated in Committee. We are entitled to ask, therefore, what will be the powers of the Welsh committee. What function will it play in financing Welsh universities? Why is it not written into the Bill? What is wrong with giving it statutory powers? A non-statutory committee can be abolished by administrative fiat and the House would have no way of preventing that, so we have every right to demand that the establishment of the Welsh committee should be written into the Bill.

We want to establish the role that the committee could have played in the various crises that have struck our universities and colleges in the past few years. Without going into the complicated arguments about University College Cardiff and its cash crisis, I remind the House that in the middle of that crisis it was sent a peremptory unilateral letter — not by the UGC, not by the Secretary of State for Wales, not by the permanent secretary at the Welsh Office, but by Sir David Hancock, the permanent secretary at the Department of Education and Science acting in his role as the principal accounting officer. We want to know whether that behaviour could be repeated once the new Welsh committee has been established. Will it be possible for an English permanent secretary from an English Department once again to intervene directly in the finances of a constituent college of the University of Wales?

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): What the permanent secretary at the Department of Education and Science did went much further than that. He threatened to stop the recurrent grant, which would have closed the college down altogether.

Mr. Rowlands: My hon. Friend underlines the seriousness of such intervention. Will we now be able to channel our arguments through a properly representative committee of the new Universities Funding Council?

As my hon. Friends will recall, there is another example of intervention — the UGC's peremptory statement that University College Cardiff might have to sell the Sherman theatre. That happened in the middle of last year. Would that have been possible had a Welsh committee already existed? Will the establishment of a Welsh committee allow it to be the proper channel to handle such issues so that we do not have peremptory demands from bodies that do not understand and are not sensitive to Welsh university life? As my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend said, the cuts in research grants, the problems of the Welsh universities and the representations that we have had to make to change the formula that the UGC has established for funding the Welsh universities all lead us to believe that we need a powerful Welsh committee; and the only way to establish a powerful committee is to give it statutory powers under the Bill.

Mr. Morgan: I am grateful to have the opportunity to reinforce the points made by Opposition Members. I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) asking for a fully comprehensive transbinary approach to all post-16 education in Wales. If it was to be fully comprehensive, I suppose that it would have to include Jesus college, Oxford, too.

Let me reinforce what my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) said. In comparing the cuts that the University of Wales has experienced with those faced by the universities of England and Scotland, he clearly showed that something has gone wrong. It is not easy to put one's finger on it. However, given that the real resource cuts to the University of Wales have been almost double those in England and slightly higher than those in Scotland, one can tell that we are not talking about Celtic paranoia. There is a great difference between paranoia and persecution. We are talking about a breakdown in the application of the norms as between the universities of England and those of Wales and Scotland.

What has been going wrong? Opposition Members think that it is simply the failure of the University Grants Committee to realise that one cannot always apply English norms to Welsh institutions. They are different, and, in particular, they are different in periods of rationalisation. The University of Wales was set up on the principle of disbursing its assets throughout the different areas of Wales because of the nature of Welsh geography and non-existent communications. During a period of rationalisation, when the University Grants Committee is

going for a "big is beautiful" and rationalised set-up, any university that is based on a disbursement principle will suffer more than any other.

What is the answer? Surely the answer must be a powerful body in Wales with some teeth that is able to say to the UGC, "If you apply that norm, it will be a disaster for the University of Wales." After all, the University of Wales is unable to make up by private funding what it loses from public sector funding. A cut for the University of Wales of 12 per cent. cannot be made up by approaching millionaires such as the Sainsburys, David Robinson of Radio Rentals, and so on. Lowland regions of England can find millionaires who can provide the arts centres, theatres, institutions, and so on that make a university a fully comprehensive set-up. That cannot be done in Wales simply because the taxation revenue is not there and millionaires do not live in Wales.

I implore the Government to set up a body that is able to explain to the Universities Funding Council, when it is set up, that Wales is different, that it needs different treatment and that the importance of the University of Wales to Wales is as great as it could be in any part of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Richard Livsey (Brecon and Radnor): I add my congratulations to the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths). He is a Brecon boy and he has done extremely well this evening.

I should like to address the problems facing the University of Wales. There are special problems, in that it is a federal university. Stuart Rendel, who was once the hon. Member for Montgomery, and the Davies's of Llandinam, who were Liberal party members, were very much to the fore, and together with the people of Wales they gave their pennies for the establishment of the university. I believe that in recent times we have seen a dismembering of those ideals by the UGC.

The position of the University of Wales is significant in its federal structure. One of the problems is that it has not always been ruled in a federal way. If it had, it might have been a little stronger in resisting some of the aggressive and predatory attacks of the UGC. Latterly, the UGC has tended to be an arm of the Government in a rather hard way, enforcing Government ideas and making cut-backs in the university sector. If we cannot have a funding council for Wales, at the very least we must have a UFC sub-committee as suggested in amendment No. 423.

One of the characteristics of Welsh universities must surely be to reflect the community in Wales. That community is undoubtedly changing. We have seen, regrettably, the abolition of the chemistry department at Aberystwyth and the movement of the geography and geology departments between Swansea and Cardiff. We now wish to see science becoming more important in the universities, especially in relation to the new industries that are coming to Wales. Many electronics industries are coming to Wales, and there is also new investment from Japanese industries. Biotechnology is becoming increasingly important. These are all things that should be developed in the universities at a much higher rate than they are now. Matters such as that should be dealt with by the WEWH sub-committee of the UFC, which is proposed in the amendment. That committee could promote a link-up with firms in Wales in order to produce a more dynamic relationship, particularly in research, which has sometimes been lacking in the University of Wales. However, some efforts are being made now, with science parks being established in Aberystwyth and in other areas to try to catch up on lost ground.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Can the hon. Gentleman explain to the House how the industries of Wales will fund the university when they cannot even fund proper apprentice schemes?

Mr. Livsey: I am not saying that industries should fund the university. I am merely saying that there should be stronger links between the university and the industries in Wales so that there is a spin-off between the two. That does not mean that we should cop-out of state funding of the universities or of our tradition of teaching the Welsh language and other languages. Indeed, suggestions have been made by certain people that we should study Japanese. I think that that is a good idea, because it might encourage more diversity of interest and more international interest in the University of Wales.

The UGC has not given Wales a good deal. We want the Minister to accept the amendment so that there will be a written commitment in the Act that there will be a sub-committee for Wales which will be treated as a special case so that attention can be given to the problems of Wales and so that the University of Wales can have a proper deal.

6.45 pm

Mr. Donald Coleman (Neath): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) on his comments from the Front Bench.

We should remind the Minister of the uniqueness of the University of Wales. It has a federal structure; a structure that perhaps does not exist anywhere else in the United Kingdom. The University of Wales is the people's university and was created by the people of Wales. There should be special arrangements such as those mentioned in the amendment. These arrangements should ensure that the funding of the university is protected and that our colleges are preserved.

I support the amendment and hope that the Minister will listen to what has been said this evening.

The Minister of State, Welsh Office (Mr. Wyn Roberts): I welcome the hon. Member for Bridgend (Mr. Griffiths) to the Front Bench. I hope that my compliments will not devastate his career.

I shall deal with whether there should be a Welsh Committee of the Universities Funding Council. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced on Second Reading, and as I reiterated in Committee, the Government will look to the UFC, using its power under paragraph 9 of schedule 6, to set up a Welsh committee, together with committees for Scotland, Northern Ireland and for medical education. I commend paragraph 9 to the attention of hon. Members, because that is where the power to set up committees can be found.

I do not think that there is any need to write anything further into this Bill.

Mr. Rowlands *rose*

Mr. Roberts: I suggest that hon. Members look at schedule 6, which states that power to appoint committees is given to the UFC, the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Education Assets Board.

I can assure the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas)

Mr. Rowlands: That schedule simply says:

"The Corporation may establish a committee".

It does not say "shall" establish a committee. It does not say that after a committee is established it can be terminated. What guarantees do we have, except verbal guarantees from the Minister, that such things will happen?

Mr. Roberts: The statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on Second Reading about his expectations of the UFC and my reiteration of that statement in Committee are adequate. We do not want to be too prescriptive in the Bill and specify each and every committee that the UFC will have. Obviously it will have a number of such committees, but it is, in part, for the UFC to work out the details of the committees that it needs. However, it is committed by my right hon. Friend to establishing the committees that I have mentioned.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): Is that a serious objection that the Minister is putting before the House, that one should not be prescriptive? Is that not what legislation is about? Why does he not write it into the Bill? Is not the real truth that he and his Secretary of State have lost the battle with the DES, the most centralist Ministry in the kingdom?

Mr. Roberts: The right hon. and learned Gentleman is wrong. There is complete agreement between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

I can tell the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy that we expect that the committee will concern itself with broad issues affecting the university sector in Wales, including the need for collaboration with the public sector. It will also provide a channel through which my right hon. Friend's wider policies for the Principality can be taken into account by the Universities Funding Council. The title "right hon. Friend" covers both Secretaries of State—indeed, all Secretaries of State.

Appointments to the Welsh committee will be a matter for the UFC, although we shall want it to consult my right hon. Friends. We envisage that the committee will include members drawn from the Wales Advisory Body, the University of Wales and employer interests in the Principality. I assure the hon. Members for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Mr. Rowlands) and for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) that we do indeed expect great things from this committee, but the Government believe that it would be wrong to require a Welsh committee, or any other specific committee in the Bill whose overall nature is to facilitate rather than to be prescriptive.

There was a great deal of discussion in Committee about prescription. The Opposition accused the Government of being too prescriptive in the general structure that we are establishing for the funding of higher education. That is not so, of course. The Government have put down amendments Nos. 124 to 136, which are the next batch to be discussed by the House, to put that entirely beyond doubt.

The Opposition have sought to insert into the legislation all sorts of detailed requirements about how the funding councils should go about their jobs. These amendments are yet another example of that, and I do not think that it would be a help to anyone to get this kind of detail set in legislative concrete.

Mr. Rogers: The Minister said that he did not want to put details in the Bill. Can he answer a very simple question? If the Welsh sub-committee of the funding council comes up with one set of propositions and it is turned down by the major United Kingdom funding committee, who decides — the Secretary of State for Wales, or the Secretary of State for Education and Science?

Mr. Roberts: We are talking about a sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council, which will be appointed by the council. There will be discussions within both the committee and the council, just as there are currently within the UGC. I shall come back to the university in a moment, but I am seeking to dispose of the amendment moved so ably by the hon. Member for Bridgend.

The Bill confers no responsibilities on the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council in relation to Wales. There is, thus, no present need for a Welsh committee of the council. As for the future, we have made it clear that if and when the Government take a decision to transfer Welsh higher education institutions from the local authority sector, we wish to retain the two options, as I explained in Committee, of either placing them with the PCFC sector or funding them direct. If they were in the PCFC sector, a Welsh committee could be established under schedule 6, paragraph 9, but, as with the UFC, this is not a matter for legislative concrete. Clearly the issues would not arise if the institutions were funded direct.

Mr. John: While the hon. Gentleman is system building, or perhaps empire building, in his dreams about the polytechnic, will he assure me that he will take some action to end the scandal of the funding of the Polytechnic of Wales?

Mr. Roberts: I assure the hon. Member that the Wales Advisory Body is re-examining the funding methodology for higher education, in particular in connection with the polytechnic. Meanwhile, I must remind him that the polytechnic's funding was increased by 10·9 per cent. for this academic year and will be increased by another 10 per cent. for 1988-89, which amounts to a 21 per cent. increase over two years. I assure him that we are looking at the position of the polytechnic again.

The amendments tabled by the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy were, I believe, originally connected with new clause 60. His proposal is that there should be arrangements for funding higher education in Wales for both university and non-university sectors. It is further proposed that the two sectors should be funded through a single university and colleges funding council for Wales. I do not accept that this is the best approach to higher education in Wales.

Let us consider, first, the position of the University of Wales under these arrangements. Its funding would become the responsibility of a council responsible to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, and that council, with responsibility for funding only the University of Wales, would find either that it had very little scope for planning or — and perhaps this is more likely — that it could not avoid being embroiled in the internal affairs of the university.

The University of Wales, as we all know, is a federal university. I know that there are grounds for saying that it would be in the interests of the university and of its constituent colleges for the university to be perceived to a

greater extent than is the case at present as a large and powerful federal university. As I said in Committee, steps are now being taken to see how the university's central role can be strengthened. Hon. Gentlemen will know that Lord Cledwyn, as pro-Chancellor, with the full agreement of the university, has established a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Goronwy Daniel to consider how the university structure might be strengthened.

There have been recent moves towards rationalisation which have shown an encouraging tendency towards federal action. The effect of enacting these amendments would, I think, be to nullify any serious attempt that the university might make to act as a single institution. Indeed, I suspect that the effect of a funding body for Wales alone, making decisions and judgments as between the colleges, would so usurp the university's own prerogatives as fatally to weaken the federal structure. There are some, of course, who would applaud that, but many more, I am sure, would feel with me that the break-up of the university would be a disaster, especially for the smaller, more vulnerable and more distinctively Welsh colleges.

That being so, it is not surprising that the University of Wales is opposed to the aims of these amendments. I ask the House to take serious note of the university's own view, as expressed very clearly in evidence to the Croham committee, that it is in its best interests to continue to be funded as an integral part of the university sector in the United Kingdom. I recognise the special role that the university has in Wales, in relation to both the culture and the economy of the Principality—matters in which my right hon. Friend has specific responsibility. The exercise of those responsibilities brings him into contact with the university and the colleges very frequently. However, it would be inappropriate, given its international as well as its national standing, for the University of Wales to be divorced from the rest of the university sector in the United Kingdom. After all, two thirds of its students come from outside Wales, and we are not in the business of directing those Welsh students who elect to go to English or Scottish universities to stay at home. The University of Wales is a very Welsh institution, but it is also a United Kingdom institution, and the amendments would clearly put at risk its standing in the wider context — *[Interruption.]* Several hon. Members have spoken on such matters in Committee and on the Floor of the House, and I know that certain hon. Members, representing Welsh constituencies, are especially interested and entitled to have a proper and meaningful reply.

7 pm

Turning now to the polytechnics and colleges sector in Wales, section 178(2) and (3) specifically exclude Wales from the PCFC funding arrangements. There is a reserve power in section 178(4) that would enable the Welsh public sector higher education institutions to be transferred to the PCFC by order should that be considered necessary in the future. As with any other reserve power, it may never be used. Its relevance to the amendments that we are considering is that it envisages the possibility of transferring the institutions to the PCFC, not to a separate Welsh PCFC. Our reason for that is the small size of the higher education sector in Wales. Only six Welsh institutions meet the criteria in clause 100 for transfer to the PCFC sector.

We have considered whether, if the reserve power to transfer the Welsh institutions to the PCFC sector were activated, it should be to one PCFC that would cover England and Wales or to a separate Welsh PCFC. I concede that the idea of a separate body has its attractions from a Welsh point of view, but in no way could I justify the cost of an independent body to plan and fund so small a sector.

A further option exists if it should be decided to remove the polytechnic and the other higher education colleges from local authority control. The Welsh Office could take over the funding responsibility itself. Powers already exist in section 100 of the 1944 Act which would make it possible for the Department to fund the institutions direct. Indeed, we are already using these powers to fund our one voluntary college—Trinity college, Carmarthen.

Dr. Thomas: I understand the impatience of some hon. Members who are present, but this is an important debate about the structure of higher education in Wales, and it is right that we should have it. Will the Minister give us some indication of the Government's thinking on the options that he rehearsed in Committee, because the education system in Wales is entitled to hear his preferred option?

Mr. Roberts: I want to make it clear that at present there is no intention of exercising either of the options. For the time being we intend to work closely with the local authorities and to continue with the Wales Advisory Body arrangements that were established in 1983. It is a partnership arrangement between the local authorities and the Welsh Office which works satisfactorily for the small number of colleges involved. As the hon. Gentleman knows, I chair the committee of the Wales Advisory Body, the members of which are nominated by the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the Welsh Counties Committee. Through the WAB arrangements we have a means of planning the sector on an all-Wales basis, rather than on a local basis. This will be increasingly important in the period between now and the mid-1990s, during which the number of 18-year-olds will fall significantly and competition for students will become more intense. I believe that the Wales Advisory Body will be able to undertake this planning role effectively, and that is how we intend to leave it.

Mr. Win Griffiths: I am extremely disappointed with that reply, first, because the commitment that we got was that the Universities Funding Council would be looking to use its powers under schedule 6. I stress that the commitment was that it would be "looking", and not "doing" it. Those powers are optional, not compulsory. The idea that we are being detailed or prescriptive to ask for a Welsh sub-committee of the Universities Funding Council is ludicrous. This is a fundamental right for Wales and should be in the Bill. We shall definitely seek a Division on that.

Secondly, we did not intend to seek to press the amendments relating to the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council to the vote. We wanted to find out from the Minister the answer to the question that I asked in Committee, and the answer to the question that I asked again this evening.

The hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Dr. Thomas) referred to the talent of the Minister as a writer of sonnets. Well, I thought that I was getting the Mabinogion this evening. However, despite the long reply,

[Mr. Win Griffiths]

I still have not had an answer to my question about the corresponding activities of the Welsh and English colleges under this part of the Bill.

Mr. Roberts: In one sentence, of course both English and Welsh colleges are entitled to recruit from whichever country or wherever they want.

Mr. Griffiths: My question was: "Could an English polytechnic or college, which is totally free-standing, open annexes in Wales because the position would not be the same for Welsh polytechnics or colleges" which, being incorporated under the Companies Acts, and not being legally independent, could not do the same in England?

Mr. Roberts: That is a very hypothetical situation.

Mr. Griffiths: That is one good reason for us voting against the whole Bill again. We shall seek to press our first three amendments to Divisions.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 183, Noes 293.

Division No. 231] **[7.7 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McCartney, Ian
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Pike, Peter L.
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ray Powell and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey

Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thorne, Neil
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly negatived.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): I beg to move amendment No. 124, in page 105, line 43, at end insert,

'or the practice of any profession'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this, we shall take the following amendments: No. 10, in page 105, line 44, after 'responsible', insert

'for keeping under review and for advising the Secretary of State on the needs of the United Kingdom for university teaching and research, and'.

No. 11, in page 106, line 6, leave out subsection (6) and insert—

'(6) The Council shall make grants to universities in the United Kingdom, subject to terms and conditions, in respect of expenditure incurred or to be incurred by them for the purposes of any activities eligible for funding under this section.'.

No. 140, in page 106, line 9, at end insert

'Provided that any term or condition imposed by the Council under this subsection shall not unreasonably constrain the university in the exercise of its judgment as to the best use of resources in pursuance of its academic objectives'.

No. 141, in page 106, line 9, at end insert

'And provided always that in determining payments to be made under this subsection to any university the Council shall not make reductions in such payments by reason of funds available to that university from sources other than public funds'.

No. 12, in page 106, line 10, leave out subsection (7) and insert—

'(7) The Council shall have power—

(a) to monitor and review the expenditure and management by the universities of such grants; and

(b) to collect, examine and publish comparative information about the universities which universities may give the Council for the purposes of the exercise of any of their functions under this section.

[Madam Deputy Speaker]

(7A) Any terms or conditions imposed by the Council under subsection (6) above shall not apply to any funds which are derived from sources other than the Council.'.

Government amendments Nos. 125 and 126.

No. 408, in clause 111, page 106, line 43, at end insert

'in such a manner as to secure the efficient, flexible and comprehensive provision of such activities having regard to other higher educational facilities provided by universities, higher education corporations and other bodies and to any local scheme for the co-ordination of further and higher education drawn up by the local education authority.'.

Government amendment No. 127.

No. 409, in page 107, line 25, leave out 'and'.

No. 410, in page 107, line 29, at end insert

'; and

(c) to advise the Secretary of State as to the funding needs of the sector for which the Council is responsible, where appropriate in co-operation with the Universities Funding Council; and

in respect of any such advice under paragraph (c) above, the Secretary of State shall take the advice into account in making a determination as to the level of funding to be made available to the Council.'.

No. 438, in page 107, line 29, at end insert

', and

(c) shall consult on a regular basis with the bodies listed in Subsection (9) below'.

No. 13, in clause 112, page 107, line 39, after 'may', insert

'after consultation with the Funding Councils,'.

Government amendment No. 128.

No 455, in page 107, line 40, leave out 'he thinks fit' and insert

'may be approved in an Order, a draft of which has been laid before, and approved by, a resolution of each House of Parliament'.

Government amendment No. 129.

No. 453, in page 108, line 2, after 'payments', insert

'shall relate to those payments and '.

Government amendment No. 130.

No. 14, in page 108, line 3, leave out from 'part' to end of line 4 and insert

'those sums paid by the Council to which terms and conditions were attached and not complied with; and.'

Government amendments Nos. 131 to 133.

No. 15, in page 108, line 10, at end insert

'except that such amounts and such conditions shall not be in respect of an individual institution or its activities.'

Government amendment No. 134.

No. 16, in page 108, line 12, leave out from 'with' to end of line 13 and insert

'those directions given to them by the Secretary of State which shall be made only by orders which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'

No. 412, in page 108, line 13, at end insert

'of a general nature, where such directions do not relate to a named institution or the allocation of funds to an individual institution'.

No. 454, in page 108, line 13, at end insert

'the terms of which shall be contained in an Order which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament'.

Government amendments Nos. 135 and 136.

No. 458, in page 108, line 25 at end insert—

'(8A) The Chairman of the Universities Funding Council, of the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council and the Education Assets Board shall sit on each others Council'.

Mr. Baker: This will be a short but important debate on a matter that came up frequently in Committee—the relationship of the Secretary of State with the new Universities Funding Council and the relationship of the Universities Funding Council with the universities that it funds.

Amendments Nos. 124 to 136 fulfil the undertakings that I gave in Committee on 16 February. Their main purpose is to make clear on the face of the Bill certain aspects of the relationship between the holder of my office and the newly-established Universities Funding Council and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, and between the two funding councils and the institutions.

A number of overlapping amendments to clauses 110 to 112 have been tabled, notably by my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), who got his amendments on the Amendment Paper before the Government did, and also by the Opposition. I believe that amendments Nos. 124 to 136 effectively meet their concerns.

Under the present higher education funding arrangements, the holder of my office has substantial implicit powers to safeguard the considerable taxpayers' interests. We are talking of a sum of about £2·5 billion a year. Hon. Members will know that under the existing arrangements for the University Grants Committee, which was, in effect, set up by a Treasury minute, theoretically I—I must be more humble—the holder of my office has sweeping powers over the universities in that he can direct the UGC to cut off money to a university or to stop funding a particular discipline. Of course, I would not use those powers in that way. None of my predecessors has. It would be unthinkable that they would be used in such a way. But when one comes to set up a statutory body, such as the UFC and the PCFC, one has to define precisely the relationships and the relative powers that one has.

The new statutory framework requires explicit provision to be made not only for the funding councils' powers but also for those which I or my successors might exercise. This group of amendments makes clear on the face of the Bill what was always intended — the limitations on the Government's and the funding councils' powers.

First, let me deal with conditions and directions. Amendment No. 132 makes it clear that the conditions on which the UFC and the PCFC make payments to institutions may relate only to the use of those payments. There is no question of their, or, through them, the holder of my office, being able to limit or control the funds which institutions receive from other sources. I have given that assurance verbally and it now appears on the face of the Bill. The UFC or the PCFC would not wish to get at private funds or money raised by universities in other ways or of which they are in receipt.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): My right hon. Friend was good enough to give such an assurance some weeks ago at Question Time, but one niggling problem remains. Although he has given the assurance, then and now, that nobody will exercise any power over money that is raised by universities, is there any danger that the UFC may take money that is raised voluntarily? I have a particular interest because Lancaster university is good at a lot of things, particularly at raising funds. Is there any danger that the UFC may decide to make deductions because a university is particularly good at raising outside funds?

Mr. Baker: That point is covered by an amendment put down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury

(Mr. Raison). As he may try to catch your eye, Madam Deputy Speaker, suffice to say that the short answer is no, but I shall elaborate later. I have visited the university of Lancaster and I pay tribute to the effectiveness of that university and of the vice chancellor in raising funds so resourcefully.

Amendments Nos. 133 and 134 make it clear that any conditions that the Secretary of State may attach to his funding of the councils shall not relate to their treatment of particular institutions. That makes explicit the commitment that we have given consistently that the Government will not involve themselves in decisions about the allocation of funds between individual institutions.

Amendment No. 135 fulfils the undertaking that I gave in Committee. Any long-stop directions by the Secretary of State to the funding councils will be by order, and, therefore, by virtue of clause 180, subject to the negative resolution procedure.

Amendments Nos. 125 and 127 empower the funding councils to advise the Secretary of State. That right will be unfettered. The amendment will not allow the Government to control what it is advised on by the councils. I have no doubt that their advice will cover the financial needs of the institutions and we shall certainly consider it carefully.

Amendment No. 125 also empowers the UFC to advise the Department of Education for Northern Ireland on the funding of the universities in the Province in the same way as the UGC does now. Given the aim of clarifying responsibilities, that continuing relationship needs to be covered in legislation rather than be left non-statutory.

There was some criticism that the power of the UFC and the PCFC to give advice was fettered in some way in that the holder of my office would have to agree the manner in which the advice was given.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: That is what the amendment says.

Mr. Baker: I am aware of what my amendment says. I have a capacity to read and understand. I have tried to demonstrate it from time to time as the Bill has been passing through the House.

Let me draw the attention of the House to a letter from the chairman of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom, Professor Sir Mark Richmond, which was published in *The Independent* yesterday, in which he said:

"I do not agree with your report that Mr. Baker has backtracked on his commitment to empower the Funding Councils for higher education to give advice to the Government. The wording of his amendment, while less all-embracing than the Vice-Chancellor's Committee might have chosen, makes clear that the Secretary of State will not have the power to determine whether, or when, or on what topics (including finance), the Councils give advice. He will determine only 'in what manner', ie, whether publicly or privately, this is done. There can be advantages in giving advice in private; it can be blunter. Nor do I believe that any chairmen of the Funding Council worth their salt will be muzzled."

I want to thank Sir Mark Richmond for making that position clear and for the way in which he has conducted our discussions as the chairman of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. He has presented its case strongly and forcefully and it is a case to which we have listened.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Who will decide whether such advice will be in public or private — the Secretary of State or the chairman of the funding body?

Mr. Baker: As I have said, the amendment says that the Secretary of State has the power to decide, but in such matters, with the degree of confidence that exists between me and the existing UGC, we would talk about such matters and, no doubt, about the way in which things should be done. Since I have held this office I have twice had advice from the UGC on the main funding. Each time it came to me privately. It was full advice and it was more effective for being private. That has been my experience as the holder of my office.

Mr. Ashdown: The Minister's comments now stand completely at variance with the disparaging remarks made by Ministers in Committee about the CVCP. I hope that he will draw his comments to its attention to put the record straight on the role of the CVCP. As he has prayed Sir Mark Richmond in aid on this important matter, I hope that he will also heed his views on academic freedom.

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman must wait for the debate after 8 pm. As I said, Sir Mark Richmond presents his case forcefully. That does not mean that I agree with every aspect of what he says. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that I have a pleasant and friendly relationship with the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. I enjoy meeting its members. They are a civilised bunch of people.

7.30 pm

Mr. Dalyell: Reference has been made to an article in *The Independent*. There is a further article in that newspaper today in relation to Christopher Hood and the whole question of tenure. Professor Christopher Hood, an Australian lecturer who was previously at the university of Glasgow, was very critical of the Secretary of State on the question of promoted lecturers losing tenure. Would this be a convenient moment to comment on that issue?

Mr. Baker: No, it would not, for the very good reason that I have not read the relevant part of the newspaper, although I will seek to read it or have it available when the debate on tenure starts at 8 o'clock.

There were two other legs to the package of amendments that I announced in Committee — amendments Nos. 128 and 129 and the consequential amendment No. 136—which limit any additional functions conferred on the funding councils to those which could in any event be exercised by the Secretary of State and which are properly related to the institution funded by the council in question. The provision is about the delegation of existing functions in relation to higher education. As amended, there can be no possibility that a future Secretary of State could use his power to create completely new interventionist functions.

The other leg concerns the power of the funding councils to seek repayment of funds. Amendments Nos. 130 and 131 make clear that the councils will have discretion over whether the repayment of funds should be sought in the event of non-compliance with conditions. In any case, repayment may be only in respect of funds for which a particular condition has not been met.

Finally, amendments Nos. 124 and 126 fulfil the commitment that I gave in Committee to make clear in the Bill that non-academic members of the funding councils may be drawn from the professions. I am very glad to move the amendments formally. They were outlined in Committee and represent substantial changes. I am glad

[Mr. Baker]

that it has been possible to come to an agreement with the vice chancellors of our universities along the lines that they find acceptable. It will be broadly and widely welcomed in the universities and across the House tonight.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Before we proceed further and the vice chancellors, or anybody else, criticise the House of Commons for not being interested, may I draw the attention of the House to how empty the Press Gallery is during this important debate?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: It is a good point, however, that a large number of journalists in the Gallery on occasions criticise hon. Members about their attendance, but on an issue as important as this they do not seem to feel it is worth their while to pay attention.

Mr. Jackson: That is the last time that the hon. Gentleman will be mentioned.

Mr. Bennett: Yes, I appreciate that.

It is ridiculous that the procedures of the House dictate that all of the clauses relating to polytechnics and academic freedom in this part of the Bill must be debated in two hours. We are considering clause 109 to clause 134 in two hours, and, having allowed a short time for Welsh issues, we are down to 40 minutes in which to examine six Government undertakings and the nine amendments with which they seek to fulfil those undertakings.

I agree with the Secretary of State that amendment No. 124, which widens the possibility of appointing people with professional experience to the public sector funding council and the Universities Funding Council, is very welcome. But most academic people would feel that a far greater proportion of those 15 people who will serve on those bodies should have academic experience, as opposed to the Government's suggestion.

Amendment No. 125 deals with the question of how advice will be offered. The Secretary of State's original statement in his press release was to the effect that funding bodies would be free to offer advice, whereas the Secretary of State has put some very miserable words in the Bill. I cannot understand why the Minister cannot put a clear statement into the Bill giving the committees power to exercise their right to give him advice. Why should he, as the wording of the Bill says, decide whether it should be in public or in private? Surely the committees ought to be entitled to judge whether in their view it is more helpful to make their comments in private or in public. Why should the Secretary of State decide ultimately, as the legislation provides, which approach is more appropriate?

I suspect that on some occasions the Secretary of State is under pressure from Treasury Ministers to accept the option of giving advice in private, because that reduces pressure on the Government, and inevitably he has to toe the Government line and suggest that comments are made in private. The Secretary of State would really strengthen his hand if advice was given in public, so that people could see what arguments were being put forward about public funding. No doubt the House of Lords will return to the point, but it is sad, when the Government claim to be offering concessions, that they still put such weasel words into the Bill.

The Opposition certainly welcome the Secretary of State's assurance that the institutions will have total freedom over their own money, although I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that in practice it will be more complicated. Where institutions raise money for equipment, inevitably the funding bodies will feel that it is not necessary for them to come up with the money for it. It would be ridiculous for a funding body to fund a particular piece of equipment if the money for it had been raised privately. But the inter-relationship between private funding and money from the Government will be strong. Although it is welcome that the right hon. Gentleman has put these extra words into the Bill to make it clear that funding bodies will not have direction over money that institutions raise themselves, he ought to recognise that there are far more problems in funding than he has suggested.

The Secretary of State has made it clear that he does not intend to give specific directions to funding bodies to deal with particular institutions. He did not deal with the current and very important topic of how far institutions will develop in a selective way, and whether there will be selective funding of top, middle and bottom-tier institutions and universities, or whether there will be, say, top-tier departments. Once we start to move into this area, particularly if the Government are pushing ahead with the idea of preferred and less preferred departments, we will be returning close to the point where, in practice, funding bodies will discriminate against particular institutions.

Next came the Secretary of State's great concession that any extra duties placed on funding bodies would be subject to negative order. Following the experience today during business questions and the uproar about the regulations on the poll tax in Scotland, he must realise that negative orders are very difficult procedures on which hon. Members can have an impact. If the Secretary of State claims that the regulation will be rarely used to confer new duties, he could have used affirmative orders. No doubt he is holding back so that he can make a further concession in the House of Lords. I am sure that it would have cleared up matters in this area more effectively if he had agreed to using the affirmative procedure, particularly as he claims that the power would rarely need to be used.

The Secretary of State knows that if an affirmative order is put forward on a completely uncontroversial issue, it can be put through Committee in about 30 seconds on a Wednesday morning. Only when it is a contentious matter will it be debated on the Floor of the House. The Secretary of State's idea that the negative order procedure is more suitable than the affirmative order procedure certainly leaves the Opposition somewhat disappointed.

When the Secretary of State was dealing with the concessions, he failed to mention the aspect of the money necessary for restructuring, particularly for universities. Perhaps he will deal with that matter in the debate after 8 o'clock. The right hon. Gentleman, together with the Under-Secretary, often made great play in Committee of the £150 million extra that will be available for restructuring, although some people would say that it was for cutting, staff.

Mr. Christopher Hawkins (High Peak): The relevant amendment comes in the next section of the debate. Only 20 minutes are left in which other hon. Members can speak on the amendments in this part, so I should be grateful if

the hon. Gentleman would leave that amendment until the next debate, when there will be two hours in which to speak.

Mr. Bennett: I was making the point that it would have been helpful if we had been given information about this. I hope that the Minister will tell us during the next debate whether the money will be available for future restructuring, as he promised in Committee. He claimed that he would come up with the concessions that were promised in Committee, but a commitment on that is noticeable by its absence from the list of amendments.

In Committee, we were concerned that there should be one funding body for higher education. It is illogical to go on with two separate bodies—one for the universities and one for the public sector. This should have been the time to set up one funding body——

Mr. Spencer Batiste (Elmet): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that, as a result of the concessions, the Secretary of State has effectively excluded the holder of his office as a potential threat to academic freedom in any university?

Mr. Bennett: I do not accept that, because the Secretary of State did not tell us about the issue of selectivity for departments and institutions. If the Government are prepared to make it clear that they do not want a selective system for institutions but only for departments, that would go some way in the right direction.

As I said, there should be only one funding body, and the Government have missed this opportunity. By insisting that the two funding bodies will be separate, the Government are not trying to develop one secretariat and one system of recording information, so we shall go on with the polytechnics and universities criticising each other and arguing over how they are treated when it comes to funding. It is sad that the Government have not taken this opportunity to deal with funding once and for all.

The major problem with accountability is that the Secretary of State will make all the appointments and they will not be subject to scrutiny. We believe that Select Committees would have been one way of making these people accountable to the country, as opposed to the Secretary of State.

In the final analysis, much comes down to what the Government say rather than legislation. When Lord Joseph was in charge of the Department, he continually ran down the arts and social sciences in higher education institutions and praised science. The climate that the Secretary of State creates is important. Sadly, the climate planned by the Secretary of State for the next 10 years is one of more cuts and the removal of tenure for future appointments. Higher education will contract. The future of the country and of higher education depends on a climate in which there is expansion, not contraction. The future prosperity of this country and its democracy depends on high quality higher education, and it is sad that the main emphasis of the Bill plans to contract rather than expand it.

7.45 pm

Mr. Hawkins: I have inherited a surfeit of riches today but have no time in which to spend them. I am grateful to Mr. Speaker for selecting amendments Nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 140 and 141——

Mr. Flannery: We did not apply the guillotine—the Government did.

Mr. Hawkins: It is, nevertheless ——

Mr. Flannery *rose*——

Mr. Hawkins: The Labour Government applied the guillotine at least as often as we have, so the hon. Gentleman should not be such a hypocrite.

I want to record the thanks of all members of the Standing Committee for the help that we received from the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, the AUT and many others in universities on this part of the Bill.

This could be a long speech, but I shall say only that I took a fair amount of stick from Opposition Members in Committee for not pressing my amendments to the vote after my right hon. Friend had given an undertaking to bring forward the amendments that he has brought before the House on Report. I greatly welcome the amendments that he has tabled; they meet all the commitments that he gave in Committee. What he has done will go a long way to increasing the acceptability of this important Bill to the universities, and I thank him for that.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): I want to direct a specific question to the Secretary of State about the importance of giving polytechnics the freedom to manage their own resources.

Under the local education authority framework, polytechnics have been free to carry over from one financial year to the next the under or over-spending on their budget heads. Until now, there has been no silly rush to spend up in the closing days of the financial year. Similarly, the polytechnic in my area—and others—has been able to accumulate reserves as a buffer against unexpected fluctuations in expenditure.

Will the Secretary of State give us a categorical assurance that polytechnics will not lose, under corporate status, the important flexibilities which local government has given them? It would be disastrous if polytechnics were treated as non-departmental public bodies. There is no reason why they should not enjoy financial arrangements similar to those that govern universities; and to deny them that flexibility would be to impose the double handicap of hampering their competitiveness and adding to their administrative costs. This is a point of great importance to polytechnics and I hope that the Secretary of State will give it a straight reply.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury): I want to refer to two important amendments, Nos. 140 and 141, standing in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), myself and others.

Amendment No. 140 is designed to limit the terms and conditions that the Universities Funding Council could put on payments to a university. It is designed to stop any unreasonable interference in the running of a university and the way in which it manages its resources. As we all know—my right hon. Friend must face this—we have a long tradition in this country of freedom in universities and their relationships with the Government. That is tremendously important. There has also been a long tradition of freedom for the University Grants Committee to distribute the resources that Parliament and the Secretary of State give to it. My right hon. Friend has confirmed that with amendment No. 134, which is all to the good.

There is a similar, and equally important, tradition of freedom for the way in which universities spend the money

[Mr. Timothy Raison]

that the UGC has given them. Of course, there are constraints; there must be. Sometimes the money may be tied to specific initiatives. Sometimes it is given for some form of rationalisation of activities between universities. Increasingly, we must recognise and accept that today. There is, too, the basic point of accountability. Nevertheless, the fundamental freedom remains, and so it should. It is part of a proud tradition in a pluralist society.

My right hon. Friend has clearly said that he does not want to centralise everything. In Nottingham in January he said that the universities will have greater freedom to manage their affairs than they have now, which is in line with his policy towards schools and opting out. It is part of the desire to introduce greater freedom. Universities must exercise their freedom responsibly, and I am sure they will. It is right that the additional safeguards embodied in amendment No. 140 should be included, and I hope that my right hon. Friend will accept it.

Amendment No. 141 is also important. It is designed to require that, when a university raises money from other sources, it should not then have the money that it would receive from the Universities Funding Council reduced. That point was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman), and it is surely right. If a university is successful in raising money from private sources, industry or charities, it should not be liable for a fall in its receipts from the Universities Funding Council.

I think that my right hon. Friend understands the point. Last October he told the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals that the Government had repeatedly said that they would not abate public support if universities succeeded in raising more private funds. In that context he has recognised in amendment No. 132 that there will be no abatement in the amount of money from central Government to the Universities Funding Council to take account of any money which universities may raise.

We need a further specific amendment to make it clear that the same principle would apply to the Universities Funding Council; in other words, if universities raise money by their own efforts, the UFC will not reduce the amount paid to those universities. It is straightforward common sense. If donors who contribute substantial sums to universities think that that will simply be knocked off the grants given by the Universities Funding Council, the donors will say, "What is the point of giving money to a university?" It would be very depressing if donors were allowed to get into that frame of mind. The Government are right to put emphasis on trying to generate new sources of wealth not just for universities but for the arts and so on. Amendment No. 141 is devoted entirely to reinforcing that principle. I profoundly hope that my right hon. Friend will be able to accept amendments Nos. 140 and 141.

Mr. Batiste: Time is short, so I shall be brief. The Government amendments implement the concessions made in Committee on the Universities Funding Council. They are important because they provide a buffer between the Secretary of State and the universities and defuse many of the genuine concerns expressed on behalf of universities. I believe that the UFC will be a better organisation because of the amendments. Most important, these measures effectively remove the holder of the office of Secretary of State as a potential threat to academic freedom in any institution.

If I should be lucky enough to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should like to speak further on this in the consequent debate. I simply ask now that members in another place note that my right hon. Friend has responded fully to genuine concern, which was properly argued, with comprehensive amendments which meet those fears.

I thank my right hon. Friend for responding to my concern about the inconsistency in the composition of the Universities Funding Council by adding a provision for the inclusion of professionals on those bodies. Many graduates are recruited by the profession and without representation on those bodies they would be the poorer.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) for the comments that he has just made. I look upon the amendments not as concessions but as clarification. If they were dragged from me, I was willing to have them dragged; Barkis was willing.

The hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) asked about the roll-over flexibility for polytechnics. I understand the point. I am considering it. I cannot make a statement about it now, but I am aware of it.

My hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) asked about redundancy compensation. He raised the matter in Committee. I appreciate that he has shown concern as the Bill has progressed that its provisions might lead to senior academics with good records being dismissed without compensation and accordingly demands some kind of statutory protection. I acknowledge his concern. I have looked into the matter and I do not think that the concern is well founded. I have not been able to discover an example in which an academic left his post at the university's instigation, other than on dismissal for good cause, without receiving generous compensation.

I am confident that universities will continue to show themselves to be good employers. The Government are making substantial funds available—£155 million—to help universities to meet the cost of compensation. I am still considering whether there is anything further that I can and should do to reassure academics that fears of dismissal without compensation other than for good cause are unfounded. There will be an opportunity to return to the issue in another place. Because of the phraseology, it has proved difficult to make changes on the face of the Bill. Such changes as I have considered do not improve the position but make it worse for many academics. For the time being I consider that we should avoid statutory interference in the operation of the voluntary schemes of compensation of individual universities.

I understand the spirit which drove my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) to table amendment No. 140. However, it is difficult to provide for it in statutory form. The position now is that a university will prepare an academic plan and the funding which is made available will reflect that academic plan. It may be that some conditions should be attached to certain parts of it. I hesitate to say so, but, as he rightly recognises, the conditions will be imposed by the Universities Funding Council, not by the Secretary of State. I can only impose general conditions upon the amount of money that I make available through the UFC. I have referred to £155

million. I would not have got that from the Treasury had I not been able to impose a general condition that it was to be used for restructuring. That is not just to pay for redundancy compensation. There are within those funds substantial amounts of new money.

Amendment No. 141 deals with new sources of wealth for universities. My right hon. Friend recognises that universities are seeking new sources of money. I have encouraged them to do that, as has my right hon. Friend and many others. Universities are finding new sources of finance much more energetically than in the past. My right hon. Friend wants a statutory declaration that when they go out on fund-raising drives, which are becoming common, they will have statutory protection from reduction of funding from the UFC. I think my right hon. Friend will appreciate that that is technically difficult to achieve because it presupposes that one can determine what the level of funding is likely to be.

It is largely a matter of policy, but I will reinforce the policy. It is definitely Government policy to encourage universities to diversify their sources of funding. Some university interests assert that the Government encourage private earnings solely to spare the public purse. That is not so. We have made clear consistently, and I reaffirm tonight, that we will not abate overall public support if universities succeed in raising private funds. I hope that that statement is clear.

Mr. Raison: Of course, I welcome that statement, but it is a statement about what will be given to the Universities Funding Council. The amendment deals with what the UFC will do with regard to universities. I understand that there may be technical difficulties, but it is an important point. I hope that my right hon. Friend will at least say that a search will be made to find a way of producing something which is technically viable and that there will be an opportunity to consider it in another place.

Mr. Baker: I am always happy to engage in a search to find something better. We have engaged in a search and it is very difficult. It presupposes that one can say what the funding would have been in certain circumstances and then say that it should not be abated. The problem lies in determining what the funding would have been.

I have tried to express the clear policy of the Government. I have every sympathy with the principle that individual universities should not be discouraged from increasing their private funding, as would obviously happen if the UFC were to abate the funding accordingly. That would run directly counter to Government policy. I assure my right hon. Friend that we shall make our view clear to the University Grants Committee and the Universities Funding Council.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 125, in page 106, line 12, after 'section', insert—

'(aa) to provide the Secretary of State, in such manner as he may from time to time determine, with such information and advice relating to activities eligible for funding under this section as they think fit;

(ab) to provide the Department of Education for Northern Ireland, on such terms as may be agreed, with such advisory services as the Department may require in connection with the discharge of the Department's functions relating to universities in Northern Ireland;'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 111

POLYTECHNICS AND COLLEGES FUNDING COUNCIL

Amendments made: No. 126, in page 106, line 36, at end insert

'or the practice of any profession'.

No. 127, in page 107, line 25, after 'section' insert—

'(aa) to provide the Secretary of State, in such manner as he may from time to time determine, with such information and advice relating to activities eligible for funding under this section as they think fit;'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 112

THE FUNDING COUNCILS: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Amendments made: No. 128, in page 107, line 40, leave out 'additional' and insert 'supplementary'.

No. 129 in page 107, line 47, at end insert—

"(1A) For the purposes of subsection (1) above a function is a supplementary function, in relation to either of the funding councils, if it is exercisable for the purposes of—

(a) the exercise by the Secretary of State of functions of his under any enactment; or

(b) the doing by the Secretary of State of anything he has power to do apart from any enactment;

and it relates to, or to the activities of, institutions eligible for funding by that Council.'.

No. 130, in page 108, line 3, leave out 'requiring' and insert

'enabling the Council to require'.

No. 131, in page 108, line 4, after 'condition', insert 'subject to which the sums were paid'.

No. 132, in page 108, line 7, at end insert

'but shall not relate to the application by the body to whom the payments are made of any sums derived otherwise than from payments made by the Council.'.

No. 133, in page 108, line 8, at beginning insert 'Subject to subsection (3A) below,'.

No. 134, in page 108, line 10, at end insert—

'(3A) The conditions subject to which grants are made by the Secretary of State to either of the Funding Councils shall not relate to the making of payments by the Council to any specified institution.'.

No. 135, in page 108, line 13, at end insert—

'(4A) Directions given for the purposes or subsection (4) above shall be given by order made by the Secretary of State.'

No. 136, in page 108, line 25, at end insert—

'; and the reference in subsection (1A) above to institutions eligible for funding by either of those Councils is a reference

(a) in relation to the Universities Funding Council, to universities; and

(b) in relation to the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, to—

(i) institutions within the PCFC funding sector; and

(ii) institutions maintained or assisted by local education authorities, other than universities, at which prescribed courses of higher education are currently provided'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 116

SCHEMES FOR FINANCING LOCALLY FUNDED FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I beg to move amendment No. 261, in page 110, line 31, at end insert—

[Mr. Kenneth Baker]

'(2A) The scheme shall also set out the principles and procedures to be applied by the authority in planning the educational provision to be made by institutions required to be covered by the scheme.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to discuss Government amendment No. 262.

Mr. Baker: The effect of amendment No. 261 is to make it clear that the funding and delegation schemes that LEAs prepare under clause 116 must also set out the procedures that each LEA will use for planning provision in its FE colleges.

With respect to amendment No. 262, the Government amendments made in Committee restricted the application of the delegation of the governance provisions in the Bill to those assisted colleges that are designated as being substantially dependent for their maintenance on assistance from LEAs. Where——

It being Eight o'clock, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution yesterday, to put forthwith the Question on amendments moved by a member of the Government to the end of schedule 7.*

Amendments made: No. 261, in page 110, line 31, at end insert—

'(2A) The scheme shall also set out the principles and procedures to be applied by the authority in planning the educational provision to be made by institutions required to be covered by the scheme.'.

No. 262, page 111, line 24, leave out from 'if' to end of of line 28 and insert

'it is assisted by that authority and either—

(a) it is not assisted by any other local education authority; or

(b) that authority provides a larger proportion than any other local education authority by whom the institution is assisted of the aggregate amount of the sums received by the governing body of the institution during any financial year by way of assistance from such authorities in respect of the expenses of maintaining the institution.'. — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 117

INITIATION, IMPOSITION AND VARIATION OF FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING SCHEMES

Amendments made: No. 263, in page 111, line 34, leave out 'such a scheme' and insert

'a scheme under that section'.

No. 264, in page 112, line 17, after 'authority', insert

'as required by that subsection'.

No. 265, page 112, line 30, leave out subsection (8) to (10). — *[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 124

DELEGATION OF POWERS AS TO APPOINTMENT AND DISMISSAL OF STAFF

Amendment made: No. 266, in page 118, line 10, leave out

'notice terminating his contract of employment with the authority'

and insert

'such notice terminating his contract of employment with the authority as is required under that contract'. — *[Mr Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 126

INSTRUMENT AND ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT REQUIRED FOR MAINTAINED FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Amendment made: No. 267, in page 121, line 24, at end insert—

"(5A) Before giving any direction under subsection (3) above or making any order under subsection (4) above the Secretary of State shall consult such persons as he thinks fit.'. —*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 127

PROVISION REQUIRED IN INSTRUMENT AND ARTICLES OF GOVERNMENT

Amendments made: No. 233, in page 121, line 38, after 'be', insert ', or to have been,'.

No. 234, in page 122, line 10, leave out from 'body' to end of line 11 and insert

'and of any academic board of the institution, and of sub-committees of such committees, and provide for the delegation of functions of the governing body and any such academic board to such committees, to the principal or to such other persons as may be specified by or determined in accordance with the articles.'—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 167

THE UNIVERSITY COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Ashdown: I beg to move amendment No. 450, in page 150, line 24, at end insert

'and who shall ensure the maintenance of academic freedom'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments:

No. 146, in page 150, line 30, at end insert

'and

(c) to respect the principle of academic freedom.'.

No. 446, in page 150, line 30, at end insert

'and

(c) to maintain freedom of enquiry and expression for academic staff at qualifying institutions'.

No. 370, in clause 168, page 150, line 48, at end insert—

(aa) provision for a statement, placing a duty upon the institution to secure academic freedom within the law for its members, as may be proposed by the institution and in terms agreed with the Commissioners;

(bb) procedures enabling disputes between the institutions and its members over alleged breaches of the duty imposed under paragraph (aa) above, to be heard and determined;'.

No. 380, in page 151, line 19, at end insert—

'and before granting such approval the Privy Council shall be satisfied that any such modification shall have had regard to the need to preserve academic freedom.'

No. 417, in page 151, line 38, at end insert—

'A member of staff shall not be taken to be dismissed by reason of redundancy where, at the time of dismissal, it is intended to replace the member of staff by a more junior person who would perform the same work.'

No. 418, in page 151, line 38, at end insert—

'(4A) No dismissal by reason of redundancy shall have effect unless reasonable attempts have been made to find suitable alternative employment within the institution.'

No. 144, in page 152, line 5, at end insert—

'(7) Any member of staff dismissed for any reasons falling under this section, other than under subsection (1)(b), shall receive that compensation at the time of the dismissal currently agreed between the institution and the Funding Council.'

No. 415, in page 152, leave out lines 13 and 14 and insert—

'(a) his first appointment or first contract of employment in any qualifying institution is entered into on or after 20th November 1987; or'.

No. 376, in page 152, line 14, leave out '1987' and insert '1990'.

No. 377, in page 152, line 22, leave out '1987' and insert '1990'.

No. 416, in page 152, line 38, at end insert—

'In particular, the Commissioners shall ensure that no modification of statutes under subsection (2) of this section shall apply to any person employed in any qualifying institution merely as a result of a change in contract or appointment brought about by a merger of one or more qualifying institutions with any othe educational institution on or after 20th November 1987.':

No. 381, in page 152, line 41, at end insert

', being apparent to Her Majesty that instrument does not interfere with the need to preserve academic freedom.'.

Mr. Ashdown: I am delighted to be able to move the amendment on Report, just as I moved a similar group in Committee, on the key issue of academic freedom. I am also delighted to have the support of the official Opposition in this matter. Indeed, I hope that I have the support of Conservative Members as well.

The words in the amendment were not chosen lightly or ill-advisedly. Nor was the place. The amendments appear right at the beginning of the relevant clause—clause 167—which deals with university commissioners. They are placed here specifically so that we can get round the business of having to define academic freedom. We are dealing with these amendments now because they relate to the first sentence in clause 167 and therefore all the subsections are conditional upon the wording.

The words have been carefully chosen to ensure the maintenance of academic freedom. We have tried to choose the words that appear in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 relating to freedom of speech. That matter was introduced at the Government's behest predominantly to protect Conservative Members. No doubt the Government will claim that it is intended to protect everyone who wants to speak in universities. However, as we recall what happened, we are all aware that there was an attack on the freedom of speech predominantly of Conservative Members and that caused that measure to be introduced.

I believe that it is right and proper that freedom of speech should be assured. However, we must note that the Government did not find it difficult to find words to protect the freedom of speech of Conservative Members. However, when, as in this case, we are talking about protecting the academic freedom of academics in universities, the Government will argue that they cannot find appropriate words.

On my next point I part company with the official Opposition. I am not trying to defend or argue the case for tenure. I believe that tenure is an outdated and antiquated practice. Provided that there were alternative bulwarks against the erosion of academic freedom, I would be happy to see it abolished. I believe that tenure is partial and, at its very best, ineffective. It is partial because it does not apply to others in higher education, for example, to the PCFC whose academics are involved in equally important work. The Labour party has suggested, and we agree—indeed we made the suggestion first—that we should remove the binary divide and put together the universities and polytechnics in a single body. I see no logic in supporting tenure which applies only to one sector and not the other.

Indeed, tenure does not apply to the whole sector. It applies to some universities and not others. Within universities it applies to some academics, not others. I believe that tenure is outdated. I would be happy to see it abolished provided—and that word must be emphasised—that some other bulwark to ensure academic freedom, to insure against the interference in the work of academics, their curiosity and right to express their views, is created. In that context, I believe that clause 167, which was so strongly argued in Committee, is now necessary. Indeed, that view is accepted strongly in the academic sector.

Mr. Batiste: Is there not an inconsistency in the hon. Gentleman's points when he argues, on the one hand, that tenure only applies partially in higher education, while, on the other hand, some general bulwark is needed to replace it? If academic freedom has survived in those parts of higher education where there is no tenure, surely that is the best method.

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman has made an important point and I will refer to it later.

I argue that academic freedom will be required and it should apply to the UFC and the PCFC sectors. It should apply across both sectors. The hon. Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) made a good plant when he asked how, if this has been inadequate, academic freedom has survived without the statutory requirement elsewhere. The answer is simple. The threats that can be posed in the Bill in the form of the instruments present a threat to academic freedom of a kind that we have not seen before. I do not suggest that the Secretary of State himself will pose them.

The threat exists not least because the UFC, quite contrary to the Croham committee recommendations, is not its own creature, but a creature of the Government. I use the Croham committee's phrases there. The UFC is appointed by the Government of the day and it may be sacked by the Government of the day. There is no safeguard to ensure that an incoming Labour Government could not dismiss the UFC overnight and install its own placemen. We must look not at what this Secretary of State will do, but at the potential powers available to Secretaries of State for Education and Science in future.

I do not intend to argue the case for tenure. However, if the Government did not accept an academic freedom clause, tenure—partial and ineffective though it is—would nevertheless provide some kind of barrier to ensure academic freedom. Therefore, that is preferable to nothing at all.

There is justifiable concern across the whole spectrum of academia and elsewhere about insuring academic freedom so that it cannot be tampered with. We can understand those concerns among academics who have seen within their lifetimes the interference with academic freedom which has always been the first act of a tyrannical and despotic state. That happened in Germany and the Soviet Union, and it began to happen in the United States of America in McCarthy's era. It is perfectly reasonable that academics should be worried.

I want to make a broader argument. I believe that academic freedom, so long fought over and so anciently established, is not something simply convenient for academics. It is a fundamental freedom and human right

[Mr. Ashdown]

that lies at the heart of our democracy. It is important that academics should have the right to study what they want to study according to their own curiosity, not to Government diktat, and to say what they believe to be the truth. That is fundamental to the nature of our society.

The Government will argue two cases. First, they will argue how academic freedom can be under attack now if it has been sustained in Britain so far. I would reply to that argument in the same way that I replied to the hon. Member for Elmet. It is threatened by the instruments in the Bill in the hands of the Secretary of State, including the power of centralisation, the ability to instal placemen in the UFC and the potential dangers in that. It is also threatened as a result of the Government's actions in the past over civil liberties.

We are also aware that the Government have admitted that, because of the cuts and the restructuring to which the Secretary of State referred earlier, there will be a loss of 5,000 academics in the UFC and PCFC sectors. Indeed, Government documents confirm that. We believe that that cut is unnecessary and is against the best interests of the nation. However, we want to be certain that, when the restructuring occurs, it takes place on the ground of restructuring alone, and not for any more sinister motive. That is the first case that the Government will make, and it does not stand up to examination.

The second case that the Government will no doubt make is that the amendment is impossible to draft, would create a charter for lawyers—a charter of contention—and would be tested only in interminable issues of judiciary review. I find that a strange argument from the Government, who have used the ultimate back-stop of judicial review as a reason for being able to legislate so frequently, not by primary legislation, but by secondary legislation. They have always argued that the citizen of the nation need not worry, as he will have access to the courts. Here we see a different case. When access to the courts is against the Government's wishes, they argue that judicial review is unnecessary.

A more powerful case, however, is that it is impossible for the Government to argue that they cannot find the form of words to describe and define academic freedom if they have already done it in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 in regard to freedom of speech. When we drafted the amendment, we did not seek to provide a definition; we sought to parallel precisely what the Government did in the 1986 Act. We merely said that one of the duties of the commissioners would be to ensure the maintenance of academic freedom. That does not require any definition that is challengeable in the courts. It merely lays on them, as a duty, actions that they consider necessary in respect of the conditions at any given university to ensure that academic freedom continues. Surely the Government must be able to concede that. Surely they would appear grubby and partial if, having been able to find the words to protect freedom of speech for Conservative politicians, they could not find the words to protect freedom for the academics of our nation.

I do not consider this a perfect solution; I wish to go much further. It is, however, the minimalist solution, and I hope that the Government will be able to accede to it tonight. It at least provides some form of barrier.

Finally, let me deal with what I regard as the threats. I do not think that we can take lightly threats to our basic liberties. We have seen those threats develop in this nation since the Government came to power and, against the background of that erosion of our civil liberties, I regard this as a matter of prime and fundamental importance.

We must remember that this is the Government who have found the stomach to get rid of a whole tier of local government and to abolish elections in the process, to tamper with our jury system, to begin to limit our rights to protest, and to use the police, in a fashion, to bully the BBC—which I find entirely reprehensible. This is the Government who have taken away the right of GCHQ employees to belong to trade unions, and have found the will and the power to remove from 400,000 teachers the right to negotiate their own pay and conditions. Added together, that does not amount to a series of capricious acts by a Government who do not know better; it amounts to a sustained attack on the whole network of our civil liberties. In that context, the issue of academic freedom is of more than passing interest to academics.

The amendment demands the upholding of that most ancient right — the freedom of academics to inquire according to the curiosity of their minds, rather than the constraints of Government, and to speak the truth according to what they believe it to be, rather than to what is acceptable to the Government. Such freedoms — inalienable and ancient—should be enshrined in statute.

I hope that the Government will see the thrust of our argument. The amendment offers no threat to them, but it will offer reassurance to many others.

Mr. Straw: I commend the speech by the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and his efforts in pursuing this matter. Our views differ in one crucial respect, but I live in hope that we can persuade him to come our way, not least because of a statement by the Secretary of State during the small hours of one of our debates late in the Committee stage.

Three blocks of amendments fall to be discussed. Amendment Nos. 450, 146, 446, 370, 380 and 381 are all concerned with writing academic freedom into the Bill. Amendment No. 417 proposes to prevent the redundancy of staff where a more junior person would be put in to perform the same job. Amendment No. 418 proposes that, where someone is made redundant, reasonable steps should be taken to find him or her suitable alternative employment. Amendments Nos. 415 and 416 are concerned with the operative date of 20 November 1987 and its effect on the ending of tenure. It proposes that that should operate only in respect of first appointments or first contracts established after 20 November, and that reorganisations by a university or college should not have an effect on removing the tenure of someone who would otherwise have it.

There is, I believe, wide agreement that universities play a central part in the sustenance of democratic and advanced society. They do that not least by their willingness and ability to pursue inquiry, however uncomfortable the conclusions, and however much those conclusions may challenge received wisdom or vested interest.

8.15 pm

That pursuit of the central role of the university can take place only in a climate of academic freedom — supported, in our view, by security of employment. Let me say to the hon. Member for Yeovil that, while it is true —we discussed this in Committee—that academic tenure

exists legally in some universities, but not in others, and does not exist in polytechnics, the other truth associated with that is that the legal existence of tenure in some universities has created a norm, a standard, by which every member of the universities and polytechnics has behaved. It is odd for Conservatives, especially today's Conservatives, to challenge the idea of the force of a moral climate. That is what they claim their whole philosophy to be about.

Mr. Batiste: Is it not a consequence of what the hon. Gentleman has just described that so many academics are now on short-term contracts?

Mr. Straw: No. There is a fundamental misunderstanding about that. As any university manager will tell the hon. Gentleman, that is a consequence of a shortage of funding and uncertainty about funding in the years ahead. The Secretary of State tried to suggest that there were more short-term contracts in universities with tenure than in those without it. I suggest to him that any statistician trying to find a correlation between those two factors would be hard put to find any close relationship. The truth is that, both in universities with tenure and those without, the number of short-term contracts has shot up because of uncertainties and cuts in funding.

Security of employment is critical. The hon. Member for Yeovil mentioned the challenges to academic freedom in Eastern Europe and South Africa, and, during the McCarthyite period, in America—within the lifetime of most hon. Members. In Berkeley, California, academics were told that if they did not sign a pledge not to associate with Communists they would lose their jobs. There could be no clearer indication of the association between academic freedom and security of employment.

Interestingly, all serious universities in America regard tenure as of great importance. It is true that they generally arrange for tenure to take place later than it is often—typically—gained by academics in this country. If that were the only argument between us and the Secretary of State, I would tell him that I felt that there was a good case for universalising tenure, but ensuring that academics could obtain it only later in their careers. The right hon. Gentleman should note that, in the free-market country of America, tenure is regarded as central to the pursuit of academic freedom.

Dr. Hampson: Although I have never gone along with the hon. Gentleman in wanting to re-establish tenure across the board, I have, as he knows, told my right hon. Friend many times that there could well be a case for giving an institution the right to accord tenure, not across the board, but in exceptional circumstances. It has come to my attention that the London School of Economics has failed to recruit a very distinguished professor from Australia, who had been expected to arrive, but who has now withdrawn simply because it is no longer possible for the LSE to offer him tenure. It is a free market indeed.

Mr. Straw: I was coming to that point. The Secretary of State justifies the abolition of tenure on the ground that it will lead to greater flexibility in the reorganisation—not to say cuts—that he seeks in the university world. He said:

"It is important for all universities to have the flexibility that polytechnics and some universities enjoy to use their resources and facilities as they think fit. Tenure restricts that freedom." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 25 February 1988; c. 1768.]

The experience in universities that are seeking to reorganise is that abolition of tenure is restricting their ability to reorganise. There is a strange paradox.

The Secretary of State should make the inquiries that some of us have made into the problems associated with reorganising the earth sciences. There may be a strong case for such a reorganisation. Is the Secretary of State aware —*[Interruption.]* The right hon. Gentleman is being given the answer by the Under-Secretary of State.

Mr. Robert Rhodes James (Cambridge): He is having a general chat.

Mr. Straw: He probably needs one. Is the Secretary of State aware that those who organise earth sciences find that academics with tenure are asking, "Why should we move to jobs elsewhere which lack tenure?" There is no better example of the abolition of tenure reducing the flexibility to reorganise rather than increasing it.

Abolition of tenure not only makes university management inflexible and more difficult to organise, but will lead to mediocrity among candidates for posts and discourage people from moving towards high levels. As the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) said, most disciplines, but especially science, are international. There is an international market in those disciplines.

Britain has always suffered because it does not offer comparable salaries to America and many other places. Nevertheless, in the past people have been willing to come here because of the climate of opinion. Now, not only do people not get the salaries paid in the United States, Australia or elsewhere, but they will not have any academic freedom. That is shown by the report in *The Independent*, which referred to Professor Christopher Hood, a leading professor of government and public administration at the University of Sydney. He had been appointed to the chair of public administration and public policy from next March, but his appointment was made six days after the day on which, retrospectively under this legislation, tenure was to be abolished. He has decided to abandon that appointment because the Government are denying tenure to university lecturers.

The Independent article said:

"The heads of geology, chemistry and physics in the universities also told Kenneth Baker, the Secretary of State for Education, that his proposals, which mean that promoted lecturers will lose tenure, will prevent transfers and restructuring of their subjects."

The Secretary of State obviously treats the erosion of academic freedom lightly. I hope that he will say what answer he intends to give those senior academics who have raised these deep concerns with him. Of course, if the right hon. Gentleman wishes to offer a view now, I shall be happy, as ever, to give way.

Last week I spoke to one vice-chancellor who previously had supported the abolition of tenure, but who said that he was shocked that one of the first questions put by candidates for senior academic posts was how their tenure could be guaranteed, given that it would be abolished by this legislation. I was told that many candidates for professional posts now seek contracts for a term of years because that is the only way in which they can envisage guaranteeing security of employment.

Mr. Hawkins: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it is not just a matter of the abolition of tenure, important though that is, since it provides the classical protection of academic freedom? Sadly, the Government have

[Mr. Hawkins]

introduced a Bill the notes on clauses to which specifically say that the intention is to make it possible to replace seniors with juniors if they are cheaper. No wonder everyone wants tenure.

Mr. Straw: That is right. The hon. Gentleman indicated his assent by a nod to amendment No. 417, to which he appended his name with ours. I hope that the Secretary of State will say that he is willing to accept this point.

Mr. Rowe: I have listened carefully to the hon. Gentleman, and some of his points hold water. I believe from my experience and the experience of many others that in a large number of university departments senior staff have become very idle and, if they have not become idle, they have become extremely dull. They are kept in post because they have tenure and there is no easy way of easing them out. Such a department becomes extremely difficult to run. In times of economic hardship it becomes extremely difficult to attract new young blood into those departments.

Mr. Straw: The hon. Gentleman has raised a serious point, despite the fact that he is wearing the tie of a technical college near Slough, as we heard earlier. There is a price to be paid for tenure. Occasionally—much less often than the hon. Gentleman suggests—people who might otherwise be sacked are not sacked, not because they have views with which others disagree, but for other reasons. No one suggests that gross idleness or gross incompetence should be overlooked by university managers.

In America people have managed realistically to bolster tenure by a process of academic assessment of staff which is more systematic than the process in this country. Such an approach must come here. It is one of the measures that need to be considered alongside academic tenure. *[Interruption.]* I have been told that I need to be careful.

Mr. Rhodes James: A one-year contract?

Mr. Straw: Of course not. I support the idea of tenure in America where, none the less, there is some accountability of staff. I was in favour of that 20 years ago when I was wearing a different hat, and I am in favour of it now. We do not argue for state pensions for people who are incompetent or idle. We argue for protection for serious academics to enable them to pursue their lines of inquiry, thought and research without feeling the threat of intimidation by outside forces, including those of the Government.

The Secretary of State and the Under-Secretary of State say that they want to protect academic freedom. In answer to a parliamentary question on 20 November 1987 the Under-Secretary of State said:

"We have recently affirmed . . . that academic staff should have freedom within the law"—

note "within the law"—

"to question and test received wisdom and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or the privileges they may have at their institutions . . . The Government therefore consider it more appropriate for the requirements of academic freedom to be taken into account by the university commissioners, in consultation with individual universities and colleges, when statutes are amended to provide appropriately for the definition of good cause for dismissal and for arrangements for appeals against dismissal."—*[Official Report, 20 November 1987; Vol. 122, c. 676-77.]*

Those words have been repeated by the Secretary of State.

Despite the protestations of the Secretary of State that he is in favour of academic freedom, and since I have listened carefully to the debates in Committee and noted that there is little chance of amendment No. 450 being accepted, we question the Government's real intentions. If they are willing the end, they are certainly failing to will the means. Many of the amendments in this group simply ensure that enshrined in the law is the Government's commitment that the requirements of academic freedom should be taken into account by the university commissioners, in consultation with universities and colleges, when statutes are amended.

Why has the Secretary of State consistently, in Committee and now, refused to accept these amendments, which will write that into law? The only half decent explanation of which I can think is that this is some elaborate tactic whereby the right hon. Gentleman wants to refuse here in order to concede in the other place. If that is the tactic, the other place will certainly see through it as rapidly as we have.

Mr. Ashdown: I am fascinated by that quotation which I had not picked up. Those words are repeated precisely in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, which refers to "freedom of speech within the law".

Mr. Straw: I do not understand why the Secretary of State refuses to do, not what we said he would do, but what he said he would do. No wonder his good faith is challenged when, on the day the Bill was published, in answer to a planted question he said one thing, but six months later he has refused to do what he said. The Secretary of State says that it is difficult to put the concept of academic freedom in the Bill because it is a difficult concept to take before the courts, but he has already written into the Bill that the concepts of fairness and justice shall be taken into account by the courts. In one of his memorable and entertaining speeches, my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) said that there were no more difficult concepts to take before the courts than justice and fairness.

The real issue is why the Secretary of State has refused to write academic freedom into the Bill. He gave the game away on 25 February, during a long debate about academic freedom and tenure, when he said:

"I say to the Committee what I have said to the vice-chancellors . . . that they must face the question of a general declaration . . . of academic freedom not being anything more than declaratory legislation. If they wanted something more specific, they would be reintroducing a form of tenure by another name."

Mr. Kenneth Baker: That is what we want.

Mr. Straw: The Secretary of State says, "That is what we want." It is also what the Secretary of State acknowledges to be the reality, which is that he cannot have academic freedom unless he has tenure. He says that he wants academic freedom. By what other means can he secure tenure? He admitted to the Committee that tenure and academic freedom went together. That is the reality. He cannot have one without the other, and he had better have a better explanation tonight than he had in Committee.

8.30 pm

We are talking about statements that the Secretary of State has made but has so far failed to carry out. On 25 February he gave the undertaking:

"It is the Government's firm intention that every academic dismissed other than for 'good cause' should receive compensation. I shall come back on Report and, I hope, satisfy the hon. Gentleman." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 25 February 1988; c. 1768-73.]

We look forward to being directed to the amendments that will satisfy that undertaking. Perhaps I have missed something, in which case I would be happy to be reassured.

We also want to know where the money is. There is no point in providing words, even in the Bill, for compensation for every academic dismissed other than for good cause unless the Government cough up the money. They are coughing up money for this year and next year for reorganisation, but this demand will continue. We must have an undertaking that not only will this be written into the Bill but that the Secretary of State is willing to back it with cash.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: At the end of the previous debate, when the hon. Gentleman was not in the Chamber—I make no criticism of him for that—I replied on that point to my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), and my reply will be in *Hansard* tomorrow. The gist of my reply was that it is more complicated than we thought, but I am looking at it.

Mr. Straw: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for the fact that he takes account of the need of Opposition spokesmen to eat occasionally. That is why I was absent for his speech. The Secretary of State now seems to have dived under the table——

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): To see if the Prime Minister is there.

Mr. Straw: I assume that the complexities are gaining the agreement of the Treasury.

If the Secretary of State does not believe that academic freedom and tenure are connected, he should contemplate his own position, because his freedom of manoeuvre is directly related to whether he has security of tenure. He has to put up with the diktat of the Prime Minister precisely because he has no tenure. If he had tenure he would have freedom, and he ought to bear that in mind.

Mr. Hawkins: In the previous debate my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was clairvoyant in referring to me as having raised the problem that the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) was discussing—the problem of compensation for university staff made redundant. I had not raised that point. However, as the relevant amendments are now being discussed, I shall raise the matter briefly.

In his reply, my right hon. Friend said that he had not been able to find any cases of senior staff being replaced by juniors. That is because the Bill has not been passed. He cannot find cases of seniors being fired and replaced by juniors merely because juniors are cheaper, because at the moment staff have tenure. The Bill introduces the provision allowing seniors to be replaced by juniors if it is cheaper. That is in the Bill. Of course it is cheaper. The Government imposed a pay scale which rewards age and experience and makes it absolutely certain that it is cheaper to replace seniors with juniors.

I can think of no more harmful measure in any Bill that I have seen since I have been a Member of Parliament or read about before I came to the House to which I object more strongly than the idea that people in universities should be fired not because they are not doing their jobs well, but simply because it is cheaper to employ someone younger. Since we have failed in Committee to shift that part of the Bill, I hope very much that those in the other place will put right this appalling provision in the Bill.

In Committee, my right hon. Friend, on an amendment that I tabled, gave me a firm undertaking—the same undertaking as he gave to the hon. Member for Blackburn and the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown)—that if we must have the clause which provides that seniors may be fired and replaced by juniors, he would guarantee a voluntary, generous redundancy scheme, which he would bring to the House on Report, that would survive his term of office. It may be difficult for him to do that on Report. In my view, it is not difficult; it simply means writing it into the Bill. However, if we cannot do that on Report, let us make sure that it is done in another place.

If we are to replace senior people before they have made their major contributions to academic life, let me point out that Marie Curie, Keynes, Milton Friedman and Alexander Fleming did not make their major contributions to academic life until they were in their forties and fifties, and Milton Friedman not until his sixties. Of course, under the provisions of the Bill he would have been fired and replaced by someone cheaper.

For that reason I commend to my right hon. Friend amendment No. 370 in my name and the names of my right hon. and hon. Friends. It does not ask the Secretary of State to define academic freedom, which I fully accept he does not want to do, on the face of the Bill. I accept the difficulties that would impose. Amendment No. 370 does not ask that academic freedom should be defined on the face of the Bill; it requires that the principle of academic freedom should be borne in mind when rewriting the statutes of universities.

I put it to my right hon. Friend, who will not like what I have said about seniors and juniors—that is a genuine difference of opinion—to fulfil his undertaking and to have academic freedom but not to define it on the face of the Bill. We have made a genuine attempt to meet the undertaking that he gave in a speech to the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals on 30 October, when he said:

"I believe that university statutes should be such as to give academic staff the assurance that they will be able responsibly to exercise academic freedom, and I shall seek to ensure that the Commissioners will approach their task with that in mind."

I hope that my right hon. Friend will accept that amendment No. 370 tries to achieve precisely that aim. For that reason, I commend it to right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House. My fear is that if that is not done academic freedom will be seen to be an issue —which it has not been during my lifetime—it will be seen to be questioned and it will be seen to be threatened.

I was in university at the time of the teaching cuts. I had tenure, but none of us checked whether we had tenure. It was not an issue. It turned out that only about half of the academics had tenure, but we did not know that. We lived in a society that we thought was civilised. We thought that it was appreciative of freedom of choice, of freedom to speak one's mind, of freedom to write what one wished and to think as one wished. It is regrettable that those who

[Mr. Hawkins]

went through the small print when the Bill was drafted were civil servants in the Department of Education and Science.

I should hate this Government to be blamed for destroying what should be an integral part of any civilised society and of the policies of any party that values freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of the written word. The defence of freedom under the law may be a difficult task for my right hon. Friend, but it is something that we should all surely wish to achieve.

Mr. Andrew Smith: I welcome the changes that the Secretary of State has made to limit his powers over the Universities Funding Council. Whether he calls them concessions or clarifications is of no importance. What is important is the substance of his concessions. The time has now come for the Secretary of State further to clarify academic freedom.

In Committee I was the fortunate beneficiary of what the Secretary of State put to me as the Oxford, East question, which was whether the polytechnic lecturers on one side of Magdalen bridge enjoy some benefits of academic freedom while not having tenure because dons on the other side of Magdalen bridge enjoy tenure. The Secretary of State put it forward as the Oxford, East question, by analogy with the West Lothian question which was unanswerable. But the Oxford, East question is answerable. We answered it. The answer is that the academic freedom of polytechnic lecturers has been safeguarded by tenure in universities through the creation of a climate of freedom. The hon. Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) referred to his own experience of that climate of freedom. Sadly, unfortunately and dangerously that climate of freedom is now under threat because of the impending staff cuts. The UGC letter referred to 5,000 staff who will have to go in the next three years. Academic freedom is also under threat from authoritarian developments because of the way in which the Government conduct their business. I cite as an example the conditions that the Department of Health and Social Security is placing on research contracts. It retains the right to decide whether research work should be published. Presumably that depends on whether it is politically convenient to publish it. Academic freedom is also under threat because of the increase in the amount of funds that may be required from outside sources.

I do not dispute plurality of funding. That is good. However, we can all think of examples where dependence on particular sources of private funds puts academic freedom at risk. Cases were reported this week in *The Guardian*. Dr. Denis MacEoin was removed from the university of Newcastle's department of religious studies, where there was the fear of indefensible pressure from outside funding bodies. Another case at the university of Newcastle was that of a professorial fellowship being restricted to candidates with "a clear Christian commitment." The hon. Member for High Peak referred to a hypothetical case in Standing Committee in which Eli Lilly sponsored research at a university that happened separately to employ an academic who was conducting research into the side effects of Opren. In such a case there must be conflicts of interest, and pressure could well be brought to bear on such an institution to limit the scope or cease the funding of that academic's work.

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals has provided further instances of academics undertaking research who could find that they are vulnerable. If somebody is conducting research into the relationship between leukaemia and nuclear generation or nuclear waste storage plants, that could be embarrassing to the Government. There is also the example of Dr. Cyril Smith at Salford university who is researching the effect of electro-magnetic fields, such as those produced by pylon cables, and their effect on people's health. That is a very live issue, and one can see the dangers. Another example is that of Dr. Harold Hillman who is working at Surrey university on cell structure and his findings about the distortion of cell structure by electro-microscopy. His work challenges fundamentally the work of many people whose professional reputation depends on the use of that particular technique. Such an individual might be seen to be a threat to the standing of the institution, whose funding would consequently be at risk.

8.45 pm

One could cite many other examples. Ministers may argue that there are few such cases and that only a few individuals are concerned, but the fewer people who are involved the more important it is. If only a few people challenge the orthodox and conventional wisdom of the age, they are under more pressure and they are at greater risk. Therefore, it is important that they should be protected effectively.

Ministers have deployed a range of arguments against the inclusion of a definition to protect academic freedom, but none of them stands up to examination. Ministers have argued that such a definition is unnecessary because of the employment protection legislation. However, dismissal for good cause under that legislation could include the expression of views that are known to be embarrassing to an employer. If the Secretary of State says that the courts can use the legislation in such a way as to protect academic freedom, they will have to rely on the form of words that he says it is impossible to include in the Bill.

Ministers have argued that it is impossible to define academic freedom, but I understand that the Secretary of State subscribes to the view expressed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals that it is

"the freedom within the law for academic staff to question and to test received wisdom and to put forward new and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing individuals in jeopardy of losing their jobs."

That is a perfectly good definition. The argument that it cannot stand up in law is utterly unconvincing, as the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) and my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) pointed out, precisely because the 1986 Act contains a definition of freedom of speech that is no less nebulous. Indeed, the Bill contains other concepts, such as fairness, to which the Secretary of State must have regard, that are no more closely defined.

The Government have argued—here we are closer to their real reason for being reluctant to provide protection for academic freedom in the Bill — that statutory protection for academic freedom would impede the managerial flexibility that they wish should exist in universities. That is the real reason for their reluctance. We cannot afford to cast aside such an important principle as academic freedom and lay it on the altar of managerial expediency.

The Secretary of State made in Committee what I regarded as extraordinary and dangerous statements. He referred to the hypothetical example given by the Under-Secretary of State of a member of a theological college or faculty who had lost his faith and no longer wanted to teach the basic tenets of Christianity, and asked:

"In such a case, if the faculty and vice-chancellor tried to dismiss him, should there be provision in the Bill to allow him to remain in the faculty because his academic freedom would otherwise be inhibited?"

The Secretary of State referred to a second example—that of the biologist who no longer believed in evolution. He asked:

"Should he be allowed to demand to stay in the faculty, teaching in the name of biology, with time allotted to him to teach, if he expressed views that were completely contrary to those of his colleagues?"

The Secretary of State said that that would be good ground not to reinstate him. I subsequently challenged him to withdraw, and pointed out:

"His hypothesis is very dangerous to basic academic freedom." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 25 February 1988; c. 1773.]

The Secretary of State said, "I do not agree." We demand a clear answer from the Secretary of State: will he or will he not accept that it is essential and integral to any meaningful concept of academic freedom that it would be wrong to dismiss someone because his views were inimical to his colleagues' views or to refuse to reinstate him for that reason?

Mr. Raison: I have been following the argument with interest. But surely it is difficult to make the distinction between someone expressing independent views — something that we want to preserve—and someone who goes round the bend and starts talking nonsense so that his competence as a lecturer is affected. How would the hon. Gentleman tackle the latter problem?

Mr. Smith: There are two answers to that. A few eccentrics and lunatics at our universities may well be a price worth paying for academic freedom. Indeed, we have paid it down the centuries. The second, slightly more serious, answer is to be found in the distinction made by the Under-Secretary of State between what he called "strict tenure"—the idea that in no circumstances could one remove someone from his position, which finds few defenders in the House—and the idea of tenure simply as security of employment for a person undertaking his basic teaching responsibilities. I again use the example of the teacher at the theological college who ceases to be a committed Christian. Surely he should be judged on his ability to teach religion and to undertake useful research rather than on his beliefs or statements. [HON. MEMBERS: "How would the hon. Gentleman deal with it?"] It is clear that a court would need to decide, given the statutory protection that the individual would have through the insertion of such a clause in the Bill, whether in the circumstance that prevailed he had been dismissed for his views or because of his incompetence as a teacher. At least the individual would have the protection and security of knowing that there was some statutory safeguard for his position.

What the universities and polytechnics and all those committed to genuine free academic inquiry will be interested in in the reply of the Secretary of State will be not so much the Oxford, East question but the Oxford, East answer. The Oxford, East answer is that statutory protection for academic freedom should be written into the Bill. Let the Secretary of State have the grace to concede that we—I include some Conservative Members — have won this argument and to accept that real protection for academic freedom must be written into the Bill.

Mr. Rowe: I am wholly committed to the proposition of academic freedom. If, as was suggested just now, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State believes that somebody who holds views inimical to the views of his colleagues thereby puts himself in a position in which he should be forced to resign, I regard it as monstrous. But I am sure that my right hon. Friend, for whose judgment I have great respect, cannot really have meant that.

Having said that, the picture that is being painted of the academic community is fanciful to say the least. It is fanciful in both directions. Is my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), for whom I have a high regard, seriously suggesting that universities in this country are composed of people of so little academic perspicacity and scruple that, confronted with an Alexander Fleming — someone of manifest academic superiority — they would manoeuvre to get rid of the person bringing lustre to their university and to replace him with someone about whom they knew nothing except that he was cheaper? If so, he is demeaning the quality and standards of the academic community to an extent that I find horrifying.

Mr. Hawkins: There have been numerous people whose ability was not recognised early in academic life and whose achievements came later. Many people have been regarded as highly controversial early in their academic life, just as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) was regarded as controversial in this place. His merits were recognised later. The same happens in academic life; it is no different.

Mr. Rowe: Clearly, one needs to try to protect the person who is controversial, but I do not feel that that is necessarily something that has to be written into statute. If the academic community itself is incapable of protecting colleagues whom it finds controversial, there is something more rotten in the state of academe than I believed.

The opposite argument is also true to some extent. Anyone who has worked in the academic community knows perfectly well that at every stage pressures are put on individuals which are very difficult to protect against in law and which are very often unscrupulous and disgraceful. When I was teaching in a university, a large number of university departments would not allow Eysenck to come and talk about his highly controversial views on psychological testing—in clear breach, it seems to me, of the whole principle of academic freedom. It also applies to the selection of new colleagues to take the place of someone who is retiring, in which the judgment often seems to be made on grounds very different from proper grounds of academic excellence. Such selections seem to be made on all sorts of other disgraceful grounds. However, I do not believe that a definition in law will necessarily save us.

Dr. Hampson: Surely it is not a matter of deciding one side of the equation. The concern that some of us have is with the other side of the coin. Our worry is that all the disgraceful pressures, as my hon. Friend describes them,

[Dr. Hampson]

could be a reason for dismissing someone, and they do not have to be stated if all that the university administration has to do is to say, "We want to remove an older person who is expensive and replace him with a junior person who is cheap." They do not have to give reasons of disgraceful pressure; they simply have to say that they want a cheaper person.

Mr. Rowe: I am electrified by the proposition that that is a ground for getting rid of any academic. That is disgraceful. However, one gets rid of that by removing it from the Bill and not by writing in a whole lot of other shibboleths which, if they are not carefully defined—it is not easy to define them — will have the effect about which I have spoken before. They would freeze a large number of departments, because it is perfectly fair that for every senior academic whose excellence was not recognised until he became senior, there are many other academics who, as they get older, become more stupid and dull. The inability of a university to remove such people from their posts freezes those departments in a state of mediocrity that I find distressing.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am not sure whether the hon. Gentleman has finished his speech or is simply giving way.

Mr. Rowe: I have finished.

9 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): It is with some trepidation that I rise, particularly since the majority of hon. Members who have spoken in the debate had the privilege of serving on the Committee of the Bill. I attempted to follow the Committee proceedings by reading the documents from it. However, the nuances that emerge in Committee are never recorded quite as effectively in the written word as one would hope.

I wish to speak to amendment No. 146 and to support the other amendments in the group. Amendment No. 146 is a simple and straightforward amendment and reflects the genuine concern felt in many parts of the House about the issue of academic freedom. I am grateful that the hon. Member for Exeter (Mr. Hannam) has supported the amendment without my request.

When anyone asks us to define what is meant by academic freedom, we immediately run into problems. I encountered such problems earlier today when I was asked directly by one of the radio stations in Scotland what I meant by academic freedom. After 10 minutes of informal chat with the reporter, we eventually agreed on a format that he thought might be comprehensible to the listeners. I do not wish to denigrate the people who may listen, but it is a difficult concept to define. That is part of the difficulty we are facing tonight.

In my attempts to define academic freedom, I have always said that I believe it to be the right of academics to speak and research objectively in whichever discipline they may be an expert. I believe that we have to find a form of words to write that into the legislation. There are many genuine fears within our universities that the Bill, as it stands, will deny that academic freedom, however vague we may think the concept is.

I do not believe that the people who talk to us as Members of Parliament are scaremongers. I cannot think of any group less likely to scaremonger than the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. Yet that committee has written to hon. Members to draw their attention to various amendments tabled at the end of last week on the issue of academic freedom. The letter said:

"By academic freedom—as we have repeatedly said—we do not mean job protection for life, we mean freedom within the law for academic staff to question and to test received wisdom and to put forward new and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing individuals in jeopardy of losing their jobs."

Surely that sums up a responsible attitude within our universities and we should take account of that.

The CVCP is concerned that this Bill goes against what was recommended by the Croham report. Indeed, just two nights ago we had a debate in the Scottish context on part of the problems that we see as restricting academic freedom or restricting the freedom of our universities. I do not want to rehearse those arguments, but part of the problem is the issue of the centralisation of funding. That is part of the denying of academic freedom because we may find ourselves with centralised diktats on research telling us which departments can survive, which can expand, which will have to go, which subject areas are popular and which are not. That goes against the whole concept of education as we understand it.

I should like to touch briefly on the issue of tenure. Part of that issue centres on the restructuring within our universities. Perhaps within Scotland we are much more conscious of what is happening in the restructuring of universities because of what has been happening at Aberdeen university, which could lose six or seven departments, and Dundee university, where departments are under threat.

It might be useful for hon. Members to hear details of a letter which was sent to the Secretary of State from the department of modern languages at Dundee, which is to be closed with effect from 1992. The letter relates the problems which were faced by lecturers in that department who were seeking relocation in preparation for the closure. I do not want to go into the whys and wherefores of the department's being closed. I would obviously argue against that, as I would argue against the closure of departments at Aberdeen university.

Anyway, being realistic people, the lecturers in the department decided to go ahead and look for relocation. They turned to the university of Exeter, and Dr. Kearns, the senior lecturer in French and the Leverhulme research scholar, wrote as follows:

"Relocation negotiations between the two universities were well advanced when it emerged that as a result of the Education Reform Bill we would be subject to considerably less favourable terms and conditions of appointment than we have at the moment. It seems to us grossly unjust that the very members of staff who are prepared to contribute to the rationalisation process which you"—

meaning the Secretary of State—

"have initiated should be penalised in this way."

That is a view that I would endorse. The letter goes on to say that this whole process will lead to immobilism within our academic system, and surely we do not wish to see immobilism within our universities.

We therefore have a responsibility to ensure that the staff of our universities are safeguarded, that the standards which they have striven to attain are not in any way diminished, and that they are given the opportunity to maintain their commitment to the university system. It seems to me very strange that staff can be faced with the

possibility of having an increment to their salary, but may at the same time lose security of tenure. That is not something that most people in working life would consider an incentive.

There are many issues surrounding these amendments for which the Secretary of State has a direct responsibility to answer to the House. We cannot treat lightly the issue of academic freedom. It is surely something that we can write into the Bill in a simple and straightforward way to relieve the genuine concern of our academics. I wish to see these people continuing to contribute to the development of society, the economy and all that we hold dear. I think that the Secretary of State, being an honourable gentleman, must respect that. I trust that at the end of this debate we shall hear a commitment from him to write in something that will guarantee that principle of academic freedom which we hold so dear.

Sir Ian Gilmour (Chesham and Amersham): I do not want to enter into the Oxford, East question, as I think it is called, or into the question of tenure, because it seems to me that that has gone. Whether that is a good idea, I do not know. I only hope that my right hon. Friend is right about it, and I express no view as to whether my hope is well founded.

What seems to me to be very much the point is that the Government are the aggressor in these matters. It is the Government who are demanding that all universities should write into their statutes provisions making it easier for them to dismiss academic staff. So it is the Government who are changing the landscape, cutting down the trees, levelling the hedges and getting rid of historic buildings. The Government appear to be set on what many may think is a slight act of vandalism. If it is not to be an act of vandalism, they must be very sure that they are replacing what they are knocking down with something that is at least as good. That is their clear duty.

Why the Government have this obsession with dismissing academics I do not understand. Perhaps if I had read all the proceedings of the Committee I might be more au fait. I would have hoped that our universities would be expanded, not cut down. But we are basing our discussion on the proposition that academics have to be dismissed and on how it is to be done. The Government are responsible for the position, and it is the Government's duty, and therefore my right hon. Friend's duty, to see that the present system is replaced by something as good, if not better.

As I said, I did not have the chance or the pleasure of listening to all the speeches made in Committee on this matter, but I have read them in *Hansard*. My right hon. and hon. Friends are men of great intellectual gifts, but the interesting thing is that on this subject of academic freedom they were able to produce arguments which, with the greatest respect, one can describe only as wafer-thin. That suggests that there is something seriously wrong with the point of view that they are being made to argue. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), said in Committee:

"The Sloman report said that the freedom to teach is qualified in a variety of ways."

I do not think that we need the Sloman report to tell us that. Even Back-Bench Members realise that, let alone academics. My hon. Friend went on to say:

"Academic freedom is not an entitlement to resources . . . academic freedom is subject to available resources."—[*Official Report*, Standing Committee J, 23 February 1988; c 1707-08.]

We could probably all have thought of that for ourselves, without the advantage of the Sloman committee.

The argument is made that academic freedom is such a recondite concept that no judge would be able to understand it, but, by their very nature, all freedoms are qualified. That does not apply only to academic freedom —there is not a single freedom under the sun that is not qualified.

I cannot believe that that is a serious objection to writing it into the Bill, especially as my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins), who tabled amendment No. 370, to which I had the honour to put my name, is going out of his way to meet the concerns of my right hon. and hon. Friends. Therefore, unless there is some new argument that none of us knows about, the case for doing as my hon. Friend suggests is absolutely overwhelming.

Whatever else one may say about universities, they contain a lot of very clever people. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) went into some rather disagreeable fantasies about people in universities getting stupider and stupider and said that academic freedom was a shibboleth. I do not think that that is right, nor do I believe that there are stupid men in universities. I certainly have not come across any. Indeed, I should be very surprised if other people have come across any. However, a number of very clever men are distinctly worried about what the Government are proposing. I gather that the Government are proposing several concessions, but, so far as I can see, they have not moved a muscle on this key point.

I hope that my right hon. Friend, with all his acumen and intellectual resources, will see his way to making some clear concessions and a clear pledge on that point this evening, otherwise the Government will be lumbered with the public having the clear idea that the Government are not interested in academic freedom.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): During the Bill's Committee stage I made two speeches about academic freedom which between them lasted an hour. I shall not go over anything that I said then, especially because — it is nice to be able to live vicariously through the brilliance of others — my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) spelt out the general principles so well, as did the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), who is sitting behind me. I take this opportunity to congratulate him on that.

The question of academic freedom is slightly more complicated than the Minister sometimes says. It can be about the relationship between the Government and the universities. It can be about the relationship between the individual and the universities. But the Minister has never made any admission of the fact that it can be about the relationship between the Government and the university and the individual. Sometimes that can be mediated in a strange fashion, through the operation of something like a research council.

In this debate I want to talk about academic freedom as regards the relationship between the Government and the Universities Funding Council. With great respect, that issue was bypassed in the congratulatory unction of our previous debate. I want to do this by one example. Let us suppose that the Bill is already law. Next Thursday is 31

[Mr. Brian Sedgemore]

March and on that day the Secretary of State for Education and Science makes a major announcement. He will make it next Thursday because Parliament is about to rise for the Easter recess and Easter is a good time for burying contentious issues. Next Thursday the Secretary of State will announce that he intends to introduce legislation to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities. Some people may think that that is a quixotic and questionable thing to do to those ancient and estimable regimes. What would the Universities Funding Council do about that? Could we expect it to say anything on the matter under the Bill?

9.15 pm

We know that the council cannot dissent publicly about the announcement by the Secretary of State, because the Under-Secretary of State assured us in Committee that there could be no public dissent by either of the funding councils. That would be a resigning matter. I find it strange that the councils cannot speak out publicly and dissent from what the Government say. Can they dissent privately? Even after all the amendments that have been tabled, they still cannot dissent privately, because they do not have the statutory powers to do so.

To dissent privately, the activities about which the councils were dissenting would have to relate to activities eligible for funding. I speak as a lawyer, and activities relating to funding would not allow the Universities Funding Council to protest about legislation to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities.

I have followed closely the way in which Ministers' minds work. On 6 April the secretary of the Universities Funding Council would write to the Secretary of State as follows:

"Dear Secretary of State,

Our attention has been drawn to your proposal to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities. We would very much hope that you would feel able to give us your permission to comment on the proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary

Universities Funding Council".

Three weeks later, on 27 April, the secretary of the Universities Funding Council would receive a reply from Sir David Hancock, permanent secretary at the Department of Education. That letter would say:

"Dear Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 6 April, concerning the decision of the Secretary of State to introduce legislation to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities and the desire of the Universities Funding Council to make representations on this matter.

I am instructed by the Secretary of State to inform you that, exceptionally, he has no objection to your so doing, provided that your representations take the form of those set out in appendix A to this letter, which itself is a final draft of the letter which you will send to the Secretary of State making the appropriate representations. The Secretary of State will then reply to you in the form of a letter, a final revised copy of which is set out in appendix B to this letter.

At that stage, the matter will be deemed to have been satisfactorily disposed of. I am most grateful for your co-operation.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your humble and obedient servant, Sir David Hancock,

Permanent Secretary."

What are the two appendices to Sir David's letter? Appendix A is a final draft of a letter from the secretary of the Universities Funding Council to the Secretary of State, which has been drafted by the Secretary of State. It is dated 3 May and says:

"Dear Secretary of State,

In response to the letter that we received on 27 April from your permanent secretary, concerning your proposal to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities, we would like to make the following points.

1. We are most grateful to you for allowing us, exceptionally, to make these representations.
2. We utterly refute suggestions made in the press and on television that the Government wish to abolish Oxford university because the Hebdomadal council refused to grant the Prime Minister an honorary doctorate. We felt at the time that the decision was a bad one and have now persuaded the Hebdomadal council of the correctness of our view. By way of reparation, the Hebdomadal council has agreed that its very last act before abolition will be to confer, not one, but two honorary doctorates on the Prime Minister.
3. We are distressed that Kim Philby, one of your top mandarins, who was educated at Cambridge university, should be giving an interveiw to Phillip Knightley, which the *Sunday Times* is publishing. This can only further damage national security. We agree with the Prime Minister that one is either for national security or against national security. Cambridge university is against national security.
4. It is true that a recent meeting of the senate of London university discussed a forthcoming visit by the Secretary of State. We utterly deplore the cry of the emeritus professor of mathematics at that meeting, 'Not that authoritarian man again. Who wants to listen to that discredited old faggot.'
5. Oxford, Cambridge and London universities have asked us to make representations on their behalf and say that they are most grateful to you for your patience in listening to and weighing up all the arguments in this complex matter.

Yours sincerely,

Secretary, Universities Funding Council."

Finally, there is Appendix B., the final revise, a letter from the Secretary of State himself to the secretary of the Universities Funding Council dated 24 May. It says:

"Dear Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 3 May clearing up a number of misapprehensions about my proposal to introduce legisiation to abolish Oxford, Cambridge and London universities. Your understanding of the complex issues involved is indeed appreciated and speaks volumes for the wisdom and maturity of your members. That being so, I am sure that you will accept that there are no grounds on which I can reconsider the matter."

The basic problem—this is the whole purpose of the correspondence—is that we are beginning to doubt the Secretary of State's bona fides on academic freedom. He is like a man who has stepped into a bog. As he is sinking down into that bog, ultimately to die, he shouts out, "Do not worry, it will be all right on the night. Do not worry, it will be all right when we publish the Bill. Do not worry, it will be all right on Second Reading. Do not worry, it will be all right on Report. Do not worry, it will be all right in the House of Lords." Then suddenly he is dead.

It really is time that the Secretary of State did a simple thing, which is to enshrine in law one of the most important freedoms in our society, that of academic freedom, because freedom in society at large depends on it.

Dr. Hampson: I have no doubt that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State believes firmly in, and is completely committed to, the principle of academic freedom. All that I and many of my hon. Friends want him

to do is to enshrine those words in statute so that the whole world can see that he and the Government stand by that principle. I deny that my right hon. Friend treats the erosion of academic freedom lightly. I do not believe that he does. Nor do I believe that his stand is one of expediency.

Let me make two points. The first concerns the narrow and practical aspects of what he is doing. There are gross inconsistencies between what is proposed in the Bill and the Government's perfectly proper policy of trying to reorganise, restructure and create mergers of university departments. If my right hon. Friend believes in doing that, he should not be doing some of the things that he is doing which deny the success and flexibility of his proposals.

Let me draw my right hon. Friend's attention to two examples. In a letter sent to my right hon. Friend by the Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments, of which he will be aware, it is acknowledged that that whole area must be reorganised and that the heads wish to do that with the maximum flexibility. Of course, as we all know, the earth sciences review is part of that and a survey has shown that 30 per cent. of teaching staff who had previously indicated their willingness to transfer as a result of the review of this part of the academic world would reconsider that decision if they were to lose tenure as a result of moving.

What is the sense of inhibiting an essential reorganisation by insisting on a hard and fast date, as the Bill does, so that we make it possible for people to say that they will not move when it is our intention to encourage them to do so?

The heads of all the departments urge the Secretary of State to exclude from the relevant provision those staff who agree to transfer under restructuring and rationalisation arrangements as a result of the policy reviews. They stress that that is partly because it is more efficient but also on the ground of natural justice. I really would have thought, as I think my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Mr. Hawkins) stressed, that a Conservative Government would stand firmly by the principle of natural justice. We constantly preach that we are the party of the individual.

Let me cite an example of a university lecturer who received a letter from a member of the university's administration confirming that he has gone through his period of probation. It says:

> "In the past, this confirmation would have led to the offer of a tenured appointment, however it is clear from the Education Reform Bill that any contracts offered and accepted after the 20th November 1987, within universities, will not carry tenure. This means that the contract which you received upon your appointment here will continue."

But he has not got tenure.

The interesting point in that case is that the lecturer was on probation for four years. There is an issue of natural justice for many individuals who have been caught by the Bill and put into a position where they would not otherwise have been. It is unfair and, I believe, not in the national interest, and it is simply not efficient. So a combination of fairness and a desire to become efficient and more flexible lies at the heart of the case, which I believe many Conservative Members wish to pursue.

The rest of the argument is really about public perception because, increasingly, it is evident that the public misunderstand the Government's intentions in the Bill. But, all too often, Ministers say that it is not necessary to change the face of the Bill. I have a letter in my pocket dealing with the national curriculum. We were trying to ensure in Committee that Secretaries of State would not have control over textbooks and teaching methods. The Minister of State says in a categorical assurance that that is not possible within the framework of the Bill. But that assurance does not appear in the Bill. Therefore, in classrooms throughout the country, there is still gross misunderstanding about the degree of flexibility or rigidity that the Government seek in the national curriculum.

Here again, the issue of academic freedom is not, in my view, about the motive of the Government, which I do not question at all; it is about perception. I must raise with the Government the central issue of how far down the line one must go towards good management practice. I understand that that is what concerns the Government. It is perfectly reasonable to encourage vice-chancellors and administrators to have more nerve to take a tougher line and to be prepared to take hard decisions about how many people they need to employ, because that is a very costly item.

We will face these dilemmas, if the technical notes on clauses mean what they say. The notes on clauses suggest that this would enable an institution on grounds of economy to employ a junior person in a job hitherto done by a senior person. I can see that that starts off being seen as good management practice, but it is being interpreted as enabling heads of departments or university administrations to get rid of difficult people and to replace them by juniors on the grounds of economy, when the real grounds are that the man is just bloody-minded, difficult to deal with or holds difficult views — or has become a lunatic, as my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) has just said.

I will end on the solution to the dilemma. The clause provides a loophole which a Conservative Government who believe in individual freedom ought not to subscribe to. Further, I do not believe that we should get into a position of constant judical review so that each individual who is made redundant goes through all the courts to challenge it on the basis that an institution does not like his views and that it is not a matter of economy at all. I do not believe that many lecturers will have sufficient financial resources to take a case through the courts.

9.30 pm

Let us deal instead with the question of commissioners. We require certain things of the commissioners already. They must have regard to fairness and justice, although the instances I have cited as the consequence of reorganisation do not seem to fall within the realms of fairness because of the way in which the Bill is drafted. Those people are not being treated fairly, or in terms of natural justice. We require that they should be. A set of broad principles as guidelines for the commissioners must include the maintenance of academic freedom and the independence of research. If the commissioners scrutinise university statutes with that in mind, I cannot believe that the end result will be challenged through the courts. In any case, it would be a once-and-for-all challenge — a test case. And who would bring it? At that point, no individual would feel threatened, so we are talking about the union — the Association of University Teachers. I do not believe that the AUT will want to challenge the commissioners on the basis of statutes that embrace the principles of academic freedom. They would not want to

[Dr. Hampson]

go though the costs of that process. If the commissioners do their job properly, their scrutiny of the statutes must be part of a consultative and co-operative process with university authorities and staff. So the end product should contain a broad consensus.

We are asking my right hon. Friend to acknowledge that there is deep concern in the university and academic world about this matter. The problem is one of public perception; we do not want the public to see the Government denying what is at the heart of a free society and of the modernisation of this country and its economy that the Government want. Without freedom of research we cannot stay at the forefront of knowledge and push back the frontiers that are being extended throughout the rest of the developed world.

For all these reasons, the Secretary of State must not only accept these principles but find a way of requiring the commissioners to pay heed to them when they scrutinise and draw up the universities' statutes.

Mr. Dalyell: Like my hon. Friends, I have listened carefully for some years to the hon. Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) speaking about this subject. In Committee he was sometimes courageous and withheld his vote. I have also listened to him for the past three days —from time to time—speaking about this Bill. If he speaks in that tone, is he not obliged to vote in a way that shows that he means what he says? I hope that he will put his vote where his mouth is.

Dr. Hampson: That was an unwarranted and uncalled for remark. If the hon. Gentleman had waited, he would have seen that I shall vote for this amendment. I did not support the Government on the last amendment, so I do not know what he is talking about.

Mr. Dalyell: Good. I have got it now.

I also listened to the speech made by the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) which, when I first came to the House, would have been regarded as the norm. The reactions to it today, however, were revealing. I say to the Secretary of State that Edward Boyle and David Eccles would have accepted everything that the right hon. Gentleman said. The Secretary of State's stance is not in keeping with many of his own party traditions, which some of us find more satisfactory than these new doctrines.

What will be the Bill's effect on the brain drain? I hope that there will be some answer to my question—I gave the right hon. Gentleman's officials the information—about Christopher Hood, whom some of us knew when he was in Glasgow. That question was repeated by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). The AUT document, which has been given to all of us, states:

"They will use this power to amend university statutes to ensure:—that academic and related staff can be dismissed on the grounds of redundancy as well as for 'good cause' (clause 131(1)(a)); — that 'good cause' dismissal itself is made easier (clause 131(1)(b))."

The document continues:

"The clause appears in the Bill despite the insistent pleas of the UGC not to frustrate delicate restructuring processes, despite the obvious injustice of retrospective legislation, and despite the danger of worsening the 'brain drain'."

It is on that that I ask the House to listen to one point. Last week 40 new fellows of the Royal Society were elected; 15 of them work abroad, at Duke university, North Carolina, at Canberra, at Rockefeller university, New York, at Austin, Texas, at Ohio State, at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia, at Sydney, at the University of California, Santa Barbara, at the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, India, at Basel, at Cal Tech, at Madras, at Stamford school of medicine, at Adelaide and at Victoria, Canada. Ken Murray, a distinguished fellow of the Royal Society and head of the school of biochemistry at Edinburgh, is only one among a number who have pleaded with us to realise that there is a brain drain of many of the best in this country and many of the younger members of the Royal Society.

It is a question not of being elitist but of making a calculation as to what the new developments on tenure are likely to do to those whose decision is balanced anyway for economic reasons, outlined by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn, whether to work in Britain or not. It may be that this tips the balance. I beg the Secretary of State to take the brain drain into account.

Dr. Ian Twinn (Edmonton): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his clarification of his "hands off" approach towards universities. He assures us that he wants universities and departments to manage themselves without direct interference from the Government. We appreciate what he has been able to clarify. Many hon. Members on both sides of the House hope that we may have further clarification on the role of individual members of staff.

Guarantees of individual academic freedom are difficult to define. I suppose that for most of us who have had an academic life academic freedom is rather like a belief in motherhood. Most of us believe in it, but when it comes to putting it into legislation it is difficult to define and it becomes complicated. It could interfere with the good management of the university. I accept the arguments that we heard in Committee that it might indeed complicate the life of university staff if too rigid a definition of academic freedom were to be implemented.

My experience as an academic teaching in a polytechnic may be relevant. We had no tenure but certainly we believed in the principle of academic freedom. In my position as director of research, I tried to put pressure on colleagues to carry out research which they wanted to do in the good interests of the department. Increasingly staff are on short-time contracts. That may be a good thing. Certainly it helps younger people to get jobs. Promotions are dependent upon the good will of heads of departments or deans of faculties.

Research time in polytechnics, perhaps more than in universities, is scarce, as is research money. Therefore, in the perception of staff their freedom is curtailed because of the pressure which is put upon them. The perception of members of staff is what we are talking about. As the discussion about academic freedom continues, perhaps not in this Chamber but in another place, I hope that my right hon. Friend will reconsider closely the concerns of academic staff, which may not be as real as the staff think. However, members of academic staff in universities and polytechnics feel strongly about the issue. If in another place the Secretary of State could arrange for more clarification, rather like the clarification on the funding

councils, it would be widely appreciated and in the long-term interests of academic freedom and the right of members of staff of universities to teach and to undertake research as they think fit.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: This has been an interesting debate because it has dealt with fundamental issues. The two debates in Committee on these issues were interesting because there was common agreement there, as there has been across the Floor of the House tonight, that academic freedom—if one could define it—is a very important and precious right and an essential part of our universities.

I want to begin by explaining why we are taking this action on academic tenure. The case must be made. By tabling the amendment, the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) made the clear point that he did not want to keep tenure. He said that he would welcome its being phased out. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) revealed what I believe is the official Labour party line when he said that he preferred to retain tenure. Indeed, I believe that the Labour party is on record as stating that it wants to extend tenure to the institutions that do not have it. I do not think that I have misinterpreted the Labour party view on that.

We believe that tenure produces inflexibility in the administration and organisation of universities, and that is one of the reasons why the Government believe that tenure should end. Our evidence for that is as follows. In the clinical departments in universities with tenure, 76 per cent. of new posts are on short-term contracts. The figures for non-clinical departments are similar. They are having to move away from the restrictions of tenure by appointing at least three quarters of their academics on short-term contracts. Only 55 per cent. of new appointments are short-term in universities without tenure. The non-clinical figures are 57 and 43 per cent. respectively. We believe that it is right to give the roughly 50 per cent. of universities which have tenure the flexibility possessed by other universities.

Mr. Straw: The Secretary of State has asserted two facts, but he has not made the causal link between them. The more likely explanation is that all the universities are under severe financial pressure. The universities with tenure have had to accommodate that pressure in this way, and those without tenure have accommodated it differently. He has not supported his argument at all.

Mr. Baker: I am afraid that I have made my case. The practice has not developed recently; it has been going on for some time. With regard to the shortage of money, I must state that I have provided some £155 million in the university settlement for next year for the restructuring of universities.

Some hon. Members have said that there will be 5,000 redundancies in the universities. The report in which that figure was mentioned was very important in my discussions with the Treasury. I was able to show that unless more money was provided there could be redundancies on that scale. As a result of the £155 million that I have secured for universities, redundancies will be on a much smaller scale and many new appointments will be made. The restructuring funds specifically include new blood appointments.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Will the Secretary of State give way?

Mr. Baker: I shall give way to the hon. Lady shortly, as I want to quote her in a moment.

We need flexibility, and many universities would agree with that. In the Bill we are specifically providing that the statutes of universities should do three things, and it is important that the House understands the details because this is very complicated. The statutes should, first, enable staff to be dismissed on grounds of redundancy; secondly, to make "good cause" dismissals for gross misconduct or incapability; and, thirdly, to establish an appeals procedure. We will ask commissioners to work that out. We are using that almost 19th century way of dealing with those matters at the request of the universities. */Interruption./* The universities asked us to use the method of parliamentary commissioners. I believe that Disraeli used them in the 1870s. That is the best way to proceed, because a great deal of work is involved in changing the individual statutes and charters of universities.

9.45 pm

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: The Secretary of State referred to the sum of £155 million. Can he give an assurance that a proportion of that will be used for Aberdeen university, which is seeking an element of transitional funding?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Lady will know—and the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) also knows perfectly well—that one of our earlier debates covered an issue that has run through all the debates on the universities, namely, my powers over the funding councils. I have provided them with funds which they can make available. I am sure that they know about the problems of Aberdeen and are addressing them. The hon. Lady asks me to intervene in the affairs of a particular institution. I took powers earlier tonight to ensure that the holder of my office should not be in a position to do that. I can only tell the hon. Lady that the problems of Aberdeen are well known.

Let me deal next with the concept of academic freedom. When this matter was first bruited some six or nine months ago, the whole debate was about the freedom of academics to engage openly in criticism of the Government of the day. It was pitched very much in terms of freedom of expression: teachers and university professors should be perfectly free to criticise the Government, monetarism, Keynesianism or anything else. It was presented very much as a political debate. The present Government have never made any attempt to suppress the freedom of academics in that regard. That freedom is innate in our country. I have not noticed that the last few years have been characterised by an absence of criticism of the Government by academics.

That brings me to the Oxford, East question, which has nothing to do with Magdalen bridge. Roughly half our universities have tenure; the other half, and the polytechnics, have not. The Oxford, East question is this: if academic tenure is the main protection of academic freedom, how has academic freedom survived in the institutions that have not had it?

Mr. Andrew Smith *rose*—

Mr. Baker: I shall give way to Oxford, East in a moment.

I pose the question in the same way as the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), when he was the hon. Member for West Lothian, posed the West Lothian

[Mr. Baker]

question. That question, at heart, could never be answered. I do not believe that the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) has answered this one, but he can have another go.

Mr. Andrew Smith: The answer to the Oxford, East question, as we have said on many occasions, is that tenure has created a climate in which even those who did not technically enjoy it took that freedom for granted. It is precisely that taking for granted of academic freedom that is challenged by the withdrawal of tenure. If tenure is withdrawn, it should be replaced by statutory protection for academic freedom.

The answer to the Oxford, East question is this: if tenure is to be removed, the Secretary of State must insert academic freedom into the Bill.

Mr. Baker: I am afraid that the answer is as thin as ever. It is preposterous to say that if three quarters of our institutions do not have academic tenure, the quarter that do somehow influence the atmosphere in the other three quarters.

Mr. Straw *rose——*

Mr. Baker: No. I have given way to the hon. Gentleman once.

Mr. Straw *rose——*

Mr. Baker: No. I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman must save it for another night. I have given way to him once already.

The point that I am making is that, whereas the first questions on academic freedom were essentially of a general, political nature, the issue has been narrowed down to what is really at stake: the freedom of academics within the universities to follow their courses of research or other studies without fear of being victimised by other academics. Academic freedom is protecting academics from other academics.

That point is acknowledged by Sir Mark Richmond, chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. In a celebrated letter he said that what we wanted was a process and method to protect academics from "malign administrators" — administrators within the university — or from some academics ganging up against a particular academic. That is not unknown in the universities. Members of a faculty may dislike the awkward person who does not want to conform and may want to gang up on him.

We are dealing with a system of protecting academics from other academics. How does the Bill hope to do that? My right hon. Friend the Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) said that this was the Government's responsibility. He said that, because we are changing the rules of the game, we are creating a desolate landscape. Some Conservative Members think that we are creating a land of opportunity. [HON. MEMBERS: "Some?"] The great majority.

I should like to deal with the rather gloomy vision of the desolate landscape. The Bill provides a set of proceedings to deal specifically with the problem of academic freedom. How can we protect the freedom of academics such as those described by the hon. Member for Oxford, East? The example of a theological college was given in Committee from time to time. A member of a faculty may have lost his faith but may wish to remain a member and preach to the students that he has lost his faith. A person in a biology department may conclude that Darwinism and the evolution of man are not the right explanations and that creationism was right. The question is whether he should be allowed to remain in that department and lecture. *[Interruption.]* Some may say that he should. These people cannot just be dismissed as eccentrics. I am not against the retention of eccentricity in university life, but it puts tremendous pressure on universities.

In the past, people have said that academic tenure has protected such faculty members. That has been a rather feeble protection and has not operated in half our universities anyway. We seek to protect by establishing certain procedures, which I believe will be effective. There must be proper dismissal procedures. A proper committee must be set up to deal with this matter, and this committee falls short of the whole university court. At the moment, the usual arrangement is that the whole university court has to agree to the dismissal. That is too clumsy.

There should be an appeals procedure for the don, the university teacher or the professor who feels that he is victimised and that he will be dismissed because his views are unpopular. I cannot generalise as to every university, but I do not believe that this procedure is a common feature. We are ending the visitor's exclusive jurisdiction, so that the person who has gone through the procedure of dismissal and appeal can appeal, not only to an industrial tribunal against unfair dismissal, but to the courts against wrongful dismissal.

All those safeguards, which do not now exist, are substantial bulwarks to defend the academic freedom of one academic against another. The hon. Members for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) and for Oxford, East said that academic freedom was difficult to define, and therein lies the rub.

Mr. Straw: My hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) did not say that.

Mr. Baker: I am sorry. If he did not, he should have done, because it is incontrovertibly true. It is difficult to define. We have considered ways of defining it. Our lawyers have advised us that if we include a phrase similar to the phrase in amendment No. 450 in an attempt to describe academic freedom, for the first time academic freedom will become a justiciable matter to be decided by the courts. A court may give a definition of academic freedom that widens the definition of good cause for academics and worsens their position.

That is not a pettifogging lawyer's point. I shall explain what we are proposing. Last week, together with my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, I had a meeting with six vice-chancellors to discuss whether we could find a way through. It came out of that meeting that it is very difficult to find a definition of academic freedom. The arguments on both sides were rehearsed. The problem comes if one includes a definition of academic freedom and a university, for example, decides that it wants to rationalise a department and it is agreed universally between the vice-chancellor, the management of the university, and the academic staff in the faculty that one or two people have to go. If the Bill contained a broad definition of academic freedom, those people could claim that their academic freedom was threatened because their

jobs were threatened. That produces tenure by another route. That is the difficulty. The hon. Member for Blackburn agreed to that in Committee, and he agrees to it now, as he would prefer tenure to be restored by another route.

I shall tell the House that what flowed from that meeting was a letter that I have sent to Sir Mark Richmond, and I shall quote two paragraphs from it:

"The conclusion which I took away from our discussion was that we have not yet found a satisfactory answer to the problem. I thought the Lord Chancellor drew out with particular clarity the difficulties we have seen with declaratory provisions of the kind you had suggested on behalf of the CVCP."

I am reading out the letter before the hon. Member for Blackburn leaks it to the press.

Mr. Straw: I have done that already.

Mr. Baker: It continues:

"It is because of those difficulties that I came to the conclusion that it would be wrong to try to make any amendments to the Bill at the Commons Report stage; but the Lord Chancellor and I fully acknowledge the need to continue our discussions and to explore possible alternative ways of meeting the reasonable concerns of academic staff. I should like to assure you that I am genuinely open-minded about how we shall meet those concerns. As I explained at our discussion, I believe that the addition to the Bill of a duty on the Commissioners to establish proper procedures to deal with cases of grievance and discipline as well as with dismissal should, in practice, give academics an adequate reassurance against unreasonable treatment by institutions."

In short, that is the second half of the amendment, the establishment of a grievance procedure so that a don or a university teacher, long before dismissal, if he or she is being discriminated against, should go through a proper grievance procedure. We are prepared to accept that and to bring forward an amendment in the other place to ensure that.

Should anything further be required, one possibility we noted was that of making it clear that fairness—one of the words used in the clause — includes an essential academic freedom, but this is by no means the only possibility. The Lord Chancellor and I hope that the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals will be prepared to consider a variety of alternative approaches towards our agreed objectives.

I remind the House that the agreed objective is that academics should have a proper measure of reassurance that they will not be discriminated against by their institutions on account of their views. That is the object. I have tried to explain to the House tonight why we consider that the procedures we have established secure those aims. The difficulty is in providing a genuine definition. Clearly, we are prepared to consider that again. I have asked the vice-chancellors to come forward with further proposals and we shall have to see how the debate develops in the other place.

Mr. Ashdown: Those who have concern for these matters have listened to the Secretary of State with a mixture of despair and dismay, because the arguments that he has put forward are as thin as those that he used previously. There are two important factors. First, with one single exception, every speech, from both sides of the House, was in favour of the amendment. Secondly, the Minister's arguments are no more than a repeat of those that he put forward previously. His arguments do not hold water. We may take comfort only from two facts. First, the right hon. Gentleman says that he retains an open mind on the matter, if we can believe him. Secondly, he may be maintaining a position that he will give way in the other place.

The right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Sir I. Gilmour) described the Secretary of State's arguments as "wafer-thin." I should have described them as threadbare. For that reason, this matter should now be put to the vote. I hope that all those who hold academic freedom dear will vote for the amendment.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 191, Noes 296.

Division No. 232] **[10 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Faulds, Andrew
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Fearn, Ronald
Allen, Graham	Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Alton, David	Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Fisher, Mark
Armstrong, Hilary	Flannery, Martin
Ashdown, Paddy	Flynn, Paul
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Ashton, Joe	Foster, Derek
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Foulkes, George
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Fraser, John
Barron, Kevin	Fyfe, Maria
Battle, John	Galbraith, Sam
Beith, A. J.	Galloway, George
Bell, Stuart	Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Godman, Dr Norman A.
Bermingham, Gerald	Golding, Mrs Llin
Bidwell, Sydney	Gordon, Mildred
Blair, Tony	Gould, Bryan
Boyes, Roland	Graham, Thomas
Bradley, Keith	Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Bray, Dr Jeremy	Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*	Grocott, Bruce
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	Hardy, Peter
Buchan, Norman	Harman, Ms Harriet
Buckley, George J.	Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Caborn, Richard	Heffer, Eric S.
Callaghan, Jim	Henderson, Doug
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Hinchliffe, David
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*	Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.	Holland, Stuart
Canavan, Dennis	Hood, Jimmy
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*	Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Clay, Bob	Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Clelland, David	Hoyle, Doug
Clwyd, Mrs Ann	Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Cohen, Harry	Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Coleman, Donald	Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*	Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*	Illsley, Eric
Corbett, Robin	Ingram, Adam
Corbyn, Jeremy	Janner, Greville
Cousins, Jim	John, Brynmor
Crowther, Stan	Johnston, Sir Russell
Cryer, Bob	Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Cunliffe, Lawrence	Lamond, James
Cunningham, Dr John	Leadbitter, Ted
Dalyell, Tam	Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Darling, Alistair	Lewis, Terry
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*	Livsey, Richard
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*	Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Dewar, Donald	McAllion, John
Dixon, Don	McCartney, Ian
Dobson, Frank	McFall, John
Doran, Frank	McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
Dunnachie, Jimmy	McKelvey, William
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth	McLeish, Henry
Eastham, Ken	McNamara, Kevin
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*	McTaggart, Bob
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*	McWilliam, John
Fatchett, Derek	Madden, Max

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Tony Banks

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Evennett, David
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rhodes James, Robert
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*

Soames, Hon Nicholas	Trotter, Neville
Speed, Keith	Twinn, Dr Ian
Speller, Tony	Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Squire, Robin	Waddington, Rt Hon David
Stanbrook, Ivor	Waldegrave, Hon William
Steen, Anthony	Walden, George
Stern, Michael	Walker, Rt Hon P. *(W'cester)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*	Waller, Gary
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*	Walters, Dennis
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*	Ward, John
Stokes, John	Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John	Warren, Kenneth
Sumberg, David	Watts, John
Tapsell, Sir Peter	Wells, Bowen
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*	Wheeler, John
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*	Whitney, Ray
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*	Widdecombe, Ann
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman	Wilkinson, John
Temple-Morris, Peter	Wilshire, David
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*	Wolfson, Mark
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*	Wood, Timothy
Thorne, Neil	Woodcock, Mike
Thornton, Malcolm	Yeo, Tim
Thurnham, Peter	Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*	
Tracey, Richard	Tellers for the Noes:
Tredinnick, David	Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Trippier, David	Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

It being Ten o'clock, MR. SPEAKER, *pursuant to the Orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution yesterday, put forthwith the Questions on amendments moved by a member of the Government up to the end of clause 175.*

Clause 174

POWERS OF SECRETARY OF STATE IN RELATION TO CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Amendments made: No 235, in page 154, line 15, after 'both)', insert;

and—

(b) the governing body of a designated assisted institution;'.

No. 236, in line 24, after 'both)', insert—

'(cc) the governing body of a designated assisted institution;'.

No. 237, in line 38, after 'and', insert—

'(ii) a designated assisted institution:

and in relation to'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered on Monday 28 March.

Electricity Industry (Research and Development)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Alan Howarth.]*

10.14 pm

Mr. Michael Colvin (Romsey and Waterside): I wish to raise the subject of the future arrangements for research and development in the electricity industry. I am pleased to see that this Adjournment debate is being attended by more than twice the customary number of hon. Members.

I particularly welcome the presence of my hon. Friends the Members for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) and for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern), both of whom have constituency interests in the subject and who hope to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, later in the debate. I understand that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Energy, who will be replying to the debate, is happy for them to intervene and is no doubt looking forward to what they have to say.

Incidentally, I am very pleased to see the Minister of State on the Front Bench this evening to reply to this debate, first, because we do not see very much of him at the Dispatch Box, and, secondly, because the Under-Secretary of State for Energy, my hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), whose job it would normally be to reply to this debate, is in the United States of America looking at the electricity industry, which I hope will give him some good ideas as to what he might do about privatisation, and particularly research and development.

The recent debate on the White Paper outlining the Government's proposals for privatisation of the electricity supply industry in England and Wales left one in no doubt that it should not be seen as the final blueprint. Ministers have made it quite clear that they are still prepared to listen and possibly respond to constructive suggestions between now and the next Session of Parliament, when we expect to see the Bill. One good reason for that flexibility is that the White Paper is far from comprehensive. There are gaps, and to prove the point I want to raise this evening the question of one key element in this vital industry which hardly gets a mention in the White Paper. I am referring to the research and development activities of the electricity industry, and in particular the Central Electricity Generating Board.

Apart from comments by my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark) on the area boards' research activities, R and D scarcely got a mention in the debate on the White Paper that took place in the House on Monday 7 March. The White Paper, in paragraph 9, attributes research and development to the Electricity Council. In point of fact, that is hardly correct. The responsibility is, in the main, delegated to the CEGB, which undertakes research on a wide range of matters concerning generation and transmission schemes. Such research is vital in gaining technological improvement in existing areas of operation, and also for future development.

R and D is part of the CEGB which, in 1986-87, turned over a total of £162 million in its three research laboratories, which employ over 2,000 people, in the five laboratories which provide direct scientific and technical support to CEGB power stations, and through R and D

[Mr. Michael Colvin]

contracts placed with other organisations, such as manufacturers, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and the universities.

The CEGB's research and development programme is managed through its technology, planning and research division, under the executive control of a CEGB member, Mr. D. A. Davis, based at its London headquarters.

The main aims of the research and development programme are to reduce costs and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the CEGB. It does that by looking at new opportunities to improve the reliability, safety and economic performance of existing plant and by giving expert technical assistance during the introduction and commissioning of new plant. It provides technical expertise to the CEGB so that it can be a well-informed and critical buyer of plant, equipment and fuel. It looks to the future by studying and assessing longer-term developments in the generation and transmission of electricity. Lastly, it ensures that CEGB operations have the minimum effect on the natural environment.

The main research and development programme is centred on three large laboratory complexes. First, there is the Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories — BNL — on the Severn estuary in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud. It is the CEGB's main centre for nuclear and radiation research. It is the only laboratory complex within the board with a nuclear site licence, and it employs about 720 people.

There is also the Central Electricity Research Laboratories — CERL — at Leatherhead in Surrey, which employ about 750 staff. It is the major centre for environmental studies in the CEGB and a major centre for research on transmission, power system control and electrical plant.

There is also the Marchwood Engineering Laboratories — MEL — in my constituency on the west bank of the Solent. It is the major centre for research on heavy engineering projects. MEL specialises in the development of inspection and repair techniques for nuclear plant, testing of mechanical components such as valves or fuel assemblies, and research into the combustion and heat transfer processes in oil and coal-fired power station boilers. The laboratories employ about 430 people.

There are also five operational engineering division laboratories, which provide direct operational support on generation and transmission.

In Scotland, the South of Scotland Electricity Board and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board both undertake research, although most of it is contracted out. The SSEB employs about 50 research staff at East Kilbride. The hydro-electric board has its own small research facility which looks into the specific practical problems of fish behaviour in rivers, hydraulics, and low-cost remote control systems.

Lastly, the Electricity Council runs the Capenhurst research centre, which has a turnover of about £10 million per year, and employs 350 staff working on finding better ways of distributing and utilising electricity.

It is important to understand the research and development modus operandi of the three principal research division laboratories. They have very close contact with each other and with all branches of the CEGB, as well as a wide range of arrangements with manufacturers — both large and small — which can be collaborative, contracting or commercial.

There is thus a significant number of unique major research facilities on which the industry is dependent. They are occasionally available for external commercial work, but are normally fully utilised on work within the CEGB. However, the relative independence of the CEGB, as currently perceived by our manufacturers, allows the laboratories to have productive relationships with those companies, and often to act as a sort of "honest broker" when co-operation between rivals is in everybody's mutual interest.

It appears that under the proposals in the White Paper there are three options for the privatisation of the technology, planning and research division and its facilities. The first is to include it in what the White Paper describes as "big G", but that could starve the other generating companies of R and D and should, therefore, be rejected.

The second is to fragment the division, but that begs the question, "Who goes where?" Berkeley might fit into "big G" because of its predominantly nuclear work, but as Marchwood does 60 per cent. nuclear and 40 per cent. fossil fuel research it would not fit happily into either "big G" or "little G". Fragmentation would lead to costly duplication, which is something which has almost been eliminated under the present organisation and which it would be wasteful and unwise to resurrect.

The third alternative is for the division to be sold off separately either as a plc with shares owned, perhaps pro-rata to turnover, by the generating and transmission companies, or as a research and development institute perhaps with charitable status, which might be based on the Electricity Council, but does not have to be, or maybe some combination of both—funded perhaps by levies on the generating and transmission companies, and supported by special interest groups and manufacturers. There might even be a Government shareholding.

I think that the third option is the one for the Government to use as the basis for their solution, because it gives the greatest chance of maintaining really long-term work, such as renewable energy research, although I accept that commercial confidentiality might be difficult to maintain.

The three laboratories already work as cost centres, so it would not be too difficult to turn them into profit centres. When I discussed privatisation with the management and workers at Marchwood recently, I found support for the third option, as it would preserve the integrity of the present division and would enable it to relate more effectively to the supply side of the industry, if privatised in the way proposed in the Government's White Paper.

It is worth noting that, when the CEGB gave evidence to the Select Committee on Energy earlier this year, officials conceded that some of their work was "difficult to justify in operational terms."

Future shareholders may look askance at any expenditure which does not appear to have an immediate pay-off. That is why it is important to suggest an organisation for the future which can continue long-term research and does not look permanently at the results and the profit and loss account for the current year.

Perhaps a British equivalent of the United States Electric Power Research Institute would be the answer. It

has been responsible for a co-operative research effort costing almost $3 billion since it was set up in 1973 and has acted as a focus for electricity and environmental research and development and long-term strategic thinking.

In conclusion, I suggest to my hon. Friend that, in deciding the right structure for research and development in the privatised electricity industry, the Government must bear in mind the quality of the professional graduates and skilled artisans in research and development, and the importance of maintaining a dynamic career structure to help recruitment and retention of personnel.

I would like to see a consultative document outlining the Department of Energy's thinking on this important subject, for discussion with and comment by all interested parties in research and development, well before the privatisation Bill is published.

At Marchwood, I was left in no doubt about the electricity workers' dedication to the needs of electricity consumers. They are pledged to keep the lights on, but, if the consumer is to be the real beneficiary of privatisation, that guarantee must still be given and honoured. Proper arrangements for the continuance of research and development are an important factor in honouring that pledge.

10.27 pm

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) for allowing me to contribute briefly to the debate. As my hon. Friend said, I have a constituency interest in this matter. My constituents work at the technical engineering division at Bedminster Down, at the generation, development and construction division at Barnwood, just outside Gloucester, and at the Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories.

I commend my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside on initiating a debate on this important matter of the future of the industry. I wish to consider further the third option that he has mentioned. Like him, I believe that the technical expertise and research initiative that already exist within the electricity industry can be allowed to flourish as a result of privatisation.

In many ways, I suspect that my hon. Friend has been too timid in his view of the future of that section of the industry. Although I agree with him that we should consider closely the possibility of this section of the industry being treated separately, he underestimates the commercial value of the expertise in that sector.

I would like my hon. Friend the Minister to consider my hon. Friend's third option, but with the possibility of creating in this country a centre of excellence in terms of engineering construction and development and research into the future of electricity generation and transmission. CEGB engineers are capable of doing that and could provide a service not just to "big G", "little G" or the private generators envisaged under privatisation, but worldwide. We have the expertise and the initiative, and I hope that privatisation will give the industry an opportunity to exploit them.

10.30 pm

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): I, too, am obliged to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) for giving me the opportunity to contribute briefly to the debate. I agree with what he says.

I appreciate that the White Paper is a consultation document but the research and development part of the industry hardly rates a mention, despite, as my hon. Friend has pointed out, the fact that it employs over 2,000 people and has a turnover of some £162 million per annum — considerably greater than Land Rover whose progress, or perhaps lack of it, seems to dominate the headlines week after week. Yet somehow this side of the industry has had precious little mention to date.

I take a particular interest tonight because within the Stroud constituency are the Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories, which employs some 700 people, and, in the neighbouring Gloucester constituency, many more at Barnwood, some of whom also live in my constituency.

In reply to a written question the other day on the future of those employees, I received the reply that that was a matter for consultation within the industry. I appreciate that, but I hope that tonight my hon. Friend will be able to lift a little of the uncertainty for the benefit of my constituents.

10.31 pm

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison): I am most grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside (Mr. Colvin) for raising this important matter on the Adjournment. As he rightly pointed out, it gives me an opportunity to come to the Dispatch Box, at which my appearance has been somewhat rare recently. It is 21 or 22 months since I was last here. I did take some time away before the general election, but my particular area of responsibility does not seem to be a matter of great contention in the House.

I am also grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern) and for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) for their contributions, knowing the research and development facilities as well as they do, as they pointed out.

I assure my hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside that of course Ministers listen. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State, who has particular responsibility for this area, but who, sadly for the House and for himself, is unable to be here this evening, will be reading carefully the report of the debate and will certainly pay attention to everything that is said.

As my hon. Friend pointed out, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary has been committed to a visit to the United States for some time and he was unable to cancel it, but during the course of his visit he will be looking at research and development in the electricity industry which will no doubt be for the benefit of the House and the future deliberations on this aspect of privatisation.

However, my hon. Friend's visit gives me the chance to respond to the debate in the knowledge that research and development in the electricity supply industry is very important indeed. Wearing my hat as the Minister of State, Department of Energy, may I say that I am the chairman of the Offshore Energy Technology Board. The important input that research and development has made to the amazing success story of the North sea is very much part of my life. Therefore, I wholly appreciate the remarks that have been made about research and development in the important area of electricity as well.

Research and development is important and, amongst the utilities across the world, its reputation in the electricity supply industry is good and strong.

[Mr. Peter Morrison]

I agree that the record of research and development in the industry must be maintained as we look to the future. I would go even further than that and say that it needs to be improved, if that is possible.

The essence of research is, I believe, that ideas must be allowed to flourish, and new methods must continue to be tested, and new techniques must be introduced. The proposals in the White Paper "Privatising Electricity" are familiar by now to the whole House. They will also secure greater efficiency and a more economic supply, as was undoubtedly proved during the debate on the White Paper, for the simple reason that we are building on what is best in the industry, and ending what is wrong.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside said that there are gaps in the White Paper, but it is in fact concerned with setting out a framework. During the weeks and months ahead there will be ample time for consultations. That is why I welcome the chance to have this debate and to discuss the ideas put forward on the future of research and development.

My own strongly held belief is that privatisation will benefit research and development in the electricity industry and will indeed open up greater opportunities. My hon. Friend gave a clear description of the current arrangements for research and development in the electricity supply industry. I will take a moment or two in the time left to elaborate on the research and development that is done by area boards, which he mentioned but did not go into in detail.

I will deal particularly with a centre that I know well, for reasons that are apparent, Capenhurst. It is close to my constituency — and my hon. Friends have mentioned centres close to their own constituencies. As the House knows, research into area board technological problems is undertaken both by the boards and the Electricity Council on their behalf. The council's programme is largely carried out at the Electricity Council Research Centre at Capenhurst.

About 75 per cent. of Capenhurst's efforts is devoted to what is called "utilisation research". The aim of this work is to develop new and improved products or processes which use electricity effectively. This provides the industry with a strong and competitive technology in the industrial, commercial and domestic sectors, against other energy industries. The remaining 25 per cent. of the effort is aimed at improving the distribution network of the industry. Recent advances have been made in the control of power supplies in rural networks to improve reliability for consumers.

But it is only fair to ask how the centre and the area boards respond to the opportunities in privatisation in the vital area of research and development. What will be the future arrangements? At this stage, I can give only a partial answer to these questions. As the House appreciates, the Electricity Council will cease to exist, but the 12 area boards have already, in their different ways, developed strong reputations for innovation.

For example, the board that I know best, MANWEB, has measured up to severe problems of electricity theft in inner city areas by experimenting with existing metering technology to develop an almost impregnable meter. The board is now a world leader in this equipment, and other distributors, both here and overseas, are following its lead.

In privatising the 12 area boards, we recognise that their contributions to their local regions will bring new opportunities in research and development, as well as in their mainstream commercial activities. The decisions concerning the organisational arrangements will be for the area boards.

I appreciate what my hon. Friends have said about research and development in generation—that the lion's share is being spent on this area. My hon. Friends have highlighted the records of Leatherhead, Berkeley, Marchwood and Barnwood, so I shall not detain the House by going into them.

I agree that the two generating companies formed from the CEGB will certainly continue to need to call for both research and engineering support for their existing power stations and for new stations for which they successfully tender. We will be looking to the industry to make proposals. We certainly expect there to be work which generators will take forward jointly; equally, there will be areas which generation companies will wish to take forward individually. It will depend ultimately on their own judgments. We believe that privatisation will throw open a whole range of opportunities for generation technologies. And, as the House knows, the distribution companies will be taking the lead in the restructured industry; they have already indicated that they will look to different forms of generation technologies, particularly for local generation and for managing peak demand.

The obligation on the distribution companies to contract for a fixed proportion of non-fossil fuelled capacity will also help foster a broader R and D base. Also, new generation technologies will come to the fore because substantial sums of investment will be needed over the coming years to meet growing demand and replace old plant.

My hon. Friend the Member for Romsey and Waterside said that the main aims of research and development programmes are to reduce costs and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the industry. I entirely agree with him. One of the great benefits of privatisation will be that the companies will become even more conscious of the need to orientate their research programmes towards the customers. I believe we are already seeing the first signs of that.

However, to embark on a formal consultation process through issuing a consultative paper could well have quite a contrary effect. We would run the risk of bureaucracy halting this exciting process of change. It was, I think, Chairman Mao who referred to letting a hundred flowers blossom. I might share little else of his philosophy, but that seems to me similar to what we are trying to achieve.

This is not to say that the Government do not welcome the views of those involved in the industry, those handling research programmes and those in plant manufacturing. This is a good time to let us have their views. I know that the Department's advisory committee on research and development is to discuss electricity R and D at its May meeting. But do let us avoid endless bureaucracy — it can dampen the enthusiasm for change.

Finally, I stress that we recognise the industry's excellent record and reputation in R and D. We intend to ensure that the industry continues fully to utilise its existing expertise and that new opportunities arise to build and expand on this record. In this way, we will end up with a fitter industry, offering a better service and giving the customer a better deal.

Mr. Colvin: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's reply. Although he will not produce a consultative document, I recognise that he is casting himself in the role of the listening Minister. Therefore, he can now expect to be bombarded with a host of suggestions from the people who are the seedcorn for the industry's future and without whom its future prosperity would be in doubt.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes to Eleven o'clock.

House of Commons

Friday 25 March 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PETITION

Television Licence (Pensioners)

9.35 am

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): I wish to present a petition on behalf of a pensioner from my constituency, Mrs. Hunt, and 400 other elderly residents of my constituency who wish to petition this House to the effect that they do not agree with the television licence fee being increased for pensioners, many of whom depend upon the television for comfort and company. The petition

urges the Government to ensure that the television licence is held at its present level and, in the longer term, concessionary or free licences for pensioners are introduced.

I ask the House to take note of the petition.

To lie upon the Table.

Adjournment (Easter and Monday 2nd May)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That this House, at its rising on Thursday 31st March, do adjourn until Tuesday 12th April and, at its rising on Friday 29th April, do adjourn until Tuesday 3rd May; and the House shall not adjourn on Thursday 31st March until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

9.36 am

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): This is only the second time in 27 years when I have spoken on the motion for the Easter Adjournment. I assure my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that I do not intend to take the steps that I took exactly 20 years ago when Mr. Peter Mills, as he then was, and I divided the House against the Adjournment because adequate provision had not been made to debate the problems of the west country. Also, I do not intend to petition for a debate on the procedure reports, although my right hon. Friend might expect me to do so. In the past few months I have made my position absolutely clear about that matter. I reinforce the need, however, for those reports to be considered on the Floor of the House as soon as possible.

Specifically, I wish to discuss the aspects and amount of Government financial participation in space research and development. It is important to discuss this matter now because decisions will be taken during the Easter recess and if the subject is not considered fully by Ministers before the return of the House it will be too late for the House to influence the Government's decisions. Certain approaches have already been made whereby Great Britain will not participate in the European Space Agency optional programmes. I believe that that could be terribly damaging both industrially and with regard to the role that we can play in space research.

I believe that it is essential for Great Britain to make a worthwhile contribution in developing the application of space research. Indeed, we led in the past when we made it clear that no European nation could participate properly in such research entirely on its own and that there should be amalgamation and co-operation between European countries. For that reason, we led in the formation of the European Space Agency. Only three years ago, we were responsible for much of the reorganisation in the agency, which was carried out very much to our wishes.

Five optional programmes are now being put forward for British participation. I am not suggesting that we should participate in one of those options, Hermes. The broad capability which already exists in the United Kingdom in earth observation can be applied profitably to a development market which will reach maturity within the mid-term future and has significant export potential for this country. The United Kingdom has a competitive advantage in space-borne radar and it is through development of that all-weather technology that the United Kingdom has the best prospects of successful commercial and defence exploitation of earth observation.

The Government's decision to fund the Data Centre to process data from the ERS 1 satellite is welcomed. That facility will be a cornerstone in achieving the future commercial exploitation of earth observation data and will be the first to attract private investment. It must be developed with that commercial objective in mind.

It is, therefore, an essential ingredient of commercialisation that the United Kingdom has a significant say

[Sir Peter Emery]

in the shape and size of the space segment to meet its commercial requirements. Consequently, the United Kingdom must participate at a sufficient level to influence the spacecraft platform design to ensure that those designs are capable of carrying the relevant services, especially radar sensors, essential for commercial exploitation. If we do not participate in the ESA's optional programmes and leave it to our European competitors alone, we are sunk.

Ultimately, commercial viability depends on assured continuity of data from space. It also depends on continuing development of data quality to meet user needs. For the United Kingdom to have the right of access to relevant data at competitive prices, it must participate in the earth observation spacecraft and payload sensor programmes being put forward by the European Space Agency. Industry cannot do that on its own. It can be done only with Government participation. Without that participation, the United Kingdom will not be able to continue even as an intelligent user of earth observation data because it will be increasingly at the mercy of foreign operators of earth observation systems and suppliers of data, who will control the information and prices and inhibit the United Kingdom's access to data to exert commercial leverage, which would benefit their countries.

Mr. David Martin (Portsmouth, South): There will always be a debate about whether we should manufacture our own facilities or use the facilities of others. My hon. Friend touches on a crucial point. If we do not keep up with the highly sophisticated technology, we shall quickly fall behind and be unable to re-enter those markets. If we do not have our own manufacturing capability, we shall have to queue up constantly behind others to use the facilities. In the following years, we shall find that increasingly disadvantageous. I very much support what my hon. Friend says on this matter.

Sir Peter Emery: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention. I could not have done better. He has underlined a major aspect of the argument that I wish to make.

One could give a catalogue of events since The Hague conference last November. It is important that the European Space Agency and NASA have now agreed on arrangements for European participation in the international space station and the ESA is committed to providing a polar platform. There is no doubt, therefore, that the European Space Agency will develop a polar platform as part of the Columbus programme and that this platform will be used for all its subsequent polar earth observation missions.

The position taken by the United Kingdom at The Hague has encouraged the ESA to continue with the polar platform and to reduce its carrying capacity from 3·5 tonnes payload, serviced, to about 2 tonnes payload, non-serviced, thus approximately halving the cost and reducing the risk. The platform will be acceptable to the United States. It will be about two or three times more cost-effective to the users than existing spacecraft and, consequently, will be a good basis for commercial operation. Both the commercial and research aspects must have a considerable influence on the Government's decision.

I believe that the director general of the European Space Agency has persuaded other member countries to keep open until early April the United Kingdom's option to join the Columbus project. Initially, the decision had to be made by mid-March, so we have been given a reprieve.

Alternative proposals from the French on the polar platform are already threatening Britain's ability to influence the ESA's earth observation activities. The United Kingdom's first priority should thus be to join the Columbus programme and to reassert our leadership on the polar platform.

In addition, in the light of uncertainty about the United Kingdom position on space, apparent since The Hague conference, the Canadians have taken steps on the Radarsat programme to establish a possible bilateral alternative with the United States to their present situation and intend to choose between that collaboration and collaboration with Great Britain in their final submission to the Canadian Government in April. Therefore, the decision point for the United Kingdom is immediate.

In principle, the United Kingdom's objectives could be met either by co-operating in Europe or by a national bilateral programme. The former is the less expensive and avoids leaving a vacuum for the French to fill. The latter could perhaps be considered simpler from a commercial point of view, but we would not have the European co-operation that I wish to see, and it must be more expensive.

However, taking note of the activities and decisions since the Ministers' meeting in The Hague, the common view of industry and of the less biased Government advisers is that participation in the European Space Agency polar platform related programmes is essential as a first priority.

Having sketched the background, I wish to make clear one or two points. We already participate in the European Space Agency and, at present, that costs £80 million. That is the basic price of our membership of the space agency. However, the optional programmes will dominate what happens in the space agency and in future space research and development. The Government have objected to making further funds available for those alternative programmes over and above our original £80 million membership on two counts. They considered, first, that it was too costly and without assured returns for the United Kingdom, and, secondly, that British industry was not willing to put its hand into its pocket to assist in obtaining those commercial advantages.

I am raising this matter today because, as of the latter part of the week, British industry is putting new proposals to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Minister responsible for these matters at the Department of Trade and Industry. I understand that those new proposals do two things. First, they make it clear that, for an additional expenditure of between £10 million and £15 million per annum, we would be able to participate in the schemes that I have outlined and others with which industry is so concerned. It would allow Britain to play a part in ESA and therefore make a contribution which industry is willing to put up money to meet. If the Government were willing to fix a contribution, industry could well be persuaded to contribute between £3 and £4 million towards the £10 or £15 million which it is suggested the Government should provide.

It is clear, therefore, that certain figures that have been bandied about, at levels even as high as the Prime Minister, suggesting that our participation would cost £400 million to £800 million are just not correct. Moreover, we can now

counter the argument that is being put to Ministers that industry is not willing to put up the money to participate. Those two shibboleths can now be put to rest.

Can my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House give me an assurance that the responsible Minister, and, if necessary, the Prime Minister, will consider these proposals, as this is the very last moment when a decision can be made? If we contract out of these optional programmes, we shall hand over research and development of outer space to the French and Germans, who will dominate ESA. I say that not just as an hon. Member of this House, but as a representative of this House in the North Atlantic Assembly, of which I am the chairman of the Science and Technical Committee. That committee is concerned with some of these matters. We see the enthusiasm of the French and Germans. Some French parliamentarians want us to stay in ESA, but many would be delighted to see us out and cannot believe that we should inflict such an injury on ourselves. They know they could not have made the same decision.

This is our last opportunity for us to stay in the ESA new programmes for space research and development for the next 15 years. If we do not take the opportunity, the consequences will be disastrous for Britain and British industry. I therefore urge my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to ensure that Ministers consider industry's new approach, as this matter is essential to our continued participation in space.

9.53 am

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Before the House rises for the Easter recess, we should debate the Jarvis plc report on the Settle to Carlisle railway.

I hope that my short speech will not be taken for a substitute for a properly organised and full debate, which I hope the Leader of the House will substitute for the Scottish housing Bill or some other wretched piece of legislation that the Government are pushing through. There are several options, and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will cast his eye over them.

The Jarvis report was commissioned by the Government and cost the taxpayer a minimum of £5,000. It concerns a line that has been the subject of unprecedented objections to closure, and therefore represents a watershed in the nation's view of our railway network. Many closures have been made, but they should go no further.

I also speak as the hon. Member who, in 1974, obtained consent from the Department of Transport for reuse of the smaller stations on the line for the Dales rail service which was initiated by the Yorkshire Dales national park. I am also the first chairman and founder of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Preservation Society, a driver on that line for many years and one who is extremely familiar with the operation and maintenance of railways, locomotives and rolling stock. The relevance of that experience is important in view of the Secretary of State for the Environment's remark about finding "a private sector solution."

The report is thorough, imaginative and well written and researched. It suggests using Hellifield station as a gateway to the Settle-Carlisle railway corridor. Retention and development of the line would be of enormous benefit to the people of Bradford, including those in my constituency, because it would provide them with a gateway to the Yorkshire Dales using a method of transport which would not destroy the grandeur of the Dales. We could avoid huge traffic jams on all the roads to the Dales and the resulting car parking problem. The report links road transport to use of the railway in several ways.

The report suggests Manpower Services Commission funding. It lists several projects that have been MSC funded and have been completed successfully. It also says that there is private sector support. The Government attach great importance to that. Included in the report are letters from several sources, including the Great Scottish and Western Railway Company Limited, which provides a private hotel train in Scotland. It says that, in spite of gloomy predictions, the service is doing very well.

The company also says that investing £1·5 million in a new train would be justified if the Settle-Carlisle line were retained and the 80 miles of this beautiful railway were available to the public in ordinary trains and the special, expensive train. The private sector feels that there is potential, but it all depends on the railway being retained.

On page 58, the Jarvis plc report says:

"However as stated at the outset of this study, the corridor is ineluctably linked to the future of the Settle-Carlisle railway, and closure of the line would in our view jeopardise large sections of the proposal and probably call the whole concept into question. The closure issue has generated tremendous energy in opposition to a proposal: we would now like to see such energy and enthusiasm metamorphosed to emerge as a proactive commitment to support the corridor proposal. It is our belief that the opportunities presented by this study are unparalleled, and must not be missed."

The opportunities include retention of a beautiful railway and important parts of our industrial heritage, a means of getting into some fine country, the creation of a large number of jobs and development of the tourist industry —exactly what the Government claim they support.

It is therefore with some dismay that we read in the *Yorkshire Post* on 23 March—the matter was reported more widely — that the Secretary of State for the Environment, in a leaked letter which the Opposition spokesman on transport published, said:

"I am sorry that we have not yet found a private organisation or trust able to take on the line. I do feel that we must continue to work for this—could we perhaps also give the Railway Heritage Trust the job of identifying, or if need be, assembling the private solution?"

The Secretary of State for the Environment is well known for nourishing a number of foolish illusions, and this is undoubtedly one of them. One of the McAlpine family — a firm not entirely unconnected with massive civil engineering works — has, over a period, been in negotiation with British Rail at Preston. Those negotiations have not reached a successful conclusion. A private-sector solution to take over an 80-mile railway with a huge viaduct at Ribblehead and several others at Arten Gill and Dent therefore does not seem particularly likely.

Five years ago or more, the then Secretary of State for Transport — the self same right hon. Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), now Secretary of State for the Environment — called in a number of railway preservation societies, and discussed with them the possibility of taking over sections of BR-operated line. I was not present at the meeting, but I understand that the societies made it clear that they could not manage that. Operating a railway is a very difficult task. There are statutory obligations; the maintaining of the fencing at each side of the track, and maintaining the platforms,

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

signalling and track, are very expensive. It cannot be done for 86 miles on the basis of a few of the lads going out with a few keying hammers and seeing whether anything is loose.

There is a strong argument for the Government to face up to their responsibilities and ensure that British Rail has sufficient funds to restore the Ribblehead viaduct. The viaduct has deteriorated purely because of lack of maintenance by British Rail, dating from the mid-1970s when it failed to renew the damp-proof coursing, allowing frost to penetrate and start the erosion that is now at the centre of the issue.

Most people who view the matter reasonably objectively want the Settle-Carlisle line to remain as part of the British Rail national network. The line operates an important diesel multiple-unit service which is financed by local authorities. That service is now covering its costs —despite, I might add, the gloomy predictions of many potential critics of its introduction. The loco-hauled service that operates from Leeds and Hull up to Carlisle should be extended back to Glasgow, where British Rail originally curtailed it. I think it extremely unfair of the Department of Transport to put such pressure on hard-pressed local authorities to provide finance for the reconstruction of Ribblehead viaduct and other major civil engineering works on the line. For that is what they are doing. In effect, they are saying to local authorities, "The decision is yours. If you back out of providing financial support, we are afraid that the closure decision is inevitable, and it will be your responsibility."

It is not the responsibility of local authorities. They desperately want the railway to remain open, but they want it to remain open in the context of a British Rail railway that is part of the inter-city network. While they are prepared to make a contribution, I feel that the entire burden should not be placed on their shoulders, and that British Rail, with Government assistance, should support the necessary expenditure.

The subject is important, because it is a magnificent railway. Some 30,000 objections were made to its closure. The transport users' consultative committees for both Yorkshire and the north-west concluded unanimously that it should be retained. The chairman of the Yorkshire committee, Mr. James Towler, was particularly eager and convinced that the line should remain open, and particularly erudite in his knowledge of the improvements that could be made to the deficiencies of British Rail's operation, because he travelled frequently on trains. Naturally, there was only one solution to that: the Government arranged his sacking, because he had been a bit too diligent on behalf of the passengers.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I am sure that my hon. Friend is aware that, on a number of occasions in the past year, owing to either accidents or major emergency work on the west coast line, major inter-city trains from Glasgow to the midlands and south of England have been forced to use the Settle-Carlisle railway. It is obvious that, if the railway were closed, it would not only mean a further curtailment of the main BR network, but, in the event of major engineering works or accidents on the west coast line, cause the service to stop altogether, because there would be no alternative route.

Mr. Cryer: My hon. Friend is quite right. I was coming to that. I do not wish to go into too much historical background, but hon. Members will no doubt be aware that the railway was built by the Midland railway because Midland railway trains were being slowed down by the London North Western railway — in that glorious competitive spirit that prevailed in Victorian values — and passengers were made to get out at Ingleton and walk across Greta viaduct to join a meandering LNWR train to the end of the line.

The route from Clapham junction has now been closed, so that is no diversion. Trains up the west coast route on the electrified section have no other reasonable diversion, if that route is blocked—as my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) mentioned — except the Settle-Carlisle line.

To increase the costs of maintaining the line and reduce the revenue, British Rail decided several months ago to remove all freight traffic from the Settle-Carlisle line. It then decided that it was no longer possible to use it as a diversionary route. Unfortunately, the realities of operating the railway having escaped the board, BR found that diversions are necessary on the line. Since the original decision, there have been hundreds of diversions, and on one glorious day — the day on which British Rail announced the closure proposal—there was a blockage on the west coast route causing all the trains to be diverted over the Settle-Carlisle line. I cannot name the precise day, because British Rail, in its administrative supremacy, had about half a dozen goes at producing a correct closure notice before it was able to do the thing properly and conform to the law. However, the line is certainly used for diversions, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for drawing that to the House's attention. It emphasises that the line is part of the national network, and that the notion of a preservation group or trust operating it as a separate entity simply is not on.

I hope that the Government will realise the importance of the issue and come forward. They will desperately and bitterly disappoint thousands, if not millions, of their supporters if they allow the line to wither away, or allow British Rail to close it on the instructions of the Secretary of State. My few remarks are no substitute for a detailed debate about the Jarvis plc report, but they are a guide to the Government and the Leader of the House to tell the Secretary of State for Transport to make a statement to the House that the railway is to be saved. Between central Government and the local authorities — which have demonstrated over several years by their commitment of cash that they want the railway to function and the passenger service to be retained—a solution can surely be found that does not squeeze local authorities, but puts some Government cash to excellent use. If the Jarvis plc report is brought into operation, jobs and enhancement will be provided on one of the finest and most beautiful railways in our country.

10 am

Sir Fergus Montgomery (Altrincham and Sale): I should also like to intercede with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and ask him to take up another point with his Department. I hope that not all hon. Members in this debate will raise questions with which the Department of Transport must deal.

Many hon. Members shared the Department of Transport's deep concern at the consequences of increased

congestion in the air space over the south-east of England and the implications for air safety and the environment. Those points caused enormous concern in the House at that time. The Minister therefore received wide support when he expressed the hope that future licence applications to serve Manchester and the regional airports would assist in relieving further pressure on the already over-congested south-east.

Those comments were seen by many hon. Members on both sides of the House as further emphasis on the need to reach a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations that took place at the Department of Transport last week between the United Kingdom and the United States. The negotiations were conducted to review the specific applications for air traffic licences to serve Manchester by three United States airlines—American Airlines, North-West Airlines and Pan American — and to provide enhanced opportunities for British airlines to provide direct services to the United States from Manchester.

I do not have to remind transport Ministers that during 1986, the last year for which the Department of Employment statistics are available, 900,000 passengers to the United States from the catchment area of Manchester airport travelled via London or other European airports while only 80,000 were served by direct flights from Manchester. If my arithmetic is correct, that means that less than 10 per cent. of the people from the Greater Manchester area, the areas surrounding Manchester airport, who wanted to fly to the United States, could have flown direct.

The negotiations last week were seen by hon. Members to provide a great opportunity to assist the business and leisure demands of the north of Britain, and to provide considerable relief to the congestion in the south-east through the removal of the completely unnecessary diversion of traffic to the south-east airports. The dismay and disbelief which followed the announcement that the negotiations had failed to reach any conclusion are therefore entirely understandable.

There was a bitter reaction in the north which was not simply confined to the business community, to the environmental and safety lobby in the south, to the tourist industry outside London, to the weary jostled passenger at the London airports, to the unemployed seeking an opportunity in the north or those who suffer from over-full employment in the south-east. It was felt by everyone who recalls the Government's commitment to make better use of Manchester and the regional airports to provide a greatly enhanced service to the passengers and cargo industry and a major stimulus to the economy in the regions.

I pay tribute to what has been done for Manchester airport since the Conservative party was elected in 1979. Anyone who considers the number of flights into and out of Manchester since 1979 and the number of passengers through Manchester over the period will be amazed at the enormous advance that has been made. I pay tribute to what successive Secretaries of State for Transport have done for Manchester airport since 1979. However, I want my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to bear in mind the fact that the 1985 White Paper on airports policy acknowledged that more than 12 per cent. of the traffic through London airports would be better served by Manchester airport, yet when the opportunity is clearly available the negotiations fail — unbelievably — because of an attempt to trade a request for increased rights into Manchester by United States airlines against further rights of British airlines out of London. I find that completely incomprehensible.

It is widely acknowledged that it is easier for a British airline to fill a plane from Heathrow than it is to fill a new service from Manchester. However, that attitude results in a major distortion in air traffic flows. The fact that 21 per cent. of the United Kingdom's international charter traffic flies from Manchester but only 5 per cent. of the United Kingdom's international scheduled traffic flies from Manchester owes a great deal to a previous era of air travel.

At one time the volume of international air travel was so low that services from Manchester were not viable and it made good economic sense then to feed all United Kingdom passengers into one service from Heathrow. The situation is now different as there are much higher demand levels from all around the country. The fact that six major United States passenger airlines and the two largest United States cargo operators sought to play a role in the negotiation of rights to fly into Manchester is undeniable testimony to the general acknowledgement of frustrated demand.

Why, when more than 20 per cent. of all air passengers to the United States originate in Manchester's catchment area, are there only sufficient services for 2 per cent. to fly direct? I have done a little work on this and I find it quite astounding that there are 360 flights a week from London to the United States, but only 13 from Manchester. Why are so many visitors to the United Kingdom forced to use London as a point of entry when the Department of Employment statistics show that one in three of those visitors do not spend a night in the London area? More fundamentally, why do we forsake the opportunity of an immediate stimulus to the economy of the north of Britain in excess of £100 million a year from the new services requested by United States airlines?

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport will ask his colleagues why we cannot do something positive to alleviate the north-south divide. Things are improving dramatically in the north and more inter-continental flights would give us a tremendous boost. I believe that the answer is that the negotiations focus exclusively on a balance of aviation rights between what United States airlines and British airlines choose to focus their attention on. Surely the overwhelming case for ancillary, economic, environmental and social benefits is such that the Government must act now to bring about an early resumption of the negotiations which will progress the Government's stated objectives to develop Manchester airport in accordance with their commitment outlined in the 1985 White Paper.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my hon. Friend urge the Government to recognise that the statistic of one in three visitors not spending a night in London is caused by the fact that those people often travel to other parts of Europe? Therefore, Manchester must be able to co-ordinate inward flights from the United States with onward flights linking with other European capitals. That would greatly assist my hon. Friend's constituency and those concerned with the problems of the north-west.

Sir Fergus Montgomery: I am very grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. We both became hon. Members at the same time, perhaps more years ago than we care to

[Sir Fergus Montgomery]

remember. I am grateful for his support for Manchester airport. Manchester airport is the largest single employer in my constituency, and I feel very strongly about this issue.

What must 20 million people in Manchester airport's catchment area do to enjoy the same travel rights as people living in the London area? All they seek, like Londoners, is the right to fly from their airport direct to their destination. Unless we redress the intolerable imbalance in air services between the south-east airports and Manchester, we can rightly be accused of discrimination and perpetuating the alleged two-nation concept. I understand that a meeting will take place in Washington on 25 April. I understand that the meeting will consist only of officials of the Transport department in the United States and the Department of Transport in this country. I understand that no Ministers will be present. I hope that the issues that were discussed during the negotiations last week will be opened up again and that the case for Manchester airport will be stressed as strongly as possible.

I received a letter this morning from a business man in my constituency which states:

"For many years I have had to visit North America at least once a year. British Airways and it's predecessors have provided from Manchester a stop/go/seasonal service to New York and also to Montreal and Toronto. I suspect that they really want businessmen to fly from London on their main services.

In the last year, American Airlines have run a daily flight throughout the year to Chicago which is ideal for any businessman wanting to visit that area and which provides convenient connections to all towns in central, south western and western U.S.A. A.A. and other U.S. airlines have recently applied for permission to fly similar flights to east coast destinations and these have been refused. B.A. has meanwhile kindly arranged for a flight from Gatwick to call at Manchester, and are alleged to have said that they would withdraw this if they were to have any competition on the run, see attached press cutting.

I suggest that Britain invites A.A. or some other U.S. airline to fly this route as our own national airline has shown so little interest over the last two decades.

Could you please show this letter to the Government Department concerned and let me have any comments, bearing in mind that customer should be king?"

A newspaper cutting from the *Manchester Evening News* of 19 March states:

"some of the US observers at the talks were dismayed by the evident reluctance of British airlines to actively seek more flying rights out of Manchester.

British Airways chief executive Sir Colin Marshall told Department of Transport negotiators that if American Airlines and Pan Am were allowed to start direct services from Ringway to New York, he would scrap his proposed daily service and the run to Orlando."

I have great respect for Lord King and Sir Colin Marshall. They have done an enormous amount for British Airways, but I remind them that, not so many years ago, the Civil Aviation Authority put forward proposals that would have pushed British Airways out of Manchester. At that time, British Airways was agitated and enlisted the support of Members of Parliament from the north. Northern Members rallied together and fought and won that battle, and British Airways expressed its gratitude to us. I can only hope now that in the north we shall get the support of British Airways in achieving more intercontinental flights in and out of Manchester airport.

Before we adjourn for the Easter recess, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will give me an assurance that officials from the Department of Transport who go to Washington in April will push as hard as they can the case for the north and for Manchester airport to ensure that Manchester airport continues to flourish.

10.21 am

Mr. A. Cecil Walker (Belfast, North): The Government have made a highly irregular decision in announcing recently a further substantial cut of £5 million from the Northern Ireland housing budget for 1988-89. From time to time we come to the House to hear about the appropriation of moneys for various Departments of Government in relation to the needs of the community. Various amounts are read out for us and that information is given whether we like it or not. We must accept that information without proper debate or allowance for amendment.

The dictatorial decision to reduce further an already under-funded budget is to be deplored. It appears that the Housing Executive is considered to be a soft touch when money is needed. It is important that the House is acquainted with the hardship that the long-suffering people of the Province are forced to suffer because of this callous decision to deny the means whereby the deprivation caused by years of neglect in the provision of much-needed housing can be redressed.

At the end of November 1987 the Government announced the levels of public expenditure on housing over the next three years. In overall cash terms the shortfalls in gross expenditure levels proposed by the Housing Executive for each of the next three financial years are as follows: 1988-89, £24 million; 1988-90, £46 million; and 1990-91, £48 million. After allowance for a £7 million increase in rental income, this represents a £31 million, £53 million and £55 million loss in Government funding. Although the Housing Executive had decided on a rent increase of 4 per cent. in accordance with the Government's gross domestic product deflator in its bid for funds, the Government have proposed, and now assume, an increase of 9·2 per cent. in line with the increase being discussed with the local authority associations in England and Wales.

Normally, Northern Ireland has followed decisions taken on the mainland, if the Government have thought it appropriate, by the making of iniquitous Orders in Council. It seems strange and somewhat sinister that the Government are proposing this rent increase, which is more than double inflation, before it is decided over here. It appears that this is another convenient ploy to extract the maximum from the most deprived in an exercise in figure juggling. The severity of the reduction has meant that housing programmes planned for the next three years have had to be critically reassessed.

During the autumn of 1987 the Housing Executive published its Province-wide housing strategy for 1988-91. Under this strategy the executive had hoped to sustain a yearly new build programme of 1,650 dwellings. It proposed also a rolling improvement programme for Housing Executive-owned dwellings over a 12-year period and to maintain a renovation grants scheme for private home owners at a relatively high level. The executive's preferred strategy would have been a yearly new build programme of 1,750 dwellings, improvements for Housing Executive-owned dwellings over a 10-year period and grant-aid to the private sector comprising some 4,000 improvement grants and 6,000 repair grants per annum.

The housing Executive has now been forced radically to reassess its planned programmes. This will have the effect of limiting even further its ability to meet housing need and reduce housing unfitness. In general, the main effects will be a reduction in the planned new build programme from 1,650 to 1,500 dwellings annually, a slowing down of the modernisation programme, which will now be phased over 16 years instead of the planned 12, and substantially less funding for renovation grants to privately owned homes.

This will mean that, rather than starting improvement work on an average of 8,330 Housing Executive homes a year, the executive will be able to start only some 6,250. In addition, only 3,500 improvement grants and 3,000 repair grants will be available each year to home owners, rather than the 4,000 and 6,000 respectively which the Housing Executive had hoped to provide. It is inevitable that the effects will be felt not only by tenants but in employment terms in the construction industry and by those supplying the Housing Executive with goods and services.

This further substantial cut of £5 million has brought feelings of disgust and revulsion, especially when one considers the circumstances whereby the Government deliberately denude one of their Departments to support another. If financial planning is so poor as to involve this sort of last minute change, I can only assume that there is incompetence at a high level somewhere within the Government.

In terms of activity, £5 million represents about 200 new houses or, alternatively, major improvements to 500 houses, such as installation of central heating, with rewiring or other refurbishments. This means that tenants or new applicants will now be left on the waiting list for a much longer period. When the Housing Defects Act 1984 (Commencement) Order was considered by the House some years ago, it was decided that system-built houses using pre-stressed reinforced concrete would gradually be replaced because of structural defects. There are many such houses in Northern Ireland. A significant number of them are owned by the Housing Executive. I now understand that because of these iniquitous and swingeing cuts the Housing Executive has been forced to abandon its plan to replace considerable numbers of those unsound houses. Naturally, I am concerned at this turn of events, especially in view of the extreme level of unfitness of houses in the Province, which is almost double that on the mainland.

The board of the Housing Executive met the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 16 March. During that meeting the chairman emphasised that a strategy had been agreed with the Government as long ago as 1983. That effectively translated the measured housing need into levels of activities and housing programmes. However, increasingly, the Government have failed to fund those levels of activity, and in the published figures for funding for the years 1988 to 1991 there appeared to be no change in the downward trend.

As a result, the Housing Executive was faced with a continuing decline in the rate of progress in meeting the jointly agreed housing needs for Northern Ireland. In fact, improvement work was having to be placed on such an extended time scale as to raise the question whether disrepair and need would begin to rise at a faster rate than the executive could carry out remedial work. That suggested the completely unacceptable prospect for the executive of presiding over a gradually worsening situation.

It was pointed out that if the situation were not to deteriorate in that way, it was essential that the funding promised by the Government should be regarded as an irreducible core that should not be raided repeatedly for other purposes. It was also stressed that the Government should act with consistency and continuity in the treatment of Housing Executive funding.

I understand that the Secretary of State listened sympathetically to the plea by the Housing Executive board. I hope and trust that he will now take such steps as are necessary to galvanise the Government into effective action to reduce the terrible housing deprivation in the Province.

10.31 am

Mr. David Porter (Waveney): The prospect of the Easter Adjournment is very welcome to us all. It allows us to go back to our constituencies, in my case to remind my wife and children that they are not a single parent family, to recharge my batteries, to breathe some proper fresh air coming off the sea and to bring all the good news about the measures that we have been taking during the past two months.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): That will not take long.

Mr. Porter: It will take some time. More immediate than that, I am pleased to have the opportunity to raise some east coast problems. By east coast I mean part of East Anglia. To a true East Anglian that means only Suffolk and Norfolk. I am concerned about that part of Suffolk and Norfolk which is Waveney and Great Yarmouth. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Great Yarmouth (Mr. Carttiss) is not here to support me, but he is toiling on behalf of his constituents in Norfolk.

I was going to call my remarks "East of Norwich" to place it geographically, but that smacks of East of Suez, which implies pulling out or, "No one goes there." East of Eden might be more appropriate. I am talking about an area that includes the magnificent town of Great Yarmouth and the town of Lowestoft, the premier fishing port of England.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I wonder whether my hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter) could substantiate that bogus claim. He will know that in recent months the port of Newlyn in my constituency has topped the league in regard to the value of fishing landings.

Mr. Porter: That may be so. Obviously my figures are not up to date, so I shall reserve my judgment until I have checked those figures.

I wish to raise problems about East Anglia, which is the second fastest growing region in the United Kingdom—and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys estimates that births and people moving into East Anglia will make it the fastest growing region in the next 12 years. The average cost of housing is going up £30 per day and unemployment in Waveney is down from 17 per cent. 18 months ago to 11·5 per cent. today. So why are there problems?

The problems are, to some extent, those of East Anglia's success generally, moving across from the

[Mr. Porter]

midlands and up from London. Milton Keynes, Peterborough, the west of East Anglia and the Felixstowe-Ipswich-Cambridge corridor have excellent roads, but as yet Waveney and Great Yarmouth do not. A joint representation from the two local authorities will soon be treading a path to the door of the Minister for roads, my hon. Friend the member for Eltham (Mr. Bottomley). Notwithstanding his best efforts recently on the Halesworth relief road and the recent recognition by the county council of Waveney as the poor relation in Suffolk, it can still take more than three and a half hours to drive or to travel by train from my constituency to London—a mere 119 miles.

One of the best hopes for our economic well-being in Waveney and Great Yarmouth is welcoming more tourists. Every effort has been made to speed tourists into the west country to enjoy the quaintness of the country lanes for a fortnight or so. However, sometimes visitors to the eastern part of East Anglia feel that it takes them a fortnight to get there.

Not unnaturally, visitors to our area occasionally have to use the Health Service. There is a formula for taking account of that in the funding of family practitioner services and hospital services. The Government are undertaking a fundamental review of Health Service funding and organisation, and the East Anglian regional health authority has volunteered itself as a pilot area for an internal market experiment. I ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to bear in mind that if health planning is to be effective it should move the resources with the people or allow the people to move them themselves, as well as taking account of resourcing in the sparser areas of population.

Equally, in regard to schools, a declining rural population and school roll decline nationally are partly offset by an increase in growth in parts of Waveney, and a decision on the closure of the Reydon high school and two primary schools is with my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), the Minister with responsibility for schools. I understand that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has no say in that, but he should remember how important are our rural areas, how vital is space and how essential are parental and community choices.

A maternity unit in my constituency is threatened with closure, as is an old people's home 100 yards outside my constituency in the Suffolk, Coastal constituency of my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Of course, services must change, update, modernise and be cost-effective, but let us be sure that we carry the people with us. If a ward, a hospital, three schools, the fire engine cover, the police station cover, and local council depots are all modernised, changed and updated within a few months and within a few square miles, people feel under threat, and the best intentions of the Government are undermined.

Locals and tourists alike come to Great Yarmouth and Waveney and other places to enjoy the coastline. Cleaning up the beaches is under way, but is it urgent enough? Is our attitude to re-education as a nation urgent enough? I have discussed the protection of our coasts against the ravages of the sea with my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. We have been extremely lucky this winter.

I have said that local authorities should not have to put up swimming pools or sea defences in a capital programme, because one can choose to have a swimming pool, but one cannot choose whether to protect the coast. That is a departmental matter, but I say to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that if we do not regard coast protection as a national battle, we could have the seaside resort of Birmingham by the year 2050.

I shall not detain the House on the problems of freezing the allocation of non-precious stock fishing licences, or the problems of the pig farmers or those who are worried about VAT on books, newspapers and children's clothes, or anything else from my post bag. I shall say only that the House is ready for the Easter recess to prepare for the good news to come.

10.39 am

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): The hon. Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter) made a rather strange speech. He said that he was going home to tell his constituents the good news about what the Government have done, and he then spent the rest of his speech complaining about things that were going wrong for which he wanted help, to which many of the answers lie with the Government. I certainly agree with him that his constituency, as all others, needs things from the Government, and I hope that the Leader of the House will be able to deliver.

I also agree that not many hon. Members will vote against the motion. After a spell of Committees sitting late into the night, I could defend having a week off—five working days—to even the most determinedly aggressive constituents. It will do us and the country good to have a few days with our families or friends in the fresh air and to come back renewed in about 10 days.

The debate a year ago on the Easter Adjournment motion was started by the former right hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford, the late John Silkin. I believe that it was his last speech in the House before he died and that it is therefore appropriate now to pay tribute to him for all his services to the House. Until the very end in the equivalent debate a year ago he was arguing for constituency and wider matters of particular interest to him.

I support many of the arguments already made by hon. Members, such as the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) who spoke in favour of the Settle to Carlisle railway, and the hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) who spoke in support of Manchester airport and the diversion of air traffic to the north. As someone born in Cheshire and who lived for the first decade of my life next to a Cheshire airfield, although not Manchester Ringway—it was the AV Roe Woodford airfield—I have considerable sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's decent and proper regional argument. The hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) rightly argued for more money for his constituents and for Northern Ireland housing in general. It is unfair that that has been cut.

I wish to speak about the crisis in the Health Service in inner London, a subject which formed part of my speech in the equivalent debate last year. I spoke then about the crisis in nursing. It is no better, but today I wish to go slightly wider and I hope that the Leader of the House will give us some fundamental assurances.

Since I spoke from these Benches on health matters last year, I have been dogging the Secretary of State for Social Services with questions about hospital and community services cuts in London. Eventually, after much obfuscation, I obtained the figures. In an oral answer on 12 January the Secretary of State confirmed that between 1981-82 and 1986-87 expenditure in the four Thames regions had dropped in real terms by 2·8 per cent. That was a bigger reduction than even I had expected. The Secretary of State justified those cuts by saying that they were

"more than offset by increased efficiency." — [*Official Report*, 12 January 1988, Vol. 125, c. 132.]

That gives rise to three questions which I hope the Leader of the House will take away with him. First, what is the basis for that efficiency claim? How do the Government measure increased efficiency for the purpose of that claim? Have they made specific calculations of increased efficiency, or is it a general statement? Are their claims of increased efficiency accepted as valid by anyone but themselves? When the Government's figures confirm real cuts, as they do in London, we need more than a general statement that they have been offset by efficiency.

Secondly, and confirming the worry, the Government say that taking into account efficiency savings, purchasing power in the Thames regions increased by 2 per cent. during those five years. That contrasts enormously with the 2 per cent. increase in services needed annually to keep pace with greater numbers of elderly people, existing policy commitments such as community care, and medical advances. The Government have accepted that a 2 per cent. increase in services is needed annually. Even taking on board their claims about efficiency, if they acknowledge that there has been only a 2 per cent. increase over five years—not each year—in purchasing power, they must also acknowledge that services have not increased by anywhere near enough to meet the growing demands of people in inner London and the south-east.

By the Government's own admission that a 2 per cent. increase in services is needed annually, their admission in January that purchasing power has increased by only 2 per cent. in total over five years makes it clear that the NHS in London has not had enough money even to stand still. It has been slipping back and services have been declining. Will not the Government at last admit that, I hope as a preface to doing something about it? They will have another opportunity to do something in the next few weeks.

Thirdly, must not the Government acknowledge that because the resource allocation working party formula does not take sufficient account of indicators of social deprivation and therefore, tends particularly to shift resources away from urban areas in the south-east, the cut in London, as opposed to the four Thames regions, which go outside London, will be even bigger than the 2·8 per cent. cut that the Government have acknowledged in the Thames regions as a whole—and that in an area that desperately needs more health resources?

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): How does that information stand up in the light of the announcement made on Wednesday of additional funding for the Thames area? As the RAWP formula still shows that the Thames region is overfunded, it is difficult for those of us in other areas that have not been so generously treated to accept what the hon. Gentleman is saying.

Mr. Hughes: I understand that point, and I shall answer it specifically by taking an example of one health authority in London.

The principal health authority in my constituency is Lewisham and North Southwark. Hon. Members on both sides of the House, including the Minister for Sport, the hon. Member for Lewisham, East (Mr. Moynihan), and the hon. Members for Peckham (Ms. Harman) and for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock), recently, with me, met our local health authority chairman and officers and were briefed on the exact position in our authority's area, which includes Guy's hospital. In 1988-89, the authority will hand back £2·4 million through the RAWP formula. That will go back from us into the kitty. In 1982-83, the authority's expenditure was 128 per cent. of its RAWP target of 100 per cent. The region set a target for the district of 105 per cent. by 1993-94. It is already down to 108 per cent., so it has managed to cut 20 per cent. off its theoretically excessive allocation and is giving money back. I do not detract from the needs of other regions, but the chairman and officers of the local health authority have reached the stage of saying, "We can take no more." I ask the hon. Gentleman to accept that where there is no real increase in funds in parts of the country, at the same time as there is redistribution of resources our way, the result is substantial cuts.

Since 1983, 290 beds have been cut in Lewisham and North Southwark. It will be unable to keep paying back the RAWP money without further substantial cuts. The authority's pay bill is £100 million. If it is not fully funded, and there is even a 1 per cent. deficit, it will mean a £1 million shortfall. Contingency plans have been drawn up for further substantial cuts, should they prove necessary. The authority has already lost £3·3 million because of underfunding of pay awards over five years, and it has lost £12·4 million because of inflation and RAWP redistribution. The total reduction of resources is about £15 million. The House will accept that the officers and members of the health board are impartial in matters of party politics, but they are saying that without additional money our priority care programme will be murdered, our waiting lists will mount enormously and it will be impossible to reach the RAWP target. That is just one health authority in inner London trying to cope with Government policy.

Other health authorities have desperate problems. In relation to West Lambeth authority, which includes St. Thomas's hospital, our local *South London Press* newspaper said today:

"Hospital bosses claim NHS inflation is running at eight per cent. leaving hospitals short."

Since 1983, the number of beds has been cut from 927 to 632. The number of patients treated has decreased, the number of patients on the waiting list has increased from 5,100 to 8,100, and it is likely to have to cut by 60,000 the number of people who visit hospital clinics and slash staff by one in 10.

I could make a similar argument in respect of all the health authorities in inner London, including Riverside, which covers this area, the City and Hackney, which includes Bart's hospital, and many others. The Health Service in London is far from safe in anyone's hands.

There has been a 24 per cent. increase in people waiting for operations in inner London, and a 9·4 per cent. increase in greater London. In 1987, in the South-West Thames region, waiting lists increased by 1·8 per cent. to

[Mr. Hughes]

36,391 — a quarter of whom had waited for more than a year — and last year in South-East Thames region the waiting list increased by 4 per cent. It would have been greater but for a last-minute cash allowance. We are grateful for the additional allocations of cash, but they have not compensated for the substantial difficulties faced by the Health Service in London.

The result is that health authorities are turning to charity. Great Ormond street hospital has had to have its Wishing Well appeal. Bart's hospital is bringing in Saturday volunteers from the City to help on wards. Ear, nose and throat surgeons are working for nothing. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund has given £25,000 to Bart's to pay for paediatric nurses. At St. Thomas's, doctors are donating their profits from private practice.

All this is happening in some of the poorest areas of the country. In 1986, infant mortality increased from 9.2 per cent. to 9.7 per cent. For some diseases, for example, lung cancer and respiratory disease, the death rate is up to 50 per cent. higher than the national average. Living conditions contribute not only to physical but mental illness. For example, schoolchildren in the Camberwell health authority area, which is also partly in my constituency have three times the rate of behavioural disturbance as children in the Isle of Wight. In the four Thames regions we have 76 per cent. of all the AIDS patients in the United Kingdom. The result of the cutting of acute beds has the greatest effect in areas with a high number of ill elderly, many of whom should be in other than hospital accommodation but are not. In London some 1,400 beds have been cut — 50 per cent. of them acute — and 46 per cent. of the people in acute beds are over 65. Spaces are just not available either in the proper places for the elderly or in hospitals for other patients.

I ask the Leader of the House to give assurances on the one thing that the Government can urgently do to come to the aid of the Health Service. Before we leave for this Easter recess, they should announce that they will fully fund the nurses' pay award that is to be recommended by the pay review body. Many in the nursing profession are in a desperate situation. Some 60 per cent. of nurses work overtime. Many work through their lunch breaks and most do another job to help out financially. They have desperate difficulties with accommodation and with travel costs, and they are now facing the threat of the poll tax. Nurses are opting out.

I have a letter from a BA honours student nurse, who says:

"Another disturbing aspect is being in close contact with students who leave in their 1st year . . . already 3 in my intake have gone away . . . or 2nd year, or as soon as they qualify because they are disillusioned and dissatisfied. It does not take the student nurse long to discover the reason why nurses are so disheartened and why morale is so low! . . . As a member of the Royal College of Nursing I would find it very difficult to contemplate striking, but I am filled with anxiety about how I will be able to survive physically, mentally and financially in the years ahead . . . I wish to remain . . . please make it possible for me to do so . . . by speaking on behalf of nurses in the house of commons."

I was intending to do so anyway, before the letter came, but it confirms the crisis and the need. The Lewisham and North Southwark area is between 250 and 400 nurses short of establishment. The Government must come to our rescue. They will have an opportunity to do so when the pay review body reports.

Easter should be a time for rejoicing. I hope that the situation in the Health Service will not be as bad as it was over Christmas at the end of last year. I have here a copy of a letter, sent to the Prime Minister since the new year, by a nurse working at Guy's hospital. It is about the situation at Christmas 1987 in London in the Health Service. It says:

"Understandably the operating theatres are always shut over Christmas and consequently some of the surgical wards, but this year to save money three medical wards were also closed. Unfortunately the local population did not cease to be ill. This meant that acutely ill patients were admitted onto already overstretched surgical wards. It became increasingly difficult to get doctors to see patients they had admitted, as instead of having all their patients on one or two wards, some had patients on eleven different wards. The geography of the hospital meant that it took some of them all day to complete their rounds.

On one ward an elderly lady died alone as the four nurses working on that ward were too busy looking after the twenty-six other patients, to sit with her. She then lay on the ward for four hours until a nurse had been around several other wards to be a sheet to wrap her in. To make matters even worse, the mortuary porters informed us she would have to be placed in cadaver bag, as the mortuary fridge was full!

Another demoralised colleague, along with a student nurse on her first ward placing, discovered a man vomiting copious quantities of blood. They had several other patients all calling for their attention, including an infectious patient lying on the floor of a side-room demanding to see a doctor and be discharged.

Surgical wards do not have the facilities to deal with the medical patients. For example, they do not have a large supply of incontinence aids or hoists to lift heavy immobile patients into the bath. These problems were compounded by the acute shortage of linen—presumably due to some other cost cutting exercise. By Sunday 27th December the wards were even running short of paper sheets and pillow cases. By the following day, nurses in charge of wards were refusing to admit patients until linen had been found to make up the beds for them. Excellence of care is stressed by the School of Nursing. I do not feel I am meeting this by nursing very sick people between two paper sheets on top of a plastic mattress.

How would you feel if a relative of yours was admitted to a top London hospital, only to find staff were too busy to meet all his needs and he was expected to sleep in a bed improvised from drawer sheets and pieces of paper!

Struggling to give the care we have been trained to give under the limitations imposed by financial constraint is only a further stress to an already demoralised profession."

That was the Health Service only a few short months ago. It is not acceptable to go on like that. The Government must say, through the Leader of the House, that they have a new commitment, which means more money and more support for people who are trying to keep our National Health Service up to the standards for which it was founded.

10.55 am

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): I hope that the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) will forgive me if I do not follow him too closely into the problems of the Health Service in inner London. However, I can assure him that dissatisfaction with the working of the RAWP formula is not confined to London. As far away from London as my constituency in Cornwall there is a feeling that the formula does not reflect needs accurately and nor is it a good measure for allocating resources. No doubt, as he said, inner London has particular problems, some of them stemming from deprivation and urban difficulties, but the other side of the coin is that areas such as mine suffer from difficulties such as that which has become known as the rural scatter—the long distances between hospitals and patients.

Another of the difficulties in Cornwall is the inherited situation of a large number of old hospitals. I am convinced that in order to rationalise them there will in some cases have to be increases in capital spending. Cornwall also suffers, which is fortunate in some ways, from a very high incidence of old people, which puts a big burden on the NHS, yet RAWP does not take account sufficiently of such a factor. I assure the hon. Gentleman that I would side with him in his eagerness to have a thorough look at the working of RAWP, and the Government are doing just that.

As the hon. Gentleman has outlined the difficulties facing the NHS, he will welcome the fundamental and thorough review of it that is being carried out under my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. This is a sign of the seriousness with which the Government are taking the issue of the NHS. I join the hon. Gentleman in hoping that the Government will fund in full the nurses' pay award. However, he will accept that it would be irresponsible of any Government to give an assurance that they will do that. This award in particular looks like being extremely complex, and I have no doubt that the Government will have to look at it carefully. I hope that they will be in a position to fund in full, but it would be unwise for anybody to give that assurance in advance of receiving the report.

I wish to make two particular points, one about a national issue, and one of relevance to my constituency and the county of Cornwall. The national issue is one that has dominated this week's news — Northern Ireland. I say that it is a national issue because it affects everyone of us, wherever we live. I am delighted to see the hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) here. Although it impacts enormously on Northern Ireland Members of Parliament, it affects us all, because at some time or other we have had service men from our constituencies serving in Northern Ireland, and what happens in Northern Ireland cannot be ignored by the rest of the United Kingdom. Therefore, I was dismayed earlier this week, following the brutal murders of the soldiers, at the reluctance of the broadcasting authorities to hand over all the untransmitted film of part of that attack.

I speak as one who has journalistic experience of covering events in Northern Ireland. I spent a number of years visiting the country on behalf of *The Daily Telegraph* to cover politics there. That gave me many opportunities to see the situation on the streets and the difficulties faced by soldiers, the police and my fellow journalists, especially those who worked for television, and their camera crews. I accept that camera crews are often in the front line and in considerable danger, so I understand the stance adopted by the broadcasting authorities — the BBC and Independent Television — who are trying to do everything that they properly can to protect their crews when they cover events in Northern Ireland.

However, overriding all other considerations, it is of paramount importance that the broadcasting authorities make available the evidence that they have to the RUC and the prosecuting authorities, who are trying to bring to justice the people who committed the vile murder of those two soldiers. If the broadcasting authorities say that they are reluctant to hand over film because they want to protect their staff, that merely serves to reinforce the problem of television coverage by the BBC, ITN and RTE of IRA-inspired events in Northern Ireland. The review of such coverage should have taken place even if the tragic events of last Saturday had not occurred. The broadcasting authorities need to consider how professionally and to what extent they cover IRA-inspired funerals, demonstrations and so on.

I have no doubt that there must have been an element of collusion between the broadcasting authorities and the agents or representatives of the IRA for covering some of these events. I am thinking particularly of the pictures that we have all seen in newspapers and on television in recent weeks, of IRA firing parties letting off volleys of shots over a shrine around the corner from the funerals. As the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said in the House the other day, that might be preferable to filming a firing party performing such a ceremony — if that is not too dignified a word — over a grave at a funeral, but when filming these episodes the broadcasting authorities, at least to a certain extent, play into the hands of the IRA. They should think long and hard about whether being sucked into a propaganda exercise by the IRA should constitute part of the news.

As a journalist, I know that this is a difficult area. It is always difficult to draw a line between naked propaganda for an organisation and genuine news. However, my plea to the broadcasting authorities is that they should give urgent and deep consideration to these difficult issues.

I turn now to a couple of issues that affect Cornwall in particular. I noticed this morning in *The Daily Telegraph* a report headed:

"British regions get no priority in rush for EEC millions".

That relates to an apparent decision by the EEC Commission to try to give priority through the structure funds to certain regions — Greece, Portugal, Ireland, southern Italy, parts of Spain, French overseas territories and Northern Ireland. In so doing, the Commission is trying to exclude all other parts of the United Kingdom: for example, Wales, parts of northern England and the assisted areas of Cornwall and Devon. If the report is true, and I suspect that it is, that is a matter for concern. Of course, there will still be access to other European funds in other circumstances, but the first priority for the structure fund will be the areas I have listed—the others will come behind.

I do not expect my right hon. Friend to comment on this today, but I know that he will draw it to the attention of the Ministers concerned and ask them to renew the attempts that the Government have already made in Brussels to ensure that areas of the United Kingdom outside Northern Ireland that have high levels of unemployment are given as much priority as other parts of the European Community. European funds play an important part in providing the infrastructure of parts of the United Kingdom that have high levels of unemployment. They are beginning to have an impact on Cornwall and I do not want such areas to be deprived of the funds. I hope and believe that that will not happen, but I want an assurance that Ministers will fight this issue strongly in Brussels.

Talking of infrastructure and development in development areas, I and most of my hon. Friends very much welcomed the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 9 March about local authorities' expenditure. The purpose of the statement was to clamp down on irresponsible local authorities that were going in for creative accountancy and other like devices, such as doing deals with Japanese banks — and others — to get around the Government's proper restrictions on capital expenditure. However, there

[Mr. David Harris]

appears to be a possibility that some genuine attempts to carry out redevelopment by responsible local authorities might get caught.

I refer to a report that appeared in *The Morning News* a week ago today. It echoed the concern of a number of councils, including Penwith district council about the possible ramifications of my right hon. Friend's statement. The report points out that a £2 million scheme for Truro city hall—I can vouch for its being much needed— may be at risk; so may a £5 million leisure centre at Falmouth and a harbourside car park for Truro. A £5 million harbourside redevelopment at Penzance in my constituency is also under threat. Most of these redevelopment schemes involve some sort of deal with developers, under which land may be made available to them. They will carry out the work and the community will get the benefit.

That is the proper way to proceed. It is not in the same category as some of the antics carried out by councils such as Brent and others, which we all read about. I hope that my right hon. Friend will reassure the House without delay on this matter, and that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House will convey the anxieties of responsible local authorities to our right hon. Friend so that an early statement can be made to clarify the position.

I take considerable hope from the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment that he would

"consider issuing additional capital allocations where we are satisfied that the agreements were not entered into for the purpose of evading capital expenditure or borrowing controls."—[*Official Report*, 9 March 1988; Vol. 129, c. 327]

The answer lies in that sentence, and I hope that my right hon. Friend will lose no opportunity to reply to the letters which I, and no doubt other hon. Members and councils, have sent to him. I hope that we can be reassured that sensible projects, such as the ones that I have mentioned, are not at risk and that they will go ahead.

11.12 am

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): I should like to take this opportunity to raise in the House and place on record so that, one hopes, the Government and others will carefully examine it, the importance of immediate action over the treatment of people, especially Kurdish people in Iraq, and the need to bring an end to the horrors of the Iran-Iraq war. This war has been going on for twice as long as the second world war and hundreds of thousands of people have died as a result of this appalling conflict. The most unspeakable horrors have been perpetrated on people in villages in Iran and Iraq, and people who have differences of opinion with the respective regimes are suffering under the most appalling prison conditions.

The Governments of Western Europe and, indeed, of virtually every country are conniving at the continuation of this war. This is because they do not do enough in the United Nations to bring the war to an end, and almost every Government in every industrial country is guilty of directly providing arms to one side or the other. Many Governments provide arms to both sides. Governments who are not providing arms are certainly providing sufficient equipment for the manufacture of arms. Some provide chemicals and pesticides that can be used for the manufacture of chemical weapons that are as awful and as crude as those that were banned by the Geneva convention after the first world war.

The House should not adjourn for Easter without at least protesting against the continuation of the war, and it should do everything that it can to bring some humanitarian assistance to the victims of the war. If we do not do that, we will allow hundreds of thousands of people to go needlessly to their deaths in this appalling conflict. I shall not speak at great length about the basis of the conflict, because that would take up a great deal of time. Instead, I wish to draw attention to specific aspects.

It is important to note that this is not just a conflict about the delineation of the frontier of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway between Iran and Iraq, but that it is fuelled by outside forces who want to get their hands on the oil in both countries. The war also demonstrates the humanitarian and political bankruptcy of both regimes, because they seek to repress their own people by means of an attack on a neighbour. This tactic has been used by dictators for centuries who have tried to unite their people against an enemy in order to prevent the people from rising up and protesting about the appalling conditions in which many of them have to live.

I shall illustrate the dangers that are implicit in the continuation of this conflict by quoting from "International Relations" dated November 1986. It carried an article entitled "The Middle East and World Peace" written by Sir Anthony Parsons, who was at one time the British ambassador to Iran. The part that I shall quote comes after Sir Anthony has discussed the possibility of an Iranian invasion of Iraq and the likely reaction to that of other Arab states, and the implications of an invasion of Iran by Iraq and the reaction to that of nearby states, particularly the Soviet Union.

Sir Anthony said:

"The point is that the threat to world peace will persist for as long as the Iran/Iraq war continues and we should not be lulled into false security by the long-lasting military stalemate which could at any time be broken."

Those important words should be remembered.

I should like to draw attention to one aspect of the war and to the problems implicit in the middle East—the treatment of the Kurdish people there. It is important to remember that in Iran the regime led by Ayatollah Khomeini is as brutal and repressive against dissidents as any regime in the world, and the testament to that is the number of people who have fled from that country to seek political asylum. In Iraq there is almost a Fascist regime, which has instituted virtual genocide against the Kurdish people. The vast numbers of people in political prisons in Iraq testify to that. The long arm of Iraq's security services extends to Britain, where one finds Iraqi refugees, who have sought and obtained safety, afraid to march openly on the streets to protest against the Government of Iraq because of reprisals that might take place against their families. They have to march on the streets of Britain with their faces covered so that they cannot be photographed.

Turkey also contains many Kurds. In the Kurdish areas of eastern Turkey there is virtually a civil war and many Kurdish people are in prison in Diyarbekir in eastern Turkey. I understand that during the Easter recess, or shortly afterwards, the Prime Minister is to visit Turkey. I hope that if she goes ahead with that visit she will carry very strong messages. First, she should convey the message that Turkey is not a democracy, and cannot be, because

of the hundreds, if not thousands, of political prisoners in that country. People are on trial because of their political beliefs, and the general secretaries of the Communist party and the Workers' party, Mr. Kutlu and Mr. Sargin, are in prison. Secondly, she should tell the Government of Turkey that their country cannot be looked upon as a free democracy while military rule still applies in some of their provinces and while Kurds are being oppressed. The Kurdish language is banned in Turkey, and the word "Kurdistan" is also banned. The invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Turkey is part of the attempt by the Government of Turkey to cover up their crimes so that they can gain entry to the European Community.

I shall give another quotation to show how awful the positon is for the Kurds, particularly in Iraq. I shall quote from a letter delivered yesterday to the Prime Minister by the Committee for the Defence of Kurdish Nation and by Kurdish Organisations in the United Kingdom. The letter says:

"We, the people of Kurdistan in exile in Britain, appeal to you as a world leader to intervene and publicly condemn the wholesale slaughter of the innocent Kurdish people and the use of chemical weapons by the Iraqi Government on the innocent Kurdish inhabitants of Halabja. This is not the first instance of the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds. Tonight we have received private telephone calls from reliable sources in Iraq revealing the full horror of what has happened this week: we are told that about 21,000 ordinary men, women and children from the Halabja population died immediately under the cyanide bombardment. Another 20,000 have been fatally affected and between 300 and 500 are now dying each day.

We believe that as a world leader—and in the pursuit of world peace and the right to self-determination of all peoples . . . you will share our despair and understand our desire for an immediate end to this appalling and barbaric genocide."

The letter continues by asking that the Prime Minister intervene immediately and personally and that the

"United Nations . . . send a . . . fact-finding mission to Kurdistan to establish the full facts and the extent of this tragedy which is without precedent since Hiroshima."

The letter concludes:

"we appeal to you . . . to use your prestige as a world leader to demand that the Government of Saddam Hussein immediately cease these atrocities against our defenceless people."

That letter emphasises the horrors that the Kurdish people are going through in Iraq at present.

It is also important that the House understands the background to the way in which the Kurdish people have been treated, and their fate. Kurdistan was first divided in 1514—this is not a new problem—between the warring Ottoman and Persian empires. It was not until 1920 and the treaty of Sevres that the Kurdish nation was recognised, but the treaty was never fully carried out or established because of the rise of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, who ensured that it was never brought to fruition. The treaty of Lausanne in 1923 superseded the earlier treaty and set the seal on Kurdish hopes for independence.

Today the Kurdish nation is divided between Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. For all that time there has been oppression at one time or another, of differing severity, of the Kurdish people in all four of those countries. At the moment the most awful oppression is in Iraq and Turkey, but in the past it has been in Iran, and sometimes in Syria. The desire for a Kurdish nation and for recognition of Kurdish culture is at the heart of the present oppression against the Kurdish people in Iraq. In Iraq, Kurds constitute the largest group. Over 20 million people have been victimised by the political and ideological turmoil of our time. They are the fourth largest ethnic group in the middle east and have suffered very badly.

I want to draw attention to the way in which the Kurdish people are being treated in Iraq. The Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein has for some years sought to oppose Kurdish culture and the use of the Kurdish language, and to oppress Kurdish people in those areas. It has sought to do so by Arabising the areas and moving large numbers of people into those areas to minimise the strength of Kurdish feeling. Of course, the areas into which they have moved people are rich in oil and fertile. They have also deported and evicted large numbers of Kurdish people from their villages. Since 15 April 1987, 700 villages have been bulldozed, set alight and destroyed. A new eviction drive has affected over 140,000 Kurdish people.

That is not the first time that this has happened. Indeed, 2,000 villages were destroyed between 1975 and 1979 in an earlier attack against the Kurdish people. About 8,000 Kurdish people have disappeared since 1983, when the Iraqi secret police or the Iraqi army arrived and simply took people away. Large numbers of people have been killed during that period.

The most shocking and appalling thing has been the use of chemical weapons and chemical warfare against the Kurdish people. It is clear that the Iraqi Government are using poison gas against the Kurdish people in Iraq. Since mid-April 1987—just less than one year ago—there has been continued shelling with mustard and diphosgene gases, which have been used to kill people. This week some disturbing news has arrived, which has been adequately reported in some newspapers. Anyone who doubts the existence and use of such chemical weapons—the Iraqi ambassador in this country denies the use of chemical weapons—is referred to a secret document that has been smuggled out of Iraq, from the general commander of the Erbil district, which clearly confirms the existence of those weapons. The document is headed:

"Subject: Control over distribution of biological and chemical (materials)".

It goes on to ask for a half-yearly stock-taking of those weapons and gives guidance on their use.

I refer the House to the news reports that have been received this week that emphasise the horror of the gas attacks that have taken place. I refer to the first part of the article by Nicholas Beeston, reporting from Halabja in occupied Iraq. He is writing about people who have died as a result of a cyanide attack:

"Like figures unearthed in Pompeii, the victims of Halabja were killed so quickly that their corpses remained in suspended animation.

There was the plump baby whose face, frozen in a scream, stuck out from under the protective arm of a man, away from the open door of a house that he never reached.

Near by, a family of five who had been sitting in their garden eating lunch were cut down—the killer gas not even sparing the family cat or the birds in the tree, which littered the well-kept lawn.

Their neighbours had had the foresight to hide in an underground shelter. It became their mass grave with 10 men, women and children huddled together in the darkness surrounded by their best carpets and the family's valuables."

The report then lists the horror of the cyanide gas attacks that had taken place in the past week in Halabja. It seems that 20,000 people had been killed as a result of those gas attacks, in the most appalling and unspeakable crime that can be imagined.

[Mr. Jeremy Corbyn]

If anyone has any doubts about the methods that the Iraqi forces are using in Kurdistan, I refer him to orders that were sent out to the armed forces in June last year, concerning army activities in Kurdish areas. They state:

"1. All remaining villages declared out of bounds for security reasons will be considered as areas containing saboteurs, agents of Iran and traitors of Iraq.

2. No humans or animals are allowed in these areas. Shooting is unrestricted in these areas, unless on orders issued by us.

3. All travel to and from these areas, and all agricultural and industrial activity within them is forbidden. All concerned authorities and apparatus will monitor these issues rigorously.

4. Your command will carry out special strikes against the largest number of those present in the exclusion zones periodically, using artillery, helicopters and aeroplanes, and at any time day or night.

5. Anyone found in these villages will be detained and interrogated by the security apparatus. All those aged 15-70 inclusive to be executed after making use of any information obtained off them.

6. The relevant body will interrogate those who surrender to government of (Ba'th) Party apparatus for 2 days, or up to 10 days if necessary. If more interrogation is needed, permission must be obtained from us by telephone or telegramme."

One can only assume that those people who are not interrogated are shot immediately, or shot after interrogation.

Amnesty International has issued numerous reports on the situation in Iraq. It reported last February that hundreds of people, in some cases children as young as 14, had been executed in Iraq. It calls again for action on this matter.

I hope the House will understand that the full horrors of the Iran-Iraq war have cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, but within that conflict the most appalling savagery is being perpetrated against the Kurdish people. This week's cyanide attacks have at last hit the world's press headlines. It is time for the Government to act by doing what is requested by the Kurdish people, which is, first, requesting that the United Nations immediately sends observers to ascertain the full extent of the attacks that have taken place; secondly, demanding that the Iraqi Government allow the International Red Cross into the country to take medical and humanitarian aid to those people; thirdly, and above all, demanding a complete stop to all arms and chemical sales to either Iran or Iraq. They should also stop propping up the Iraqi Government by the use of trade, aid and credits, which I am afraid the British Government have been doing in the credits that they have passed on to Iraq. This House should make its views clearly known on this appalling matter.

11.29 am

Mr. Michael Jack (Fylde): No one could fail to be moved by the humane way in which the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) discussed the tragic circumstances arising from the awful conflict of the Iran-Iraq war. I congratulate him on drawing the attention of the House to some of the details which, sad to say, have been emerging in our press and other media.

I, too, wish to raise a moving matter concerning the elderly. In particular, it relates to the provision of their housing in private sheltered accommodation. A constituent, Mr. Lawrence Lewis, came to see me and drew my attention to a matter which has now reached national proportions. For the benefit of the House I hold up a envelope containing letters from well over 100 people from all over the United Kingdom, telling me of their problems with sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

Accommodation of this type will fulfil a vital function as our population continues to age. It is already providing a much-needed dynamic to the housing market by allowing people to move from traditional forms of accommodation to accommodation more specifically provided for the needs of the elderly. The market is large. It is worth some £2 billion a year and there are about 7,000 units of this type of accommodation being built every 12 months. Clearly, problems are emerging in this area, which, at present, has no trade association and no form of regulation against possible abuse of the elderly.

My constituent purchased his sheltered accommodation as a result of some fairly persuasive advertising material. He was particularly attracted to the words used which related to service and maintenance charges. That is the provision of common services, such as gardening, window cleaning, cleaning of common parts and so on. Mr. Lewis felt from the advertising literature which showed that those charges would not rise sharply, so he would be in for no nasty shocks, that this was a good way to live economically. Sadly, that was not to be the case.

My constituent came to see me and showed me the literature for his accommodation and that from the developer of the same accommodation about five miles from my constituency in Blackpool for another development in which the developer's claim was even more specific about service and maintenance charges. It stated:

"We do not expect those to rise by any more than the rate of inflation."

My constituent could not square that claim with the large increases which he had experienced.

As a result I took up the issue with the developers. I choose not to name them deliberately, because my intent in taking up this matter has been one of good faith in the interests of the individuals, and not in any way to have a witch hunt against any one developer, builder or managing agent in this sector. I have been so careful that when I was approached by "That's Life" to open my files to reveal information from those who had written to me, I refused. I do not believe that it is right to break the confidence of those who approach me, including right hon. and hon. Members. With the exception of a factual press release about holding a meeting in the House to discuss the matter, my public comment has been in response to interest from the press.

My constituent drew the matter to my attention and I discussed it with Age Concern which told me that the problem was widespread. As a result of that, the subject got into the newspapers through completely independent means. *The Daily Telegraph* had an article covering the issue. The paper asked me what I would do about it and I said that I wanted to look carefully at the law, particularly as it affects the statements in the literature on service and maintenance charges because through the Housing Bill or the Consumer Protection Act 1987 or even through a review of the Trade Descriptions Act there might be methods to address the clarity with which information is put across in the sales literature.

As a result of that first article I received 40 letters and *The Daily Telegraph* received 30. I shall summarise the issues raised with some quotations. A lady in Wye in Kent wrote:

"We did all our 'sums' before we took over our properties and if"

the managing agents

"had kept their word about increasing charges none of us would find ourselves in the financial difficulties which we do at present, many of the residents are contemplating having to sell out and move, but even that would impose an impossible burden on many."

A gentleman from Solihull wrote:

"From conversations I have had with residents, many accepted these bottom line figures in good faith and budgeted accordingly. There is now alarm that they might prove grossly inaccurate within 12 months."

In a most moving passage he continues:

"It does seem there is a group of elderly people with genuine fears but who might feel themselves constrained from voicing their concerns too publicly because they do not want to come into conflict with the company that is managing the property where they had hoped to spend their retirement free of worry."

A letter from Cornwall tells me that a group of people found that their service and maintenance charges had risen by 70 per cent. in 18 months.

Finally, on an issue of a wider nature, a retired squadron leader in Seaford, Lincolnshire wrote:

"Can you imagine what might happen when the builder of sheltered housing goes into liquidation? Can you imagine the doubtful characters who might be attracted to these situations?

I would be the first to admit that while I have given albeit a selective flavour to some of those problems, there are also many customers satisfied with this type of accommodation. Clearly, the market is growing and we must face the fact that many elderly people see the excellence of the standards that this type of accommodation offers, are seduced by the sales literature and do not ask the pertinent financial question: Can I afford to meet those regular service and maintenance charges? Many of them are living on fixed incomes and they cannot easily adjust to sudden unthought of expenses.

Earlier I mentioned what service and maintenance charges covered. Many people have suddenly discovered that they are also liable for sinking fund payments to cover the depreciation on items such as lifts. Moreover, if the developer or managing agent got his sums wrong in estimating the cost of the charge in the run-up to the sale, the residents are visited with a bill. Such bills can go on, compounded by the natural increase in charges, and present them with financial difficulties.

My intent was to find some simple way, without creating a new quango or vast regulatory body, to help these people and any others who will enter this market. I contacted the National Consumer Council which drew my attention to section 3 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987. What I am about to say has the favour of the Office of Fair Trading, my Lancashire trading standards office and others in this area. The NCC legal officer, Mr. Guy Dehn, drew my attention to the fact that the Act deals with what is called "misleading price indicators". In other words, if one sets out to mislead or give inaccurate information on the price of a service, section 3 of that Act will help those who suffer.

The Act goes further. It provides for the creation of codes of practice which govern the whole operation, not only of sales literature, but of other statements about services and obligations for residents in this type of accommodation. It is high time that the House had an opportunity — I urge my right hon. Friend to take up the matter with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and other Ministers in the Department of Trade and Industry — to consider carefully the possibility of applying a code of practice dealing with these matters under the Consumer Protection Act. I am grateful for the support of my hon. Friends for such a code of practice.

The National Consumer Council in a letter to me said:

"Misleading or insufficient information about future levels of maintenance charges will disrupt budgetary planning and can clearly cause considerable distress."

With regard to the customers of such accommodation it says:

"It is unrealistic to expect them to forage about for further information or to challenge figures on the basis of a calculation."

I have studied the sales literature for such sheltered accommodation and many different words and phrases are used to try to say the same thing. There is no uniform description regarding what the service and maintenance charges mean. Some companies mean the narrow management charge — the administrative expense of providing communal services. Other descriptions go as wide as the water rates and all other expenses. It must be confusing for potential purchasers to be confronted by such a wide range of definitions, and that obviously gives rise to misunderstanding.

The National Consumer Council believes:

"A code of practice dealing with claims about maintenance charges would be in everyone's interest. A good code should help prevent the problem from recurring. The providers of sheltered housing would have guidance as to what information to provide and how to present it. The Government would be able to promote desirable practices in this area. Pensioners would not be misled. The application of the new law in this field would be clearer."

I can think of no finer recommendation than that the House gives some form of approval to that course of action. To that end I organised a working party, including representatives from the trade, and we had a meeting in the House. Leading developers and managing agents attended as well as an observer from the Department of the Environment, and representatives of the Office of Fair Trading, Age Concern and Help the Aged. As a result of its good will that working party will meet in the House on Monday to develop further its thoughts on the matter. I hope that not only will it recommend a code of practice, as I have outlined to the House, but that the group will form a trade association to deal with wider issues covering the quality of service, training of staff, facilities offered by wardens and so on.

If that group established a trade association it could also introduce a code of approval for each individual developer and stop maverick developers entering the market and misleading elderly people. I trust that the House will support the initiative, which I have taken in good faith, as I believe that it will do much to safeguard the future of accommodation for the elderly.

11.42 am

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): The House of Commons is the most sophisticated political prison in the world. It makes strong men and determined women impotent with the minimum of brutality yet with the maximum of effectiveness. Such is the confidence of the

[Mr. Graham Allen]

system that even the doors are not locked. Indeed, for most of the working day there is no obligation to attend—if the usual channels will permit me that indiscretion.

Parliamentary democracy and the holding to account of Government and the Executive is now little more than a sham as practised in this Chamber. The anarchic and archaic procedures that dominate our proceedings seem to give a few perks to buy off individual Members, but fail to direct the efforts of either Government or Opposition Members in the job that Parliament was set up to do.

One of the most obvious and striking examples of that failure relates to the hours of sitting of this place and it is that to which I wish refer to today. There are many other examples that could be drawn, notably the length of the parliamentary sessions. The House of Commons meets for more days than any other legislature in the civilised world. Our recesses—today we are debating the Easter recess—seem to bear no rhyme or reason to contemporary politics. Certainly the summer recess is far too long for the purpose for which it was originally intended. I believe that a system of proper holidays, which any self-respecting trade unionist would certainly support, could be arrived at by negotiations with the relevant parties, perhaps even through Mr. Speaker's Office. Such holidays could then become a normal part of our environment instead of the current practice.

My major argument relates to the length of the sitting that we have each day. On average we sit beyond 12 o'clock at night twice a week. It need not always be like that; indeed it was not always like that. The great reforming Government of 1945-50, as I understand it from the record books, had only three sittings after 12 o'clock. There has developed, however, for no reason — an organic growth—a series of sittings well into the night. Therefore, the House now has an average of two sittings per week that go beyond 12 o'clock.

The answer to the problem rests with Members of Parliament. *The Economist* stated:

"MPs, though individually they had succeeded in becoming more independent of party whips, have not yet learnt to act collectively in their own interest against the interests of the frontbenchers of both major parties. If ever a man has suffered through not belonging to a trade union it has been the modern British MP."

That comment, made over a decade ago, is just as true today. The power of the Government and in particular the Front Benches, as exemplified by the whipping system, has meant that we have been lumbered with a system without any forethought or planning. That system imposes upon hon. Members a great many burdens. Such burdens are self-inflicted because, until the Back Benchers of both parties realise their self-interest, the system will continue.

It would be idle to waste too much sympathy on Members of Parliament, but there are others who must be taken into account, notably the families—the husbands, wives, children, girl friends or whatever. They suffer because of the idiocy of the system under which we attempt to work. There is a great deal of statistical evidence about the divorce rate among hon. Members, and those statistics need not be repeated.

I hope that we would all wish to encourage more women to become Members of Parliament, but added to all the burdens that male Members of Parliament face are the burdens that families and society place upon women as mothers and, in a sense, home makers. Those burdens are in excess of those that we should reasonably place on Members of Parliament. Such burdens could be removed if we had the will.

Other disadvantages in our present system include the effect on the decision-making process. How can Ministers effectively perform their duties the next day if they have been at the Dispatch Box or sitting on the Front Bench into the small hours? There is a great deal of anecdotal and written evidence from Members of all parties—whatever shade of Government have been in power — that has outlined how performance has been impaired because this place has taken its toll of Ministers.

Members of Parliament have a macho tendency to prove their toughness by sitting through the night, but that is also a costly exercise in terms of keeping staff on duty and awake when any self-respecting person would be at home with his or her family and relaxing for the day ahead.

I have tabled a motion referring to that problem in which I suggest that the House should rise automatically at 10 pm, thus returning to the system which existed just after the war when business appeared to be conducted as expeditiously and efficiently as it is today, perhaps even more so. If there were a national crisis, there would be a fallback provision under which a given number of Members of Parliament could request the sitting to continue, but that would occur only in extreme and emergency cases. To compensate for any loss of time, the House would meet at 1 pm every day, except Friday.

Given that the television age is about to come to this place—not before time—the Adjournment debate would not take place at the last knockings of the parliamentary day, but would begin the day. The superstars on the Front Bench, who will no doubt monopolise the television cameras, would experience competition from any hon. Members who are allocated an Adjournment debate and would therefore earn a place in the public eye. Between 1 pm and 1.30 pm, they could speak about an important issue during prime time television.

I do not anticipate instant acceptance of that proposal by the House, but, having looked through the press files, I am encouraged to see that many highly respected and distinguished parliamentarians from both sides of the House, including former Prime Ministers, but unfortunately not yet including the Leader of the House, have suggested that the way in which we work is unplanned and unco-ordinated and suits only the Government, not Parliament.

A major restructuring of our work needs to take place under the auspices of the Select Committee on Procedure. I hope that the Leader of the House will make the necessary arrangements so that the Procedure Committee can consider that matter again. It has discussed the matter in the recent past, but there are many new Members of Parliament who are keen and fired with antagonism towards the way this place works. I hope that that strengthens the feeling that we must put our own house in order by ensuring that we sit at proper times of day and that the business of Parliament, which is to hold the Executive to account, can take place on a far more sensible basis than at present.

11.52 am

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): The hon. Member for Nottingham, North

(Mr. Allen) suggested that Members of Parliament should be represented by a trade union. All I can say to that is, God forbid.

Today is a sad day in the history of the trade union movement in this country. We have had the humiliation of seeing trade union leaders returning from a visit to Ford in the United States with an empty bowl. It is a particularly sad day for Scotland, but also for industry in the United Kingdom as a whole. The Government have endeavoured to make the economic climate of this country one of the best in the world in which people can come and set up a business. The Budget has gone a long way towards helping that recently with a nice taxation policy which should be a positive encouragement to people overseas to invest in the United Kingdom.

There is no doubt that Ford did a great deal of market research before selecting Dundee as the place to set up its new plant. It evaluated a labour force which I am sure is second to none. I am sure that the people of Dundee would give faithful service and do a good day's work for a good day's pay. There are many other elements, for example, communications, to encourage business.

Despite Ford's decision, the United Kingdom is perhaps the best country in the world in which to set up a business at present. I hope that Ford will reconsider its decision. As a former, fully paid-up member of what is now the Amalgamated Engineering Union, I am embarrassed to think that my former brothers and sisters have created such a climate and refused to accede to the company's request, albeit reluctantly and after a narrow vote.

Companies come here and set up business to make a profit. They are not Oxfam or some charitable institution. Ford has a tremendous commitment to the United Kingdom. It has been here for many years and the plant in Dundee would have reinforced that commitment and provided the company with a gateway into Europe. It must have been reflecting on the future of the Channel tunnel.

I find it humiliating that we shall lose this valuable plant because the trade unions cannot get a firm agreement among themselves. When a pit closes, we hear cries about the social consequences for surrounding villages. We hear of the spin-offs of the earning power of employees and the company. Ford employees would spend an enormous amount of money in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom, and the company would be a major purchaser. Others would supply components. It is sad to think that all that will be lost because trade unions cannot get their act together.

It has been said that that is not the true reason for the decision, but the exchange rate between the pound and the dollar is about the same now as it was in the autumn when the decision to open the plant in Dundee was made. The exchange rate is no more favourable compared with the other countries where Ford is considering establishing a plant.

I remember when I was a training manager responsible, among other things, for the training of about 100 school leavers each year throughout the country. The trade unions renegotiated their rate of pay and sent us a communication to the effect that we would have to put up our trainees' salaries. We felt that we could not possibly do that, so the regional trade union leader came to see the managing director. I have never forgotten the scene. At the end of a long meeting, the trade union man and his team walked along the corridor rubbing their hands, and he said, "Well, brothers, we screwed them into the ground, didn't we?"

We were left with no alternative. We were told that we would be blacked and that nobody would use our services if we did not pay the demanded rate. The young people who worked for us had motor cars or motor cycles, dressed well, seemed reasonably happy with the money that they earned and enjoyed their recreation at the weekend with their girl friends.

The result was that we had to sack or give redundancy notices to 100 school leavers within a fortnight and, for years afterwards, we took on only about 20 school leavers a year. That was the trade unions doing something for their members. I vowed that I would get here so that I could do something to restore the balance. Since 1979, I have played my part in trade union reform. We have to restore the balance between management and the rights and privileges of those who work for a company.

I believe that there is a role for trade unions, but there must be teamwork with management. Unions should fight for the good of their members and give value for the membership fee. That has not happened in Scotland. It has been a complete disgrace.

The big fear is that other companies that have been thinking of investing in the United Kingdom will see that Ford has pulled out, and will say to themselves, "Ford is not silly. That firm knows what it is up to, and if it is not good enough for Ford, perhaps we should not come to the United Kingdom as we are proposing to do." I hope, however, that those companies do not think like that, and that the trade unions will knock their heads together round the table and say, "We must sort this out". These jobs are vital, not only to Dundee or to Scotland, but to the United Kingdom in general.

When I woke up this morning, switched on the "Today" programme on Radio 4 and heard the news that the trade union leaders were coming back with an empty bowl, I was very sad indeed. I am not being vindictive, or trying to make too great a political point; I am merely saying that the United Kingdom depends on sensible trade union leadership. Union leaders are paid enormous sums. They are given expenses, large office accommodation and often a very nice executive car. In return, they ought to be responsible — responsible for the interests of their members. That is what the members want, and that is why the Government have been intent on giving rights to trade union members. We have recognised that bad union leadership, like bad management, can sometimes be very costly.

We have given power to the parents in the Education Reform Bill; power to the council tenants to buy their houses; power to the consumers, with the privatisation of electricity. Now we have given power to the trade union members. It is terribly important to get this right. I do not wish to elevate my importance, but I hope that my small contribution will put out a hand of friendship to Ford. Ford will be loyally served in Dundee; it could not have chosen a better place. As for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, he could not have done more. Only the Opposition's embarrassment leads them to suggest that he did not do enough. That is dishonest politics. If the Opposition examine the history, they will find that my right hon. and learned Friend has been in there right from the off, battling to get plant into the United Kingdom.

[Mr. Geoffrey Dickens]

Ford could do without the aggravation. The firm wants stability and continuity; it does not want plant shutdowns. If it comes here, it will want to get on with the job, and I think that it is entitled to that. In return, the TUC must meet and sort out the differences, and deliver a unanimous vote—not the silly voting that we have seen recorded—to allow Ford to come here and get on with the job.

I believe that Ford will still come, but it will want a lot more from the TUC, and if it does not come it will not be the Government's fault. The Government have a tremendous record for job creation. This was an instance of that, and it is sad to see it slipping away. I very much hope that Ford will reconsider.

12.3 pm

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): The main theme of today's short debate has been neglect. Every hon. Member who has spoken has drawn attention to the Government's neglect of one aspect or another of our national life.

First, we heard about their neglect to put enough money and effort into the space programme. Then my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) told us about the neglect by British Rail, because of short-term financial considerations, of the Ribblehead viaduct, which consequently endangers the future of the Settle-Carlisle railway. The hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) followed that with a reference to the Government's neglect of the needs of air safety by not putting enough money into providing air traffic controllers with the technical equipment that they need to keep up with the increase in air traffic. In other words, there is obviously an absence of intelligent anticipation of what everyone knew was likely to happen.

The hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) drew attention to the Government's neglect of the housing needs of some people in Northern Ireland. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) drew attention to the neglect of the needs of people relying on the National Health Service in his constituency and in inner London in general. The hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) drew attention to the neglect of the employment needs of people in the south-west. In particular, he stressed that there were not enough regional funds entering the area. It is always worth remembering that the south-west peninsula is one of the poorest, lowest paid areas in the EEC. Women's pay in the area is absolutely appalling and 164,000 people are out of work there. The area deserves a great deal of attention and it needs much more money from the Government's and the EEC's regional policies.

My hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) drew attention to the horrifying events in Iraq and the treatment of the Kurdish people. He drew attention to the Government's neglect to do anything, make representations to provide an element of protection, or persuade the Iraqi Government to behave more humanely towards people living within their boundaries.

The hon. Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) drew attention to private sheltered accommodation for the elderly, which the Government have promoted, and to the Government's failure to anticipate the need for measures to ensure that old people were not conned rotten by people establishing private sheltered housing. Perhaps the basic law in that regard is satisfactory, but I rather doubt it. If it is, the necessary codes of practice have not been drawn up, yet the Government have been promoting private residential accommodation since 1979. They should have made some progress with the codes of practice. I suspect that it would be better if they had used a little of the enormously long Housing Bill which is presently before the House to provide an element of protection for people living in sheltered homes for the elderly.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) referred to our activities. It must be a question of self-neglect to the extent that there is anything wrong. We all know that there is quite a lot wrong with the terms and conditions of work in this place and with the facility to scrutinise the Government's activities. However, that is self-neglect. It is entirely our own fault that we do not have a better system of running this place at more reasonable hours.

Mr. Roger Knapman (Stroud): I was interested in the point made by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) and particularly his suggestion that there should be a trade union for Opposition Members. If the proposals were introduced does the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) expect that the leader of that union would be elected for life, or would he be subjected to occasional competition?

Mr. Dobson: Members of Parliament are not elected for life. Unless the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that we should all be elected for life—which at this time might be a good idea for me, but not for anyone else—his proposal is not on.

One of our problems in considering our activities as a legislative body is that the whole matter is dominated by theorising from a not particularly observant Frenchman in the 18th century. He concluded that Britain was ruled under a system involving the separation of powers of the Executive from the legislature and from the judiciary. He failed to observe that the person who chairs the meetings of another place takes part in the legislature and is also head of the judiciary and a member of the Cabinet. That suggests that some observers of our constitutional scene have not been too bright, although they have managed to dominate the intellectual approach to Government for nearly 200 years.

The other problem is the failure to recognise that, provided the Government party has a substantial majority, the theory that the House of Commons controls the Executive is not true. The Executive controls the House of Commons unless there are marginal majorities of parties in the Commons.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): On the Executive's control, does my hon. Friend know that the important decision in Brussels on agriculture and stabilisers is to be agreed by Her Majesty's Government next Monday and Tuesday in Brussels, but they have not yet arranged a debate on it? They should have done so before the recess. The Government have neglected to observe the spirit of the resolution of the House of Commons on 30 October 1980. There would have been time before this week was out for such a debate. Its lack is a constitutional loss to the powers of the House over Ministers.

Mr. Dobson: I agree that the House is not strong enough in relation to Ministers. In terms of the strength

of the House in relation to Ministers participating in the EEC's activities, it is weaker still. I make an offer to the Leader of the House: if he wants to make room for the debate which my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) suggests and which would meet the requirements of past undertakings, the Labour party will happily forgo the debates proposed on the Housing (Scotland) Bill. That measure could be postponed or totally abandoned and there would be time to discuss that EEC matter next week.

The hon. Member for Littleborough and Saddleworth (Mr. Dickens), who seems to have disappeared, referred to the decision of the Ford Motor Company not to go ahead with its plant in Dundee. There has been neglect there by the Government.

Mr. Harris: Nonsense.

Mr. Dobson: Since the Ford Motor Company said that it would not build the plant there, the only action taken by the Secretary of State for Scotland has been to go round, in and out of the House, denouncing the trade unions. So far as I know, he has not said a single word to the Ford Motor Company to ask the company to reconsider its decision. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman were serious about getting that plant in Dundee, he could have gone with the people from the TUC to the United States to discover whether an agreement could be reached.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Dobson: I shall not give way.

It is unlikely that what has happened with this plant will have any effect on inward investment by other companies. Not many other companies already have 20 plants in this country and a recognition agreement that applies to those and to any future plants, and then want to say, "We want to open one plant that is entirely outside those national arrangements." The Government should sort out whether they are in favour of single-union agreements. After all, this Government wished two unions on the Nottingham coalfields. They say that they want a no-union agreement at GCHQ. They have insisted that the negotiating bodies recognise organisations such as the Professional Association of Teachers in the existing negotiating machinery. There has been considerable Government neglect in all the spheres mentioned this morning, including neglect by the Secretary of State for Scotland in sticking up for the interests of Scottish people and the people of Dundee concerning the Ford plant.

I shall raise another point which relates to neglect. It was raised indirectly by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes), who mentioned the state of the Health Service in inner London. I have to declare an interest in that most of the area that I represent is covered by the Bloomsbury health authority, which has the longest hospital waiting list in the country. This year, its income falls short of its expenditure by no less than £4 million, and it is estimated that next year the shortfall will be £5 million.

As a result of that shortfall, the health authority is contemplating closing the Royal National Orthopaedic hospital in Harrow and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital for women, which was saved partly as a result of intervention by the Prime Minister. Last week, it considered, as an alternative way to save those enormous sums of money, closing all its hospitals for all purposes save emergency admissions. At present, the Bloomsbury health authority is spending more than £1 million a month on hiring expensive agency staff because the pay, accommodation and living standards that it can offer its own staff mean that people will not work for it.

Mr. Corbyn: Is my hon. Friend aware that one of the major problems for Health Service staff throughout inner London is the extraordinarily high cost of purchasing property or acquiring private rented accommodation and the loss of nurses' accommodation because of the asset-stripping activities of a number of health authorities? Does he agree that the Government must address the urgent problem of accommodation for NHS staff as it is more important that they, rather than a bunch of yuppies, should be in inner London.

Mr. Dobson: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. In my constituency newly qualified nurses earn about £4,500 a year. A privately rented one-bedroom flat in my constituency costs about £100 a week, and that is for a very rundown one bedroom flat. In some parts of my constituency there are one-bedroom flats for sale for more than £95,000. Can the Leader of the House suggest how a newly qualified nurse from the Middlesex hospital or the University College hospital training schools can continue to stay in the area and try to provide a service for people who live in my area or who come from outside for treatment.

I have a copy of a letter from the professor of medicine at University College hospital medical school to one of his patients. In addition to being the professor of medicine, he is also an active clinician. He says:

> "Present Government policy in this field is dominated by the determination to save money. It will either continue the serious underfunding which has led to a worsening series of crises in the hospital sector over the last two or three years, or will shift much of the cost for the Health Service away from direct taxation, which would mean that availability of health care would depend on each person's ability to pay. The option of increasing direct financial support of the NHS to the level that other European countries find necessary has been discounted by the Government, apparently as this would threaten its plan to reduce the top level of income tax."

The professor has to live with the daily consequences of turning patients away as he and his colleagues cannot deal with them because of the massive shortage of funds in that area. That epitomises the neglect and the lack of foresight, anticipation and investment that has characterised the comments expressed in all today's speeches.

We should remember that this is in a country where, for the past eight years, we have had the bonus of North sea oil. That oil has brought profits, bumped up Government revenue by more than £60,000 million and made it relatively unnecessary to buy oil from abroad. It has been like a continual pools win for the economy and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in any country with a sensible Government that one-off, golden windfall would have been invested in the future in plant and equipment, education and training and research and development.

But under this Government the money has been squandered. Far from increasing investment in manufacturing industry, investment is still down on 1979 levels. Since 1979, our share of the world market in manufactured goods has decreased by 20 per cent. Our manufacturers'

[Mr. Dobson]

share of the home market is down by 30 per cent. compared with 1979. Our imports have increased by 50 per cent.

Mr. Harris: Dundee will not help.

Mr. Dobson: If the hon. Gentleman is so perturbed about 400 jobs in Dundee——

Mr. Harris: The figure is 1,000.

Mr. Dobson: No. If hon. Members check carefully, they will find that 400 jobs are at risk—*[Interruption.]* I will concede the figure of 1,000. How many Conservative Members have protested about the proposal of the South of Scotland Electricity Board to buy coal from abroad? That would put far more people out of work in the Scottish coalfield. If they are worried about jobs in Scotland, they should be worried about all jobs in Scotland.

Despite the benefits of North sea oil, we have the biggest trade deficit in our history. A country that was once the workshop of the world has become the warehouse of the world, importing for the first time ever more manufactured goods than we export. Our young people are the worst trained anywhere in the developed world. We are just about used to our young people not getting the sort of training that is available in Germany, France or Holland, but now they are not getting the training that is available to young people in Taiwan and Korea. Yet the Government believe that we can compete—*[Laughter.]* Conservative Members laugh at the idea that young people in Taiwan and Korea get better industrial training than our youngsters, but it is a fact and we shall suffer in the end.

The hon. Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) mentioned science. Our scientists have been starved of funds for research into space, information technology and agriculture. Even medical research has been cut. It used to be said that one of the great British embarrassments was that we invented all sorts of things but did not develop them ourselves and they were developed by industries abroad. The Government seem to have established a think tank and have come up with an idea to get rid of the embarrassment. Their answer is not to improve our development of inventions but to stop the inventors inventing them in the first place. That is an absurd way to get out of bother.

The Government have no long-term plans for anything other than filling the pockets and feathering the nests of their friends. The country is suffering now, and will suffer more in the future.

12.22 pm

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): No one seems to be against our taking a few days' holiday, and the whole House will have shared in the tribute paid by the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) to John Silkin, whose last speech in the House was in the equivalent debate a year ago. He was a wise man, a tough politician and a great exponent of what are known by some as the black arts of the usual channels, but I can say from my experience that when he did a deal he stuck to it, in the highest traditions of the House.

It seems a long time since Christmas. We have made good progress with our legislation——

Mr. Dobson: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman has already taken up some of my time. If I am to reply to the debate, the hon. Gentleman should sit there quietly and let me get on with it.

Mr. Dobson: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. In rightly paying tribute to John Silkin, the Leader of the House said that the former right hon. Member never went back on bargains into which he had entered. There seemed to be some suggestion that I might have done so, and I would like to make it clear that I have not.

Mr. Wakeham: I am not referring to the hon. Gentleman in any way, shape or form. He seems to be a little sensitive about this, but there is no such suggestion. I was just saying that John Silkin, the former right hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford, was a man of the highest integrity. He was Chief Whip of the former Labour Government through difficult times and had a high reputation for sticking to his word. I would have thought that that was acceptable to all hon. Members.

We have had some good speeches raising many national, international and constituency issues. The only time that the debate became heated was when the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) got a bit excited about Dundee, but I can understand his embarrassment about that. I will do my best to reply to all the points that have been made. I do not have much time, so I will do so as quickly as I can. If I have not answered all the points, I shall write to the hon. Members concerned.

My hon. Friend the Member for Honiton (Sir P. Emery) made a strong case for the United Kingdom's participation in the optional programmes of the European Space Agency. Space plays a part in the development of Britain's science and technology base and can lead to profitable economic activity, but we have to balance the long term benefits of investment in space projects with investment in other industries and technologies. My right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 10 February announced that we would not be joining the polar platform programme in its proposed form. However, since then, as my hon. Friend the Member for Honiton said, there have been discussions between the European Space Agency and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration about modifications to the configuration of the polar platform. We are reconsidering our position and I shall see to it that my hon. Friend's views are passed to my right hon. and learned Friend so that they are properly taken into account before any final decision is made.

Sir Peter Emery: I thank my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer), not for the first time, and not even for the first time this week, raised the question of the Settle to Carlisle railway. Whatever the outcome, it could not have had a better and more persistent supporter than the hon. Gentleman. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport is actively considering British Rail's closure case. It is a complex case needing careful consideration and he hopes to make an announcement soon. The recent Jarvis plc report is a helpful contribution to the debate, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take it fully into account.

Local authorities have said that they will be able to help with the cost of repairs to the Ribblehead viaduct, but they will be confirming the position after a meeting in Carlisle on 12 April. The Government cannot guarantee that any particular local authority contribution will be enough to save the line. There has been some private sector interest, but no one has offered to buy the line. I take on board the hon. Gentleman's points, and I will see that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State sees them before he makes his decision.

My hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) raised what was both an important constituency interest and an important national interest — Manchester airport. This is a major airport and it continues to have what many people would consider to be a phenomenal growth — by about 15 per cent. in 1987 over 1986, with 8·5 million passengers a year. Since 1986, 30 new scheduled services have used the airport and now it is possible to travel to over 70 destinations from Manchester. The Government were disappointed that agreement was not reached at the talks with the United States delegation on 17 to 18 March to discuss increased access for United States airlines to Manchester. The contacts are being maintained and it is hoped that an agreement will eventually be achieved. My hon. Friend's strong words will encourage everybody to recognise that the travelling public, particularly those engaged in commerce and business, should be considered, and we should not take a narrow and restricted view of the matter.

The hon. Member for Belfast, North (Mr. Walker) raised matters to do with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. I listened carefully to him. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State attaches great importance to the maintenance of a housing programme in Northern Ireland, but it must compete with other priority programmes for resources within the overall Northern Ireland public expenditure programme. I noted his careful analysis of the problem in his constituency and I shall see to it that the Secretary of State understands and studies the points he made.

My hon. Friend the Member for Waveney (Mr. Porter) raised a series of questions about his part of the world, and I would not disagree with his view that they are important, although I might slightly disagree with the way in which he managed to exclude Essex from the east coast of Britain. Coastal protection there is an important issue to my constituents, and I have received a number of representations trying to improve it. I tread carefully here because my wife was born in Norfolk and many members of my family live in Suffolk.

The key to many of the transport problems that my hon. Friend raised about East Anglia is the M11-A11-A47 route to Great Yarmouth. Fifteen schemes from the M11 are currently planned or have been recently completed, to a value of £130 million. They will result in three-quarters of the route being dual carriageway by the early 1990s. At the London end, we have proposals for the Hackney—M11 link road, a £125 million scheme that will enable quicker access to the centre. I am sure that my hon. Friend will keep pressing us, but we are making good progress with some of the problems he raised.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) raised many questions about the Health Service, and in the few minutes that I have he would not expect a full answer to them all. However, I refer him to Wednesday's announcement by the Minister for Health, which was another sign of the Government's concern to improve services in the inner cities. My right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury announced on 24 February that, provided the various review bodies' reports were received during the first part of April, the Government would hope to announce the decision on nurses' pay by the end of that month. Of course, as the hon. Gentleman knows, I cannot anticipate the Government's decision on the reports, but I repeat our pledge that we shall implement them unless there are clear and compelling reasons for not doing so.

My hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) raised a number of important issues. All journalists should read what he said about the difficult situation in Northern Ireland. Everyone, including the media, must do all that they can to assist the RUC to bring to justice those responsible for the crimes of last week.

I have taken on board my hon. Friend's points about the EEC's structure plan, which I shall refer to the Secretary of State. I shall also refer to him the point my hon. Friend made about local authorities such as his, which are behaving perfectly properly but getting caught up in the necessary restrictions that the Government have had to bring in on creative accounting. I am sure that the Government do not intend to stop activities of councils such as the one in my hon. Friend's constituency. My hon. Friend rightly referred to the statement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State the other day about this matter.

I do not always agree with everything that the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) says in the House, and I did not agree with everything he said today — but I agreed with much of it. He rightly raised matters that are of concern to every decent person in the world and which relate to some of the terrible things happening in the middle east. I share his concern about the use of chemical weapons. Over a long period the British Government have sought to eliminate their use.

The Government remain deeply concerned about the continuation of the Iran-Iraq conflict and the tense situation in the Gulf. We are particularly dismayed at the loss of life of so many innocent civilians as a result of the "war of the cities". We have played a leading role in the United Nations and are currently working closely with other Security Council permanent members on an arms embargo to enforce compliance, should this be necessary.

As I said to the hon. Gentleman yesterday, I have a deal of sympathy for the early-day motion that he drew to my attention about the plight of Kurdish people in Iraq. I deplore the denial of human rights wherever it occurs and the difficulties faced by the International Red Cross in trying to get there to give humanitarian assistance to the people who are suffering.

My hon. Friend the Member for Fylde (Mr. Jack) raised a matter that started as a constituency problem, but he was right to bring it to the attention of the House. It is about the provision of sheltered housing for the elderly. The Government welcome the discussions that are taking place about establishing a trade association and a code of practice to help elderly people who are contemplating taking on properties in sheltered housing schemes. We support such moves and think that success will best be achieved by the self imposition of a code of practice by the industry and the dissemination of information rather than

[Mr. Wakeham]

by the use of legislation. By raising the matter my hon. Friend has done the House a service. The hon. Member for——

It being three hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion, MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 22 (Periodic Adjournments).*

Question agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House, at its rising on Thursday 31st March, do adjourn until Tuesday 12th April and, at its rising on Friday 29th April, do adjourn until Tuesday 3rd May; and the House shall not adjourn on Thursday 31st March until Mr. Speaker shall have reported the Royal Assent to any Acts which have been agreed upon by both Houses.

Court of First Instance

12.35 pm

The Solicitor-General (Sir Nicholas Lyell): I beg to move,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8770/87 on the establishment of a Court of First Instance; endorses the view that the setting up of this Court is necessary to relieve the Court of Justice of some of its workload; and supports the Government's intention to work for the early adoption and implementation of the proposal.

The motion deals with the setting up of a new court for the European Communities. In order to set this proposal in its context, it is helpful to look at the work so far of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. I shall take a few moments for a historical look at that before turning to the details of the proposal. I shall refer generally to the court's work under the treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community, not forgetting that the court has separate jurisdictions under the Coal and Steel treaty and under Euratom.

The European Communities are based on law, which is established by a treaty, which is not simply an agreement among sovereign states, but which has created for those who live and work in its 12 member nations a new legal framework. That is the Law of the Communities, and it is superimposed upon, overlaps, and to some extent remoulds, the law of the individual member states. The authors of the treaties rightly saw that one cannot create a new supra-national legal order without providing a means whereby those new laws are to be interpreted and enforced. It was to this end that a wholly new court was created, the Court of Justice of the European Communities.

That court has three principal areas of jurisdiction and they are very important. First, at the instance of the Commission, or of a member state, the court may declare that a member state has failed to fulfil its obligations under the treaty of Rome. Secondly, it may review the Acts of the Community institutions — the Council, the Commission and the Parliament — and it may declare them void. In other words, the court has power of what we would in Britain term judicial review over the actions not only of member states, but of the institutions of the Community itself.

The court has a third role, and this is the interpretation of Community law at the request of the national courts where a question of Community law arises in the course of domestic litigation. That, one might say, is the link between the private litigant and the Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

I should mention two other areas of jurisdiction that come into the discussion of the jurisdiction proposed for the new court. The Court of Justice has to deal — this has proved time-consuming — with disputes between officials of the Communities and their employers — the so-called staff cases. It also deals with cases where the Community itself is sued in damages for non-contractual liability. A good example is the case of Mr. Stanley Adams, which is a well-known illustration of that type of case.

In fulfilling its obligations under the treaties the Court of Justice has been at the centre of the development of Community law. It might be said that it has acted as the flywheel in the Community engine, maintaining the

development of the Communities, despite an occasional misfiring in the political mechanism. It has developed a number of fundamental principles, not expressly found in the treaties, providing for or safeguarding the rights of individuals and corporations. Among these principles, and perhaps the most important, is the concept of direct effect —that is the idea or concept that certain provisions of Community law create rights on which individuals can reply and which they can enforce in their national courts, even in the absence of implementing measures apparently required to be taken by member states.

Also well known are the principle of proportionality —that is, the means to achieve a particular objective should be proportional, they should be no more than is necessary to obtain that end — and the principle of legitimate expectation—a concept that now finds a place in our own domestic law of judicial review.

The court's work has been fundamental to the functioning of the Community. It may be asked, "Why is it necessary now to transfer part of the court's own jurisdiction to another court?" The answer lies partly in the increasing role played by Community law in the affairs of everybody in the Communities, and partly in the fact that the Community itself has been enlarged to double the size of its original membership. The result has, of course, been increasing difficulty for the court, as presently constituted, to cope with its enlarged work load. In 1970, for example, the number of cases of all kinds that were brought to the court was only 79. In 1985 that had risen to an absolute peak of 433, although the rise may more representatively be seen by the figures for 1986 and 1987, which were 329 and 395 repectively.

The court has done its best by adapting its procedures to deal with that increasing work load. In 1970, 64 judgments were delivered. Fifteen years later that number had increased to no fewer than 211 judgments. However, it is clear that the court has been falling behind and that has shown up in delays between the commencement of a case and the time of judgment.

In article 177 cases, those where questions are referred by national courts, that delay is now averaging 15 months, while in other kinds of cases the average is 21 months. In this, as in so many other legal areas, it can properly be said, "Justice delayed is justice denied."

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am grateful to the Solicitor-General for volunteering those periods. Is he saying that when a case is thus referred under article 177 the British domestic court—whatever level is may be—adjourns the case for a period either side of the average that he mentioned—some, of course, will be longer than that—and reconvenes the case to give judgment only after the receipt of the opinion, which may be well over 24 months later?

The Solicitor-General: Yes, indeed. That highlights the problem and the danger of justice delayed being justice denied for those in our domestic courts, whose issues raise questions upon which the treaty and the law of the Community bear. This increasingly difficult position has been evident for several years and everyone agrees, as the hon. Gentleman's intervention makes clear, that it is unacceptable. A number of ideas have been floated to resolve the problem, but none came to fruition until, during the negotiations leading to the Single European Act, the Court of Justice proposed the creation of a court to be attached to it and to act as a Court of First Instance. This was agreed and the provisions were incorporated into the Community treaties by the Single European Act.

The relevant provision from the EEC treaty is in article 168A, and reads:

"At the request of the Court of Justice and after consulting the Commission and the European Parliament, the Council may, acting unanimously, attach to the Court of Justice a Court with jurisdiction to hear and determine at first instance, subject to a right of appeal to the Court of Justice on points of law only and in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Statute, certain classes of action or proceeding brought by natural or legal persons. That Court shall not be competent to hear and determine actions brought by Member States or by Community Institutions or questions referred for preliminary ruling under Article 177."

The remaining paragraphs provide for amendment of the statute of the Court of Justice, the appointment of members of the new court, and establishment of rules of procedure for the new court.

Thus, the Single European Act does not itself set up a Court of First Instance, but confers power on the Council to do so. Furthermore, it confines the potential jurisdiction of the Court of First Instance to proceedings brought by natural or legal persons, thus excluding from it actions brought by member states or Community institutions and references from national courts under article 177. Subject to these limitations, however, it is left to the Council to determine the precise scope of the Court of First Instance's jurisdiction.

To complete the history, hon. Members may recall that the ratification of the Single European Act was delayed by court proceedings in the Republic of Ireland. Nevertheless, pending ratification, the court presented an informal draft proposal for consideration by the Council. It was this informal proposal that was considered by the European Communities Committee in another place, but the Committee was also able to take account of the formal proposal presented to the Council in October.

May I remind the House briefly of the conclusions reached by that Committee:

"The establishment of a Court of First Instance broadly on the lines proposed by the Court of Justice could provide a major step to solving the endemic problems experienced by that Court: inadequate time and judge power for fact finding processes and an excessive workload. Given a judiciary of high calibre and flexible procedures, the new Court should improve the administration of justice and take a considerable load off the Court of Justice."

So we now have a formal proposal for the establishment of the Court of First Instance. Subject to some relatively minor points both of substance and of drafting, the Government welcome the proposal.

In considering the proposal it is important to appreciate that no new jurisdiction is being proposed. The treaties do not permit this. What article 168A does enable is the transfer of a part of the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice to the new court, but with the provision for appeals to the Court of Justice on points of law. Secondly, there is no creation of a new institution. There will be a new court, but, as article 168A makes clear, that new court is attached to the existing Court of Justice. Essentially the proposal is to provide a redistribution of the existing jurisdiction and work load of the Court of Justice with a view to speeding up justice.

The proposal itself is in the form of a draft Council decision including amendments to the statute of the Court of Justice, and additional rules of procedure for the hearing of appeals from the Court of First Instance.

[The Solicitor-General]

Article 2 of the draft decision deals with the composition of the new court and provides for seven judges. While this has its attractions from the point of view of economy, it is not likely to be acceptable. The Government recognise the importance of there being represented in the court the juridicial traditions of all the member states and have therefore suggested — in line with the report made in another place — that the court should consist of 12 members.

There is no provision in the draft for advocates general. The Government believe that the provision of advocates general would generally be unnecessary and would also increase the time for the court to deal with cases. However, it is possible that there might be some cases where the services of an advocate general would be desirable: for instance, in a long and difficult competition case an advocate general could assist the court considerably in teasing out the strands for the benefit of the court. So it may be appropriate for advocates general to be appointed from among the judges of the Court of First Instance on an ad hoc basis.

The Court of Justice has proposed that the new court should always sit in chambers and that each chamber should be composed of three judges. The Government agree that there seems no real purpose in providing for the court to sit in plenary session, but there is a case for allowing flexibility in composition so that, when appropriate, the court could decide to select a chamber larger than three. In particular we consider that competition cases should normally be heard by chambers of five judges.

The jurisdiction of the new court is set out in article 3 of the draft decision. It is to deal with competition, anti-dumping and steel matters and also with certain non-contractual liability claims and with staff cases. It is clearly right to remove from the Court of Justice the burden of staff cases. The other categories are suitable for transfer, in particular, because they often call for detailed and time-consuming investigation of questions of fact which, because of the pressures of other business, the Court of Justice has not always been able to handle satisfactorily. On points of law there will be a right to go the Court of Justice on appeal. As I have mentioned, cases brought by member states or the Community institutions — as opposed to private individuals or corporations — and cases in which questions are referred by national courts will continue to be dealt with by the Court of Justice alone.

The jurisdiction proposed could be wider than that now proposed, with the aim of relieving the European Court of Justice of part of its case load to the maximum extent possible in one step, though it must be borne in mind that the extent of the jurisdiction cannot exceed the limits set down in article 168A of the treaty. But what is proposed is, in the Government's view, about right as a first, and substantial, step. We would expect the Court of Justice to keep this matter under review and, if experience shows that other classes of case could with advantage be heard at first instance, to bring forward a further proposal to amend the scope of the new court's jurisdiction.

If the objective of relieving the work load of the Court of Justice is to be achieved, the judgments of the Court of First Instance need to be of a high quality and so command respect. This will help to minimise the number of appeals on points of law from that court to the Court of Justice and will also facilitate the handling of the appeals that are made. It is therefore essential that the members of the new court should be of the highest calibre. The Government consider that it may be appropriate to provide for a Council minutes statement pointing out that all member states have agreed on the importance of this point. We have made a proposal to this effect in the Council working group, which is it.

The remainder of the proposal consists of additions to the statute of the Court of Justice and its rules of procedure providing for the circumstances in which an appeal lies and how it is to be made. The Government are pleased to note that article 48(3) of the statute provides for a right of appeal for member states and the Community institutions whether or not they took part in the proceedings before the Court of First Instance. This is important, as it represents a change from the court's informal draft proposal. The Government consider this matter to be important, since there could be a decision of the Court of First Instance with which the parties to the case itself were content but which raised a point of Community law of wider application which a member state would see the need to contest.

The proposal does not deal with the rules of procedure of the Court of First Instance. Under article 168A of the treaty, these rules will be established by the new court when it comes into existence. However, the rules require the agreement of the Court of Justice and also the unanimous approval of the Council. The House will therefore have a full opportunity to scrutinise the proposals for those rules.

I shall not detain the House on drafting points, except to mention two matters where the present draft in English hides a possible point of substance and which, in any event, only serves to confuse. The first point relates to article 113 of the additions to the rules of procedure, which concerns the order that a party may seek on appeal to the Court of Justice. This speaks of "conclusions" and "grounds" which a party must "maintain" in his appeal. What is apparently intended to be achieved by these provisions is that the appeal should involve the same subject matter and cause of action as did the hearing before the Court of First Instance. In other words, an appellant should not seek to mount an entirely different case on appeal. That must be right and the Government are seeking to refine the English draft more accurately to reflect that idea.

The second point arises out of article 120 of the additions to the rules of procedure of the Court of Justice and relates to oral hearings. The opportunity for the parties to urge and reinforce their case by oral argument is of great importance in the United Kingdom's systems of law. The court modified its informal proposal to the extent that the court now proposes that an oral procedure will be dispensed with only where the parties have, had a full opportunity to state their points of view in the written procedure. This must be right.

We have, I am glad to say, persuaded the court to accept a further amendment to ensure that the parties have an opportunity to make representations as to whether they would like an oral hearing before the court decides whether to hold one. The parties should by the close of pleadings at the appeal stage have had ample opportunity to set out their submissions and meet the submissions of the other parties, but they should nevertheless be able to

seek a hearing when appropriate. We believe that the Court of Justice now accepts this and that an appropriate provision will be added to the proposal.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): Does my hon. and learned Friend regard that as something new? He said that the individuals concerned may apply for the right to an oral hearing. Does he regard that as entirely satisfactory?

The Solicitor-General: I understand my hon. Friend's point. We regard it as the best compromise that we could achieve. I have already emphasised the importance of the oral tradition in English proceedings. Initially, the proposals to allow an oral hearing were more restrictive. We have made some progress and it will be possible for the parties to urge forcefully on the court the desirability of an oral hearing before the court decides to dispense with one. Although that does not provide an absolute right to an oral hearing, it is a significant improvement.

There are many other rather more technical points, and if any hon. Member wishes to raise any particular concern on the technical aspects, I would be very grateful if he or she would write to me, but I hope that I have made clear the general thrust of the proposal.

Mr. David Martin (Portsmouth, South): I have not yet heard a definition of who is a natural and legal person. I am sure that anyone who appeared before the court would have a great shock if he was told that he was unnatural and illegal. Will my hon. and learned Friend tell us to whom that definition applies?

The Solicitor-General: My hon. Friend will be comforted to know that he is a natural and legal person and so, as it happens, is a corporation. I hope that that will assist him for the time being.

To sum up, the Government welcome this proposal. We believe that it will improve the speed and quality of the administration of justice in the Community. We are participating actively in the Council working group with a view to resolving the remaining drafting difficulties, and we are doing all that we can to ensure that the Court of First Instance is established at the earliest opportunity. I commend the motion to the House.

12.58 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I had expected to hear a contribution from this side of the House, but I am pleased to follow the Solicitor-General, who introduced the motion. Although it is concerned with the extension of the European Court of Justice to a Court of First Instance, it gives us an opportunity to review the work of the court from which it springs and the need for it.

Those matters have been outlined by the Solicitor-General. In his initial remarks, he emphasised the superimposition on the institutions and courts of this country of the decisions of the European Court of Justice. We have had a relatively dramatic example of that recently in respect of spectacles, and we expect a fairly controversial judgment in the next few months.

The Select Committee on European Legislation summarised the proposals for an extension to a Court of First Instance in its report, HC43-VIII. As the Solicitor-General said, the other place did a more extensive investigation. Its report — House of Lords 20, in the Session 1987-88—goes into even greater detail, including witnesses' comments and more history of the court. There is the Government's explanatory memorandum signed on 23 November 1988 by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office. EEC document 8770/87 is in the form of a draft decision, and I take it that it is that base document in respect of which the working party to which the Solicitor-General referred is dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

This development springs from the Single European Act, which will become better known than when it was debated two years ago under one of the most stringent guillotines ever seen in the House — and that on a constitutional matter. The contents page of the Single European Act, as published in Cmnd. 9758, are scrutinised in vain for any reference to the establishment of the Court of First Instance. The provisions are interlarded into Single European Act articles 4, 11 and 26, which write subsidiary articles into the main treaty of Rome and expand on the three communities to which the Solicitor-General referred, inserting the relevant paragraphs relating to the powers of the Court of First Instance.

The treaty of Rome, as originally adhered to by Britain, is printed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, but it has not yet managed to print the treaty as amended by the Single European Act. A few weeks ago, I had a letter from the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office telling me that that is indeed so. I regard the delay as unfortunate, unnecessary and semi-constitutional. The Single European Act came into effect last summer after a delay, and I should not have thought that it was beyond the wit of man for the presses to have been set up some time ago and for the consolidated law, which applies as a written constitution to the United Kingdom, to have been printed.

A volume has been produced in Europe, but I hope that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the House would not regard that as a satisfactory solution to an increasingly important matter.

What I have said so far is fully compatible with my being Chairman of the Select Committee on European Legislation, but anything that I say henceforth will not be in that capacity but by way of personal comment. The establishment of the Court of First Instance, though it is only an extension of the existing court, marks an extension of the constitutional role of the EEC in the life of our country and the degree to which its findings and recourse to it will be important for corporations and other courts. It will not perhaps be so important for individuals.

In response to an intervention of mine a few moments ago, the Solicitor-General confirmed the degree of delay. In an answer given to me yesterday, which can be found in column 181 of the *Official Report* for 24 March, the Foreign Office listed no fewer than 23 occasions on which the Commission has taken the United Kingdom Government to court. In column 177, the Attorney-General said that since accession to the treaty of Rome the House of Lords has had to seek an opinion from the European Court of Justice on six occasions, the Court of Appeal on six and other courts of the land on no fewer than 64.

Although the Court of First Instance may not be fully involved—as we have heard from the Solicitor-General, it is not involved in article 177 consultation — that at least shows the importance of the institution. The court does not only give verdicts when we have been party, or there has been an appeal or at least a reference from our own courts. There is, I understand, a growing body of case

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

law in which different firms or organisations — or, indeed, different states — are involved in the European Court of Justice, and the findings of that court are applicable to us through case law, just as case law in our own courts has been applicable to jurisdiction subsequently. The European Court of Justice is important for that reason alone.

I do not know whether any organisation other than the commercial publishers—I shall not name them; they are very well known — is producing volumes of case law from the European Court of Justice. No doubt the Court of First Instance will be producing some of its own, and the House should pay some attention to the increasing documentation that will result.

Another consequence of the European Court's jurisdiction is the importance of determining cases on article base. We are becoming used to operating within a written constitution — or perhaps we are not becoming used to it, as the case may be. If we are not becoming used to it, we must do so pretty quickly, because it runs counter to most of our instincts and assumptions in Parliament, and those of Ministers in Whitehall.

A current instance of great importance relating to the Court of Justice lies in the interpretation of the treaties, and the question of which articles should be taken into account as the basis of law. That is particularly important in regard to articles 100 and 100A, which are important for the harmonisation to which we move as we approach 1992. Article 100, as it stands and as it was, requires unanimity for matters of harmonisation; article 100A, as introduced by the Single European Act, requires only majority voting. It may be asked why, as virtually everyone agreed with that, it cannot be speeded up. The point at issue is whether a particular matter should be regarded as a matter of harmonisation according to the aims of 1992—in which case jurisdiction should be based on article 100A — or whether it is a matter outside harmonisation for the purposes of achieving a common market, and should be based on some other article of the treaty, perhaps agricultural or industrial, or indeed, on article 100.

There is, of course, a big difference. If the court determines that the article used should be 100A, then the House, the nation and indeed the courts will be subject to a majority vote; whereas if it is subject to article 100 or article 99 — which, as the Prime Minister has often reminded us, deals with matters of taxation — it is a matter of unanimity. Perhaps those matters will not arise in the Court of First Instance. I think that they probably will not. However, it is important when considering the powers and responsibilities of the European Court of Justice that those matters are made clear.

There may be problems over a topical subject such as summer time and its dates and hours. Some people might argue that jurisdiction on that matter should be based on article 100A. In that case, a majority view must prevail in the Council of Ministers to which this nation, House and people will be subject. On the other hand, it might be contended, no doubt by the Government, that other articles are more appropriate because the case involves matters of social and economic affairs as well as harmonisation. In that case, the determination would be consequential upon unanimity and the agreement of the Government, possibly with debates and decisions in this House. If in due course the European Court of Justice has to make an adjudication not on the merits of the matter, but on the basis of the article on which a decision is made, the powers of the House and the Government may or may not be circumscribed.

Another matter in relation to the European Court of Justice about which the House should be aware is the appropriate juncture at which to bring it to the attention of the House. I want to consider the responsibility of the court to make judgments in accordance with the treaties. That is a sine qua non of the situation. People may not be aware of the fact that, unlike our statutes, where a court must take account only of the sections of the relevant Act, the European Court of Justice takes into account the context in which treaties have been made. It therefore takes into account when interpreting argument the preamble of the treaties concerned.

We are aware that the European Communities are essentially a centralist organisation. I want to put on record some of the criteria that the European Court of Justice would need to take into account when reaching a decision. There are a number of preambles to the treaties, not least that to the Treaty of Rome. The most recent preamble, the preamble to the Single European Act, contains two paragraphs which should be placed in the *Official Report*. First:

> "Convinced that the European idea, the results achieved in the fields of economic integration and political co-operation, and the need for new developments correspond to the wishes of the democratic peoples of Europe, for whom the European Parliament, elected by universal suffrage. is an indispensable means of expression."

In other words, the expression of view by the European Parliament should be taken into account in the interpretation of treaties.

I should explain that I am not quoting from the whole of the preamble, but simply from the final two paragraphs. The second paragraph states:

> "Determined to improve the economic and social situation by extending common policies and pursuing new objectives, and to ensure a smoother functioning of the Communities by enabling the Institutions to exercise their powers under conditions most in keeping with the Community interests. Whereas at their Conference in Paris from 19 to 21 October 1972 the Heads of State or of Government approved the objective of the progressive realisation of Economic and Monitary Union."

That is a second area in which the criteria of judgment of the European Court of Justice at any level will have to refer and on which it will ultimately have to depend.

I should also emphasise a point which I believe was mentioned by the Solicitor-General with regard to the nature of the European Court of Justice. The court is not adversarial. It is not in general a place where cross-questioning takes place or where witnesses appear. As I have understood and observed it, it is a court in which argument is made on points of law by depositions of papers, usually preliminary to any oral hearing, and that is normal in continental practice. I make no complaint about it in terms of the task that the European Court of Justice has to fulfil in respect of its constitutional interpretation of treaties.

Whereas dealing with technical opinion and the witnessing of experts is common in our courts, I surmise that that will not apply to the Court of First Instance. It will mirror decisions, with simplifications and without the opinion of, for example, the Advocate-General. It will, I hope, speed up the process. If the range of cases with which the new court deals involve great technical detail and

witnesses, I am not convinced that the paper method, used by the existing European Court of Justice, will necessarily be adequate to do what the Solicitor-General said was its aim—to see that justice is done, swiftly and adequately.

The Lords report touches on this matter to some extent, but I am not convinced that the new court will do its task to the extent that we would wish. The rules will be drawn up by the European Court of Justice. The treaties give the European Court of Justice the power to originate proposals for its extension. That was agreed—wisely or unwisely—some time ago by the House. I should have no objection to those who run the existing court saying to the Council or the Commission, "We suggest that we expand our activities in this, that or the other way." That is consultation and would be acceptable. To require the existing Court of Justice to provide the draft of the decision—in other words, to write the Bill for its own future expansion—and to give the framework for its activity, is outwith, to use an old-fashioned but well-known phrase, the experience, tradition and expectations of our constitutional development.

This is instanced by the fact that consultative document 8770/87 is

"from: Mr. A. J. Mackenzie Stuart, President of the Court of Justice of the European Communities."

It is almost like a new legal Bill coming before the House, having been drafted and presented by the Lord Chief Justice. We must be aware of that aspect and of the general manner in which the Court of Justice operates. There must be observation of how the court works.

I have referred to the probable increase in the scope of the court's work load. I concede that the articles relating to the Court of First Instance do not expand the court's jurisdiction, but the Single European Act certainly increases the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, because it significantly extends the European Community's scope and powers into matters concerning the environment, economic and social cohesion and defence procurement, which involves Foreign and Commonwealth Office co-operation, although I think that that is less likely to feature in a legal case.

Therefore, by automatic escalation, the scope of the European Court of Justice, not just the Court of First Instance, must also expand. That is where matters of detail, witnessing and argument may cause some difficulties. In future people may look back with some astonishment to the fact that the matter was taken on a quiet Friday, and that the original intention of the Government was that it should be discussed in Committee.

The amount of legislation which is creeping up the creeks and estuaries of Britain from across the water is growing daily. The areas of our social, domestic and economic life into which that legislation is penetrating are increasing. It is clear that not only will the scope and activity of the European Court of Justice increase and loom larger in our national life, but by definition so will the activities of the court that we are discussing today.

1.21 pm

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): The only obvious thing about these proceedings is that very few hon. Members wish to talk about this issue. I have only a few brief questions for the Minister after his courteous and helpful speech.

Perhaps the Table will give some consideration to the formula of the papers which are presented for debate and perhaps at some later stage will decide whether any rules have been breached. I draw attention to the explanatory note to article 120 which has been referred to by the Minister. It includes some very long foreign words which do not mean a great deal to me. I have never experienced this before in the House, and I wonder whether it is strictly in order or whether it is a precedent for long foreign words which have no meaning to the great majority of people who do not have a widespread knowledge of foreign words to appear in official papers presented to the House for discussion and which will affect almost all our constituents. I do not expect more than general guidance, but I hope that the Table will consider whether it is in order that long foreign words which the majority of people simply do not understand should be inserted in papers which are directly relevant to our discussions.

The Minister is always extremely courteous and he is an extremely good Solicitor-General. I should like him to comment briefly on a number of questions. He has expressed hope, expectation and optimism about the operation of the new court. He has explained that the European Court of Justice is getting busier. I am well aware from my research that, for example, the number of cases brought before the European Court of Justice has risen from 79 in 1970 to 329 in 1986. The number of cases brought each year has more than doubled from 200 in 1979 to more than 400 in 1985. We are also aware of the increase in expenditure. About £3 million has been added to the annual budget of the court by the creation of this new mini-court.

First, is the Minister aware, is he worried and is he concerned about the fact that Ministers, including himself, regularly come before the House to give optimistic and hopeful indications about future policy in relation to the Common Market, and in almost every case those expectations and hopes sadly are not accurate. For example, we were told by the Government and by the Civil Service that Fontainebleau would reduce the United Kingdom's net contribution. So far we have had three revisions of that figure, yet this year, despite all the hopeful conclusions, our net contribution is the highest ever and is still rising.

In previous debates, hopeful statements were made about Britain's trade with the EEC, and documents were presented for consideration by the House which we were told would improve the position. But our trade with the EEC in manufactures is the worst in history, with a net deficit of more than £11,000 million—something that could have an effect on the Government's economic policies.

Recently the Prime Minister came before the House with the results of a European Community discussion which she said would have a marked effect on agricultural spending, yet in the past few weeks agricultural spending has rocketed, exports from the EEC are cheaper than ever and we are flooding the Soviet Union with butter at 6p a pound and beef at 11p a pound. I am not being critical, especially of this most courteous and helpful Solicitor-General, who has an extremely good reputation in Government, but I suggest that in presenting this document Ministers should be suspicious about the optimistic noises that are made about the limited effects of the measure.

The Solicitor-General said, and gave me a kindly look in so doing, that the court will not create a new jurisdiction. On reflection, does he not consider that by

[Mr. Teddy Taylor]

offering new facilities for making decisions on complex matters he is extending the operation and jurisdiction of the institution of the EEC? He will be aware that, apart from the many cases that are presented to the court, even during the past few days many problems affecting the details of Government policy have been caused because of possible applications to the court. I mention only a few.

The other day, the unfortunate Secretary of State for Enterprise, as I think he is now called, was summoned by the Commission and told that his exciting new deal to merge the Rover company with British Aerospace was causing a problem. We were told that it had to be sorted out by next month, but he was hastily summoned over by the Commission and told that, sadly, this could not happen because the European Community wanted to examine it first to see whether the figures added up and were acceptable, and that it would take six months to do so. I understand that the Government took legal advice on what would happen if they went to the court, and were told that they did not have a hope. So that vital and urgent decision will have to be delayed because of a possible application to the European Court.

Some of my hon. Friends are careful with their purchasing and wish to ensure that they buy goods from particular countries. They are worried about origin marking, which the Government said was vital to protect the consumer. But recently we had to pass a law to ensure that origin marking, as we know it, will disappear—not because the Government want it, but because the Government's solicitors were told that if they resisted that proposal from the Common Market we could be taken to court and would lose the action. There has been a flood of transfer of sovereignty, not because of decisions of the European Court but because of potential decisions on applications that are undermining the freedom previously enjoyed by the House.

My third question to the Minister is this: will the new court deal with the policies of Governments as opposed to individuals or organisations? Many of us are becoming worried by the extent to which new powers are emerging that will affect Government policy. The other day the court told us that we shall have to charge VAT on spectacles and hearing aids whether we want to or not. We cannot discuss that in this debate. Very soon the European Court will tell the Government whether they will be obliged to levy VAT on electricity and gas for industry and on new commercial and industrial building. That could involve and extra £350 million in building costs.

My fourth question is about costs. I am well aware that industry and commerce, particularly small firms, are often worried about going to court because of the costs involved. We have a fair idea of what is involved with British courts. Several people, particularly in Southend, have expressed to me a concern about costs in the event of an application to the Court of Justice or to the new court. We have just been told that we must charge VAT on spectacles. Our application against that was turned down, and we have to pay costs. Could my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General give us some idea of the costs in European Community courts, perhaps by telling us what the costs in that case were?

Finally, in drafting this new court extension, did the Government give any thought to implementation? Quite a few of us are worried that, while the United Kingdom consistently agrees to decisions of courts and obeys them because of our traditional respect for the courts, in other countries decisions are not being applied because the domestic Governments concerned have to apply the law. Are the Government satisfied that other member states are applying the decisions of the Court of Justice as fairly and equitably as we are? Will the creation of this new sub-court include an additional clause which could have the effect of ensuring that these clauses are applied honestly and fairly in every respect?

Quite a few of us are beginning to get worried that in these various measures we are seeing part of a pattern of agreements which are basically taking away powers which have been traditionally enjoyed by this country. We know, for example, that my right hon. Friend the excellent Home Secretary has just brought in proposals to reinforce the gun laws and we now find that under article 100A the EEC is giving careful consideration to a proposal that would ensure that any person from a European country could walk up and down Oxford street with a Kalashnikov rifle as long as he had a certificate from his own country—in other words, a mutual recognition of firearms licences.

We also know that my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is concerned about the independent television companies. Our traditional patterns could be overturned or undermined by a majority decision in the EEC. Summer time will no longer be our decision but that of others. Even this morning, there was an alarming report in *The Daily Telegraph* that these wonderful new structural funds of over £10,000 million will benefit only one part of the United Kingdom—Northern Ireland. That decision in not taken by the people or by democratic Governments—it is purely a decision by the EEC Commission.

I suggest that this court is not such a positive move and might not be as easy for Britain as my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General has suggested. I hope that he will at least give us the clear assurance that in this matter, as in all others, he will approach European documents, whether written in English or any other strange language, with caution and reserve and read them carefully.

1.33 pm

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) asked the Solicitor-General a question, which the hon. and learned Gentleman will no doubt answer, about whether individual Governments are likely to have actions brought against them in the Court of First Instance. My understanding is that only natural and legal persons—that is to say human individuals and corporations—will be subject to proceedings before the court, although, once the Court of First Instance has come to a decision, it would be open to the Government or the Commission to intervene by way of appeal to the European Court of Justice.

I do not entirely share the hon. Member's emphasis on Community matters. His views are well known. However, I agree with him that there seems to be a contradiction in that the instrument before the House has as one of its objectives the escalation of hearing cases relating to competition matters. Once the competition directorate comes to a decision it will be possible to appeal in the Court of First Instance against its findings of fact. We are lending our hand to speeding up the operation of competition policy on one area, but there is no similar degree of urgency for dealing with the most anti-competitive part of the European Community—article

86 calls it an abuse of dominant market power — the common agricultural policy. So we are accelerating competition in industrial and commercial matters, but doing little to accelerate a balance of the market in agriculture. As we know, surpluses often damage not only our pockets but the operation of agricultural systems in other parts of the world — particularly South America and west Africa.

As a solicitor who specialised in competition matters, I should declare an interest when a new court that might deal with such matters is established. I endorse and underline what was said by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). He asked whether we could have annotated and updated copies of the treaty of Rome, which it is not possible to obtain in the Vote Office. Indeed, I am told it is out of print. An essential part of the British constitution is not available to hon. Members, and the book in the Library on the treaty has not been annotated or updated with the amendments that resulted from the Single European Act. When we debate these matters in the House, we labour under the difficulty of not having the relevant statutes before us. I hope that the Solicitor-General and other authorities will ensure that the articles of the treaty that we are discussing today — 100A and 168A — are available to Members of Parliament. It is unfair to ask us to debate European legislation without having it before us.

The treaty of Rome is part of British law and is directly applicable in some cases, as it is in other member states. It is no longer imposed by European courts or institutions. It has been adopted by the British Parliament and some of the amended articles of the treaty are directly applicable to the United Kingdom. It is important that the Court of Justice should be able to deal quickly with matters of law that are referred to it by national courts. The Solicitor-General said that jutice delayed is justice denied. Admittedly, there are occasions when it is to the advantage of one of the parties to proceedings to have a long delay. I am sure that the hon. Member for Southend, East might say that VAT was a case in point. However, it is wrong that proceedings in domestic courts can be delayed for some years as a result of being referred to the European Court of Justice, which finds itself with so much work that it cannot give a quick decision, and then having to return to a domestic court for a final decision in this country.

Speed and consistency of approach in different countries and in their domestic courts are important. I shall give a couple of examples of what I mean. Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome, which deals with equal pay, is directly applicable in member states. That was established by the Sabena case, in which an employee of that airline took proceedings in the Belgian courts to show the direct applicability of article 119. The employee won the case for equal pay, and that led to a directive by the Council of Ministers to member states so that they could legislate on the matter and create some certainty. I know it very well because I negotiated it.

Having negotiated the directive on equal pay, which we thought was already implemented by the Equal Pay Act 1970, we then had a challenge which established that our legislation was insufficient because it provided for equal pay for the same work, whereas the treaty provides for equal pay for equal work. That was interpreted as being work of equal value. I think that I am right in saying that the issue eventually came before the European Court of Justice which established that throughout the Community there should be equal pay for work of equal value. As a result, further amending legislation had to be passed by this Parliament.

An issue that began as a domestic one where somebody pleaded article 119 of the treaty of Rome led to the conclusion that it would be wrong if workers in one Community country had rights different from workers in another. Not only would that distort the terms of trade between Community members, but it would be a denial of basic rights granted to workers by the Treaty of Rome. It would be wrong for the Court of Justice to delay for some years adjudicating on that kind of dispute.

I shall give a second example of the direct applicability of the Treaty of Rome. Article 86 deals with the dominant power of a commercial institution, a power that affects trade between member states. That may be of considerable interest to the small business man or the small manufacturer — people who are very much bounden to those who have great commercial power inside the Community. In British law there is no absolute bar to a refusal to supply goods and services or on compulsion to take.

Article 86 of the treaty of Rome may make refusal to supply or compulsion to take illegal if an abuse of dominant power is involved and if it distorts trade between member states. There was an example of this when brewers in the north-east of England tried to compel their publicans in tied houses to take one kind of amusement machine, much to the chagrin of the suppliers of other machines — if I may use the word chagrin in the presence of the hon. Member for Southend, East. A supplier sought an injunction in the British courts to restrain brewers in the north-east of England from compelling their publicans in tied houses to obey their orders. The injunction proceedings were successful, because it was held as a result of the direct applicability of article 86 that a brewer was engaging in conduct that was an abuse of a dominant position. Thus the supplier of the amusement machines had his remedy.

It would be wrong if overseas suppliers of equipment — amusement machines, cars or anything else — were able, because of the United Kingdom interpretation of article 86, to operate with a greater facility in the United Kingdom than United Kingdom suppliers could operate in countries such as France or Italy. That is where the importance of the Court of Justice comes in, because in accordance with the British tradition of developing precedents, it can apply consistency as well as these directly applicable articles. A distinguished Scottish judge presides over the Court of Justice, although that in itself does not commend the proposals to the hon. Member for Southend, East.

I advise my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South that it is not unusual for the courts themselves to take the initiative on procedural matters — for instance, rules of conduct — but I agree that when it comes to substantive matters, the initiative might better come from another source.

As the Solicitor-General said, the problem is that the Court of Justice is cluttered with staff cases and to a lesser degree with competition cases that involve much complex elucidation and foundation of facts. I understand that not half the time, but half the cases that come before the Court of Justice involve staff. That makes the European Court of Justice the most expensive, prestigious, multinational

[Mr. John Fraser]

and multilingual employment tribunal in the world. It is ludicrous that staff cases should come before a court which is so expensive to operate and has such a big bench.

It seems sensible to establish a Court of First Instance to deal with matters of fact and where, for the time being, those matters will be related to staff, competition, dumping and certain matters involving the coal and steel communities.

I have one reservation about staff cases, which for two reasons, has been intensified by what the Solicitor-General said. I should have thought that the most appropriate way of dealing with staff cases would be to have some kind of staff employment tribunal, rather like our employment tribunals in this country.

First, from my experience of dealing with staff cases, such as unfair dismissal cases, it is often the cross-examination and oral evidence of the parties that is important. We are told by the Solicitor-General that in the proposed court the proceedings may be entirely written. There is a right to apply for an oral hearing, but not a right to have one. In staff and employment cases, the essence of the matter is often to cross-examine and to convince the court or the tribunal of the good faith, or otherwise, of the parties involved. It is extremely difficult to do that when somebody is not under cross-examination or giving viva voce evidence. That seems a good reason—made even greater by what the Solicitor-General said—for having a staff tribunal. However, I do not urge that as a reason for holding up the establishment of a Court of First Instance.

Secondly, and perhaps more important, now that it is proposed that a Court of First Instance will sit in chambers of five judges, rather than three, we are getting back to almost exactly the same problem as we have with the Court of Justice at the moment——

The Solicitor-General: Only for competition cases.

Mr. Fraser: I am corrected, it is only for competition cases, so I withdraw that objection.

It seems sensible to enable the speed of proceedings of the Court of Justice to be made greater by establishing a Court of First Instance to deal with matters that are largely of fact.

I suppose that this is a fairly unremarkable debate on what is, at least on the face of it, an uncontested matter, dealt with in a House that is largely unattended. However, in a way that makes this proposal more remarkable because we have a Community of 12 which, if one talks linguistically, joins Celtic and Greek, Germanic and Romance, Hispanic and Nordic, and people of different nationalities, races and religions in an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony. It is a Community of rivals, and in some cases of former enemies, which in an uncontentious way, is taking a further stride towards the establishment of an international judicial system.

Can anyone imagine that 50 years ago in March 1938, on a deserted Friday afternoon we would simply be taking note of a proposal that applied a judicial process to the behaviour of the Governments of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Salazar and Metaxas, who, I remind the House, was also a dictator, alongside the democracies of Western Europe? Five decades ago, or even less, the proposition would have been impossible, but it now fails to ignite even much concern. It is a remarkable achievement that a fairly uncontentious, relatively minor change in the procedures of the Community will be endorsed. It is as well to reflect that it is a sign that, in part, Europe is now a safer, more democratic and law-abiding place.

1.49 pm

The Solicitor-General: With the leave of the House, I shall answer this short but interesting debate. If I may say with some humility, the contributions, albeit limited in number, came from hon. Members—I absolve myself from this—who clearly have a deep knowledge of the European Community and its workings outside what might be provided for the purposes of this debate.

First, I shall respond to the anxieties expressed by all three hon. Members about the availability or non-availability of the treaty of Rome and the relevant treaties in the Vote Office. I have received information that the treaties, as amended, are available from the Office of Official Publications of the European Community and that the volume may be obtained through the Stationery Office. An application through the Vote Office to the Stationery Office for the updated volume can be made. I appreciate that there may not be copies in the Vote Office now, but I hope that that information will offer some comfort to hon. Members who take a great interest in the matter.

I shall take the several points in order. The House will welcome the speech of the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). It is well known that he is the Chairman of the Select Committee on European Legislation, and that is no easy task. We have learnt to respect his knowledge of this detailed area in several debates. He rightly emphasised the consitutional role of the European Court of Justice and drew attention, as he has done in recent days, to the delays that have arisen, as highlighted by the answers to his parliamentary questions.

It is important in this debate and in the context of the hon. Gentleman's point that articles 100 and 100A on the effect of harmonisation and the important questions of whether or not a particular change requires unanimity, or is available for the majority voting system, to emphasis that the Court of First Instance is not directly affected. But it is right to say that the establishement of a Court of First Instance will make available more time and judge power within the European Court of Justice to concentrate on the extremely important issues that come before it.

All contributors to the debate have emphasised what certainly is not as widely understood as perhaps it should be, and that is the seminal importance of the European court as the supreme court of Europe and its ability to rule on these supra-national matters which affect every country in the Community.

The hon. Gentleman went on to draw attention to the fact that the Single European Act has a premable and to draw upon his knowledge of the development of European law as developed by the Court of Justice. He pointed out that the principles applied will mean that it will study the preamble carefully in deciding questions in future. I am sure that he is right to make that point.

The hon. Gentleman is right to say that the work of the court will loom larger over the years, so he is right to welcome the Court of First Instance as making available to the appellate court—the European court—more time and opportunity to devote its attention to these matters.

Mr. Spearing: I am not sure that "welcome" is the right word. I omitted by error to include in my speech an

important point. If individuals are involved in the Court of First Instance, what will be the effect on the legal aid system of taking cases to or being a respondent in, the Court of First Instance? It may be that this has not yet been worked out, and although it is not part of the document that we are considering, I think that it should be given quick and close attention if it has not been considered.

The Solicitor-General: The hon. Gentleman raises a matter to which I freely admit, at this moment I have not given my mind. It may be that I can give him some guidance before the termination of the debate, but if I cannot I shall write to him.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) has a knowledge of these matters that is unsurpassed by anyone on the Conservative Benches. I thank him for his kind remarks, but whether my ability to answer his questions will justify those remarks remains to be seen. I well understand his chagrin——

Mr. Teddy Taylor: My what?

The Solicitor-General: I knew that I would raise a smile from my hon. Friend by using that word. It has already been used in the debate, although with a better pronounciation—I believe that it is an English word—and it describes how my hon. Friend felt about finding the word "Nichtzulatsungsbeschwerde" — I cannot do it justice — in the explanatory note to article 120. I am happy to say that the explanatory note precedes that word with its meaning—it is German for "leave to appeal". I hope that that will mollify my hon. Friend in his proper desire that we use language that is at least intelligible to a British audience when we speak in this House.

I have been rapidly assisted on the subject of legal aid, which was raised by the hon. Member for Newham, South. It has been brought to my notice that legal aid before the Court of First Instance will become a matter for the rules of procedure of that court — it is master of its own procedure. It is expected that legal aid will become available in the same way as it is already available for those who have to go before the European Court of Justice. I hope that that will be a comfort to us all. If there is any modification in that position I shall inform the hon. Gentleman, and I am grateful to him for raising that matter.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East took the opportunity to mention matters of grave concern to himself and to other hon. Members the trade deficits; the effect of Fontainebleau; agricultural spending; and the effect of the Community on mergers policy. Although those matters do not arise directly in this debate, and while I hesitate to apply the word "welcome", I believe that my hon. Friend will recognise the advantages that obtain as a result of the European Court of Justice, which has such a powerful, overall constitutional position in such matters, having its time more freely available for careful consideration of them. Its time will not be taken up with matters that can properly be directed to the Court of First Instance.

One may or may not like European developments, but, whatever one's approach, they are of huge importance to everyone in this country and to all member nations of the European Community. Therefore, it must be a matter of welcome that the court that has played such a developmental role in the concept of the Community should have adequate time and judge power to give fundamental matters the most careful attention.

In answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East I should emphasise that matters of Government policy, as opposed to matters for individuals and corporations, are not for the Court of First Instance. Should a case raised by an individual come before the court and give rise to a judgment that affects the Government, the Government have the right to take the matter on appeal to the European Court of Justice.

The precise figure of VAT on spectacles is not immediately available to my officials, but I shall write to my hon. Friend and let him know what it is.

My hon. Friend concluded by referring to the implementation by other countries of their obligations under the Treaty of Rome and the other two treaties. Although I do not wish to go overboard on optimism, on a number of occasions this country has exercised its right as a member state to bring matters before the Court of Justice and, therefore, cause our fellow members to implement their obligations under the treaty. The fact that the court is freed of more minor cases will make it easier to consider those matters quickly. In some of the cases that my hon. Friend has in mind, speed will be of considerable help to people and businesses in this country.

I wish to turn now to the contribution of the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). As I said, copies of the updated treaty are available, albeit from the Stationery Office. The hon. Gentleman again emphasised his deep personal knowledge of a number of matters that have come before the European Court of Justice, particularly in cases in which the treaty has a direct effect upon the rights of individuals. He emphasised the importance of justice not being unduly delayed, particularly in those matters concerning individuals. I agree with him about that. I should like to join him in paying tribute to Lord Mackenzie Stuart, the president of the European Court, in whose name these proposals stand.

The issue of staff cases has been of real concern over the years because of the amount of time that they have taken up with the Court of Justice. The number of staff cases in 1984 was 43, out of a total of 312. In 1985 the figure was 65 out of 433, and in 1986 it was 57 out of 329. Nevertheless, the hon. Gentleman's point is well made, as those cases represent a significant proportion of the work of the European Court and it is right that they should be dealt with elsewhere.

The question of a special tribunal has been discussed, but it has not been possible to reach agreement on setting up a separate and special tribunal. The beneficial effect of sending cases to the Court of First Instance is enhanced by the fact that this court can sit in chambers of three for such cases. A tribunal of three should provide a very much more satisfactory method of dealing with those cases than has applied hitherto.

The hon. Gentleman concluded by emphasising the importance of this international legal tribunal. He drew to our attention the fact that within Europe matters of supra-national importance can now be decided carefully by a European court in a way that would have been unthinkable 50 or 60 years ago. That is a major change. Of course, it has its controversial aspects, but we can join in commending this motion in the thought that adding a

[The Solicitor-General]

Court of First Instance to the European Court of Justice will enable that very important court to do its work better in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House takes note of European Community Document No. 8770/87 on the establishment of a Court of First Instance; endorses the view that the setting up of this Court is necessary to relieve the Court of Justice of some of its workload; and supports the Government's intention to work for the early adoption and implementation of the proposal.

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE

Resolved,

That this House do meet on Thursday 31st March at half-past Nine o'clock, that no Questions be taken after half-past Ten o'clock, and that at half-past Three o'clock Mr. Speaker do adjourn the House without putting any Question.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Monday 28th March, the Motion in the name of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to Community Charges (Scotland) may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after it has been entered upon, and if proceedings thereon have not been disposed of at the end of that period, Mr. Speaker shall then put the Question.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

Business of the House

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 29th March, the Motion in the name of Mr. John Wakeham relating to Televising of Proceedings of the House may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after it has been entered upon; and, if proceedings thereon have not been disposed of at that hour, any Amendments which may have been selected by Mr. Speaker may then be moved, the Questions thereon shall be put forthwith, and Mr. Speaker shall then put the Main Question or the Main Question as amended, and that, notwithstanding the practice of the House, the Motion shall be regarded as a single Motion.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

2.5 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): My understanding is that the motion permits one and a half hours' debate on Tuesday on the important issue of televising proceedings of the House of Commons. I and many other hon. Members of all parties fully support the principle of televising the House and, since the decision in principle was made, many who opposed the idea have begun to see some of the advantages and many who were in favour are perhaps more aware of the disadvantages. One and a half hours is insufficient time to consider such issues.

I have in mind two points. The first concerns Select Committees. Perhaps the majority of hon. Members feel that the hard work of Parliament goes on there as opposed to the glamorous air of the Chamber. Some of us may feel that a built-in percentage of television time should be allocated to coverage of Select Committees. The Public Accounts Committee is dear to my heart, but no doubt other hon. Members feel that other Committees merit coverage.

Secondly, control has been mentioned. One proposal was for the equivalent of a *Hansard* office to control the pictures that are given to the various channels, at least until hon. Members are reassured about the future.

One and a half hours is one and a half hours more than nothing, but is it within the remit of the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) to extend the time available so that more Back Benchers can be called to speak?

The House may remember that, during the debate on the principle, one hon. Member took about 40 minutes, others took a long time, and some, such as me, were involved in important Committees and were unable to participate. I fear that if only one and a half hours is granted, we may find that only five or, at best, six or seven hon. Members are called to speak on an issue about which genuine differences of opinion must be aired. For once, moreover, many hon. Members would be listening to the arguments.

2.7 pm

Mr. David Hunt (Treasurer to Her Majesty's Household): I understand that the motion has been agreed through the usual channels. If the motion is not passed, it will not be possible for any debate to take place on this business unless it is reached before 10 pm—it is not exempt business.

The hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) has raised two matters which I shall ensure are passed to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House at the earliest possible opportunity. I remind him that the debate will take place on a motion on the setting up of the Select Committee and on its composition. I believe that it is in the interests of all concerned that the Committee be set up as quickly as possible.

2.8 pm

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I had not intended to involve myself in this debate, but there are two aspects of the reply of the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt) which require some comment.

When, no doubt, the history of the televising of Parliament is written, those involved will examine what was said in our previous debate and that which is to take place next week. Conceivably, they will consider this brief procedural exchange. It is on matters of procedure that greater matters grow.

The hon. Gentleman says that informal agreement has been reached on the motion. I have no objection to such agreements being reached for the convenience of the House, but it is questionable whether such an agreement should be prayed in aid. I may be wrong—if I am, no doubt I shall be corrected—but my understanding is that the motion is about the membership of the Committee, about which there has been some controversy, and the Committee's terms of reference. That is open to amendment. I suspect that those are separate but important issues. There has been some discussion about membership, but I think that terms of reference relating to how the Committee goes about its work—apart from the principle—are also important.

Mr. David Hunt: It may assist the House if, while recognising the hon. Gentleman's concern, I direct his attention to motion 23 in the Remaining Orders of the Day. He will then realise, if he has not already done so, that the terms of reference for the Committee are not contained in the motion, but were contained in the resolution on 9 February.

Mr. Spearing: I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. Perhaps I should have been a little more circumspect. The formal terms of reference are, of course, there, but—I shall modify what I said—expressions of view on how the Committee goes about its business, and some of the ideas and suggestions that it might bear in mind, need some formal expression. The debate would enable that to take place.

I entirely understand that if this motion does not go through the matter cannot be debated at all, as it is not exempt business. I have no doubt that, if it had been tabled for debate late at night, an amendment might have been put down to increase the one and a half hours to two or two and a half, but that did not happen. We have what is before us now, and it may in effect have already been arranged. Probably, when we reach the end of the debate on Tuesday, some hon. Members will be creating that there was not sufficient time for what will be quite a significant and important debate in an important series of debates leading to important innovations.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 29th March, the Motion in the name of Mr. John Wakeham relating to Televising of Proceedings of the House may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after it has been entered upon; and, if proceedings thereon have not been disposed of at that hour, any Amendments which may have been selected by Mr. Speaker may then be moved, the Questions thereon shall be put forthwith, and Mr. Speaker shall then put the Main Question or the Main Question as amended, and that, notwithstanding the practice of the House, the Motion shall be regarded as a single Motion.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Ordered,

That Mr. Allan Rogers be discharged from the Committee of Public Accounts and Mr. Henry McLeish be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. David Hunt.]*

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c

Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Local Loans

That the draft Local Loans (Increase of Limit) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 22nd February, be approved.

Fees and Charges

That the draft Department of Transport (Fees) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 26th February, be approved.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Question agreed to.

Elderly Persons (Nottingham)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

2.11 pm

Mr. Graham Allen (Nottingham, North): It is a great stroke of fortune for any Back Bench Member to succeed in the ballot for Adjournment debates. I aim to add to that fortune the great privilege of speaking up on behalf of pensioners, and not only those in Nottingham, for much of what I say will, I hope, be relevant to pensioners throughout the country.

A civilised society should ensure that its elderly live an independent and secure life, enjoy the love of the community and receive whatever care they require, as a right rather than a privilege. By that standard, Britain is no longer a civilised society. Under the present Conservative Government, the elderly in Nottingham and throughout the country are not so much a respected and valued part of our community as a persecuted minority.

In a society that exalts greed and admires ruthlessness, the elderly are at best cast aside, and at worst treated as a captive market to be exploited by the new generation of Arthur Daleys created in the competitive climate of Thatcherite Britain. The treatment of our pensioners is a savage indictment of this Government. Let us examine their record on various issues in turn.

In 1980, the Government broke the link between pensions and earnings. If that link were restored today, the pension of a married couple would rise by £14·65 a week, and the single pension by £9·20 a week. Week in, week out, married pensioners are robbed of £14·65 through the callous, repetitive, inescapable mugging of the elderly by a Government, who, in last week's Budget, gave their richest friends over £2 billion in tax handouts. In Nottingham, it has been received less as a Budget from Robin Hood than as one typical of King John at his worst.

Whatever else we do by way of concessions and additions whenever there is a change of Government, a decent pension will remain the cornerstone for older people, enabling them to choose for themselves how they wish to meet their needs. It is important to stress that fact, because this year is the 80th anniversary of the old-age pension — not the Lloyd George pension, but the pension created as a result of great pressure from charities, the trade union movement and the Labour movement. That mantle is being carried now by bodies such as Age Concern. I pay tribute to the work of Jack Jones in fighting for pensioners' rights. I hope that we will all be able to contribute to that work.

In my constituency, one third of pensioners live below the official poverty line. People who gave their lives to local pits, local textile, chemical, tobacco and cycle industries in Nottingham have been thrown on a scrap heap and draw a pension equal to only 17 per cent. of gross average earnings. That pension is one of the lowest in Europe. We frequently receive some of the garbage from Europe. It would be fitting if we now adopted a similar pension level to that in France where the level is set at half the average wage.

I also want to consider what the Government intend to do to pensioners on 1 April 1988 when the great counter-revolution of the welfare state takes place. Ten days ago the Government presented the Budget for the rich. On 1 April we will see the budget for the poor. Next week's budget for those on pensions and benefits will hit the elderly in particular. In common with many other hon. Members, I have already had a procession of desperate, anxious pensioners at my surgery, worried sick about their income after 1 April. I want to use two examples from my postbag and my surgery this week.

Mr. T of Strelley in Nottingham has discovered that his industrial disablement pension will henceforth be taken into account when his housing benefit is calculated. Previously it was disregarded. Mr. T worked for most of his life down the pit and he was injured in an accident in a pit in Nottingham. He receives industrial disablement pension which is currently discounted in calculating his £54·14 housing benefit. After 1 April without any change in Mr. T's means or circumstances he will discover that his housing benefit is reduced to £15·95 a fortnight. In other words, he will lose £38·19 a fortnight or £19 a week without receiving any additional income. He has committed no offence. He has not carried out a robbery or any outrage in society. On the contrary, he has contributed sweat and blood to this country for many years. On 1 April he will be fined £19 every single week that he remains alive.

My other example concerns a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. P who live in Cinderhill in my constituency. Mr. P suffered an industrial accident and completely lost his hearing. As a result, he was awarded the maximum industrial disablement pension of £67·70. Hitherto that was disregarded when calculating housing benefit. After 1 April it will be roped in with any other income that that pensioner couple has. They will totally lose their housing benefit. Every fortnight £32·59—£16 a week—will be taken from that couple, despite no apparent change in their way of life. They will suffer a week-in, week-out fine of £16 a week for the rest of their lives. Just a few days before this decision, billions upon billions of pounds were given away in tax handouts to those who could well afford to do without that additional income. In addition, those people whom I have mentioned will have to pay, perhaps for the first time, at least 20 per cent. of their rates. They are just two examples of how the changes on 1 April will affect many of my constituents.

Those on housing benefit will have benefit reduced by £1 for every £250 over £3,000 that they have in the bank and no housing benefit will be payable if they have more than £6,000 put aside. We exhort people to make proper provision for their old age, yet those who can afford to put a little money aside will find that they have done so just to save the Government money. The Government through the local authorities, which they are subtly using as agents, will recoup a large amount of that money. One Conservative Member has proposed, as perhaps some sort of tax dodge, that these people should pay in advance for their funerals as a way of getting some of that money out of the bank. That sort of callous, hard-hearted attitude typifies the way in which the elderly are viewed.

Overall, the changes on 1 April will leave the average pensioners, aged 60 to 79, £1 a week worse off. In my constituency, notably in Bilborough, many pensioners are the unsung, unheard of victims of the right-to-buy policy introduced by the Conservative Government. They live in British Iron and Steel Federation houses which were owned by the city council and they are now stuck with those properties, unable to sell them because building societies will not lend money to prospective buyers, but the Government will not declare those properties defective.

Some people cannot get a mortgage to buy these properties and there are no grants available to bring them up to mortgageable standard.

The city council—a Conservative council—will not buy back the properties. On the contrary, it is continuing to sell properties that it well knows people will not be able to sell on. It may sound strange to some hon. Members, but many of these people are first-time buyers at the age of 60, 65 or older. They do not know the way in which the system works. Many are buying a pig in a poke which they are not able to sell. They could be the very people hit by the changes in the social fund on 1 April.

Social fund help for large one-off expenses such as roof repair — some roofs in Bilborough are thought to contain asbestos—will be given in the form of a loan or grant, and pensioners in particular will be worried about their ability to repay the loans. Equally, for people in that position, as a result of the Budget no tax relief will be available for home improvement grants. To add insult to injury, at the end of the equation, the Tory poll tax will mean that even pensioners on the lowest incomes will have to pay at least 20 per cent. of the full poll tax charges instead of getting the current rate rebates.

One of the most obvious, and most easily avoidable tragedies that could beset the elderly is death or discomfort through lack of proper heating. More pensioners die of cold in Britain than in Canada or the Nordic countries where winters are far more severe, yet the insulation programme, which could play such a vital part in easing that problem and saving old people's fuel bills as well as saving their lives, has been cut to one seventh of what it was in 1979, during its first full year after implementation by the Labour Government in 1978.

Standing charges for gas and electricity still bite a disproportionately large chunk out of the fuel bills of the elderly. The most contentious part of the old and the cold story is the confusing severe weather payments which miss many of the most vulnerable people. Last year, only one in 10 pensioners received any payment at all, and I understand that the average payment was just £10. That must be wrong. It must be replaced by a flat-rate winter heating allowance which is paid automatically when it is needed and not long afterwards when old people have decided not to switch on the heating because there are too many forms to fill and too much bureaucracy and they take the risk of dying of hypothermia, or at best suffering terrible unnecessary discomfort in the cold.

Another issue that has been raised with me on a local basis concerns television licences. This morning I had the privilege of presenting a petition to the House from Mrs. Hunt and 400 local pensioners who ask that the House consider bringing in concessionary television licences. The Labour party's position is clear and simple. We consider that all pensioners should be given free TV licences. We fought the last general election on that promise and I hope that we shall do so again until we can deliver.

The television is a friend and a comfort and a source of pleasure and entertainment to many elderly people, yet at £62·50 for a colour licence the price is prohibitive to most pensioners. However, when I raised this matter with the Minister of State, Home Office, he said that any scheme of concessionary licences would be expensive in terms of lost revenue. Indeed, it may, but when the Government hand out billions of pounds to their friends and to people who are not in need, surely some concession can be made to help the elderly when they get so much pleasure from such a small amount as would be provided to them through such concessionary licences. However, the Minister of State ruled out any changes.

I ask the Minister to consider the matter again and make representations to his colleagues at least to extend the system of 5p licences which currently applies to sheltered housing for all other pensioners in Britain.

In addition to the difficulties that pensioners experience because of Government policies, the elderly in Nottingham suffer the burden of an extremely dogmatic Tory council which tries to mimic, outdo, and impress its national mistress as if it were some sort of brainless lap dog. The clearest evidence of that ruthless approach has been the selling of the council's purpose-built houses for the elderly and disabled. As more homes are flogged off, there are fewer to go round because the council has stopped building such homes. A lengthening queue of people in pain and need—people who have the medical criteria necessary to be selected automatically for a purpose-built bungalow — cannot obtain such accommodation because the homes have been sold. That Tory local authority should be held in contempt by all right-minded Members on both sides of the House.

In the past week, Nottingham has been selected for the experimental selling-off——

It being half-past Two o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment lapsed, without Question put.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Dorrell.]*

Mr. Allen: Nottingham has been selected for the first trials of a new scheme that will result in the sale of council estates. The research programme being undertaken by a market research company on behalf of the Department of the Environment involves interviewing groups of eight to 10 people on estates in Nottingham—in Bestwood Park, Top Valley Bestwood and Broxtowe in my constituency —for one and a half hours trying to find the best gloss to put on the sale of council estates to private landlords.

Needless to say, the elderly in Nottingham remember well the era of the private landlord. My family came from an area that was dominated by private landlords. It was an area of high rents, lack of repairs, no modernisation programme and, above all, fear because of no security of tenure. Elderly people who have been council tenants for 30 or 40 years fear for their future, because a small minority of tenants could, with the inducements offered and the attractive way in which a scheme may be promoted, sell their birthright in council estates. There will be no going back. Once those estates are sold, the asset-strippers will ensure that they never return to public ownership.

All that is taking place despite the fact that the Housing Bill has not yet completed all its stages through Parliament. Groups of people are scouring the country conducting interviews so that they can sell estates when the legislation is passed. Not only is that unconstitutional, but I fear the drastic consequences if people are lured into accepting apparent bargains and are then trapped by private landlords—perhaps even slum landlords—who may not take their responsibilities seriously.

Nor can a shortfall in assistance for the elderly be made good by the county council. It has to make resources for social services stretch further than ever before. The county council has one of the best records in the country for

[Mr. Allen]

inspection of residential homes. It is rightly proud of that record, but is is now restricted from carrying out that important function.

For those who depend on residential care, and for those who may do so in the future, the picture becomes bleaker. Private homes for the elderly have expanded massively as support from the Government — subsidy by the Government—has increased from £10 million in 1979 to £485 million last year. The Public Accounts Committee, of which I am a member, has considered the matter and will report on it soon. The Thatcherite entrepreneurs have seen a killing to be made from the slogan "care in the community". In many cases, the elderly have become like livestock, pulling in up to £220 a head each week from DHSS payments to private nursing homes. At the same time, local authority provision is static or running down and our long-stay hospitals are asset-stripped by hard-faced private sector managers and the cosseted consultants who now direct the NHS.

The Griffiths committee was set up to look at the issue and it suggested that one of the answers was to give more control and direction to local authorities. That in itself was enough to condemn it, within days, to the Government's shredder. I ask the Minister to make clear when the Griffiths report will go out to the widest possible consultation, and when the Firth and Wagner reports will also go out for consultation. Is there any time scale for action on those three reports? Many of us fear that all three reports will be consigned to the back shelf to gather dust, because they are unpopular with certain sections of the Government.

The elderly, more than most, depend on the Health Service, and yet the Government have stopped the supply of NHS spectacles and soon will impose charges for eye tests, deterring early detection of glaucoma, diabetes and cataracts which are common among the elderly. Pensioners were particularly hard-hit when the Government's limited list stopped doctors prescribing free many of the drugs that pensioners were used to.

Now, the junior health Minister talks of giving low priority to the elderly who need treatment. So often, the elderly are at the end of the queue. It is not glamorous to be involved in his replacement and it is far easier to spend money on services other than those that are vital for elderly people, such as chiropody. In Nottingham, to balance the books, the geriatric ward at the City hospital has been closed over the past three months, with the prospect of at least a further six months' closure.

Today's old people are no ordinary generation. They survived the war and defeated Hitler's Nazi tyranny. They went on to found the welfare state and the National Health Service. They deserve to be treated better. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is a reasonable command when they have done so much for us.

The recent Gallup poll in *The Daily Telegraph* showed that the Labour party had a 30-point lead over the Government on pensioners' issues. Some 52 per cent. of those polled said that Labour would be the most likely party to look after Britain's pensioners, compared with 22 per cent. opting for the Conservatives and 12 per cent. for what was then the alliance. That trust is hard-won and richly deserved. It will be reinforced when this disrespectful, hard-hearted, mean-spiritied, cheeseparing Government have been thrown out. For many pensioners, that day cannot come too soon.

2.37 pm

The Parliamentary-Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Michael Portillo): I congratulate the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Allen) on obtaining this Adjournment debate. I happened last night to be in a Birmingham television studio, at Central TV, where a little feature on the hon. Gentleman was put together. I am not sure whether he is aware of it. A computer print-out of all the occasions when he has spoken in the House was produced, and it was a long document. I think I am right in saying that this is the first occasion on which he has had an Adjournment debate.

Mr. Allen: No, the second.

Mr. Portillo: The second occasion. I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on it and on his many other interventions.

In, the previous debate, the hon. Gentleman referred to the glamour of debates in the Chamber. I am not sure whether he and I together constitute a glamorous debate, but we shall do our best.

I take issue with the hon. Gentleman on a number of points. I begin by addressing myself to one that was foremost in what he said — the living standard of pensioners. He will recall that in our last manifesto we pledged ourselves to continue to maintain the value of the retirement pension. We also said:

"retired people value their independence. They do not want to rely on the state alone for their income. nor, increasingly, are they doing so. We share Beveridge's original goal of a good basic pension from the state, together with a second income from occupational and personal pensions and savings."

Over the past nine years we have worked steadily along the lines of that pledge. We have protected the value of the basic state pension, and it will rise again in a few days' time by £2·65 for a couple and £1·65 for a single person.

More important, through our economic policies we have provided a climate of growth for the non-state portion of pensioner's incomes. Unlike the Opposition, we have always sought to recognise that only half of pensioners' incomes comes from state provision. The pensioners can be done no good by increasing the state pension and ignoring savings and occupational pensions that are now such an important part of their income. That was tried by the Labour Administration, and I remind the House of its results.

Between 1974 and 1979 pensioners' total incomes rose by a miserable 3 per cent. in real terms. In this Government's first six years pensioners' total incomes rose by 18 per cent.—almost as much every year as during the entire period of the Labour Government. Pensioners have improved their position relative to the working population as well, whereas under the Labour Government their relative incomes fell. Those contrasting figures help to put the hon. Gentleman's remarks into context.

The growth that we have prompted in pensioners' incomes applies fairly evenly to all groups of pensioners, younger, older, less well off and better off. We have every expectation that the trend will continue as more and more pensioners retire with second pensions. Seven out of 10 newly retired married couples have occupational pensions now, as do half of all pensioners. The steps that we have

taken to stimulate the development of occupational pension schemes will, we hope, further increase the proportion with this form of additional income. Already more than 85 per cent. of pensioners have pensions from work, or savings income, or both. We look forward to a society in which every elderly person has income in retirement over and above the state pension.

I thought that the hon. Gentleman's European comparisons were misplaced. Spending on the elderly in the United Kingdom is now the third highest in the European Community as a proportion of gross domestic product, at 9·6 per cent. that is based on 1983 figures, which are the latest definitive ones that we have. However, the partial figures for 1984 show that spending in the United Kingdom was rising as a proportion and falling in other countries. The comparisons on that basis of GDP are the only measure of pensioner support that the European Statistical Bureau can confirm as accurate.

It is in the light of some of those figures, and the reduction in inflation that has enabled pensioners to benefit so much from their savings, that we must view the reforms in social security to which the hon. Gentleman alluded. He called them a counter-revolution. In the coming year we shall be spending almost £1 billion a week on social security, which is not a counter-revolution in the sense that he meant. It may go further than Beveridge had in mind, but it is not a counter-revolution.

We shall be spending rather more, in effect, on income support—the benefit that replaces supplementary benefit — than on supplementary benefit, which is a complicated benefit with more than 20 extra weekly additions that depend on detailed questions about individual personal circumstances. It is a confusing, outmoded benefit and it does not have many friends left among the public or staff who try to administer it. Income support is a simpler system that gives better service to the public. It directs resources more effectively to the groups of claimants who face the greatest pressure — the people whom we have identified as being families with children, and the sick and disabled.

We have put another £220 million into income support to help us achieve some of our objectives. We put a similar extra sum into the new benefit of family credit to help working families with children. However, that is by the way, because this debate is about the elderly.

Between 1979 and 1985 pensioners' total net incomes increased, and it is only by remembering that that we can begin to address the question of the reforms. We must recognise that the base line is very much higher than it used to be and that it is fully protected in our reforms. The rate for a single pensioner between the ages of 60 and 79 is £10.65 more than the support for an unemployed man of 55. That is within the new income support system and reflects the priority that we give to the elderly in that system. That new premium covers the old standard heating addition in supplementary benefit, the long-term rate under supplementary benefit, average water charges and 20 per cent. of average rates.

Mr. Allen: Will the Minister tell the House why the Government broke the link between pensions and the rise in earnings?

Mr. Portillo: I think that I have explained that to the hon. Gentleman, because I said that what matters is what the pensioner ends up with. Under this Government the pensioner has ended up with a 3 per cent. increase over the years. The Government formed by the hon. Gentleman's party tried to sustain the link between the pension and earnings but could not quite do it because one year they had to change the method of calculation and some money got lost on the way through. Under that Government the income of pensioners improved hardly at all, despite valiant efforts to keep it up. I hope the hon. Gentleman will agree that what matters is the outcome. There is no point in enormous pension rises if there are also enormous rises in inflation. One may be able to keep pensions in line with inflation, but nothing can be done about savings that are losing their value behind the scenes. That is the point that we have addressed.

We have doubled the maximum amount of savings that a claimant may have while still qualifying for some benefit under income support as compared to supplementary benefit. We estimate that this change alone will mean that a further 10,000 pensioners will be able to qualify for income support. We are also told sometimes that although we have established this pensioner premium, it does not cover people who receive payments for a large number of additional requirements. That might be so in particular cases, but the effect should not be exaggerated. The receipt of these additional requirements under supplementary benefit is frequently overstated.

Three quarters of those eligible for pensioner premium under the new system received no more than one additional requirement under the old system, and only 5 per cent. received three or more. The majority of these additional requirements are more than covered by the pensioner premium. The reform will result in 61 per cent. of pensioners getting more or being unaffected by the changes. The remaining 39 per cent., who would otherwise have received less, will under the new system, receive transitional protection and about £200 million will be spent on maintaining that benefit income. That means that no one transferring from supplementary benefit to income support will lose as a result of the introduction of the new income support scheme.

The hon. Gentleman spoke about housing benefit. That is also being restructured in the same way to give the greatest help to people who are in the greatest need. About 620,000 pensioners on housing benefit will gain, and most pensioners remaining on the benefit will see a cash increase in April. The hon. Gentleman spoke about the capital rule and I know that he is interested in equity. It is difficult to justify to taxpayers on the 25 per cent. rate who are perhaps paying 9 per cent. in national insurance, and who may have no savings whatever in the bank, why they should pay taxes in order to provide benefit to people who have more than £6,000 in the bank. The hon. Gentleman needs to address that problem.

I recognise that there has been some uncertainty among claimants about the effects of the April changes. The campaign mounted by some people in the hon. Gentleman's party has not always been very accurate and must have added to the anxiety and the difficulties that people have in understanding the system. When all the reforms are taken together, nearly nine out of 10 people will be no worse off the day after the reforms than they were on the day before them, and many will be better off.

Mr. Allen: I should like to make just two brief points. The first relates to the £6,000 rule. I made the point that

[Mr. Allen]

the Government are now discouraging people from saving and putting money aside because they will be penalised. Surely that goes against any sensible economic policy.

Secondly, I must pick the Minister up for implying that the anger in the community especially among the elderly, has been generated by a campaign either by Opposition Members or by people outside. People come to surgeries in droves. They do not need to be inspired or incited to do so, because they are people who will suffer. I gave the Minister two examples. The first was of a couple who will lose £16 per week, and another was of a gentleman who will lose £18. Those people do not come to surgeries because of a great campaign; they come because the Government's policies are hitting and hurting them.

Mr. Portillo: I do not dispute that a small minority will lose, but I advise the hon. Gentleman that the vast majority will either remain the same or gain. Many of those people have been stirred up to anxiety or worry, and even though those anxieties will prove groundless, I am concerned that they are being put through such distress at the moment.

As for capital, apart from housing benefit, there has always been a capital rule for other income-related benefits. What discourages thrift in the first place is having a benefit system. One must recognise that as soon as there is a benefit system there is less reason to provide for one's future than there was before. That is a problem in itself. If one is to direct benefits to the people who need them most, there must be some sort of rule about the level of income at which they cease to qualify and at what amount of capital they cease to qualify. We think that we have got that about right with the important advantage that now, in all three income-related benefits, the same rule on capital will apply. That will be less confusing and lead to fewer perverse results than we have sometimes had in the past.

Mr. Allen: I am anxious not to intervene too often, because I am sure that the Minister will say "no" on one occasion. If, on average, half an elderly person's income comes from sources other than the state pension, there are clearly a large number of people, the majority of whose income does not come from the state pension, but, equally, there must be a large number of people who are almost entirely dependent on the state pension. I urge the Minister to address his remarks to those people and not to a mythical average. I urge him to address the people who are at the sharp end of the cuts, the counter-revolution, or the reforms—whatever one wishes to call the changes of 1 April—because, by and large, those people are working-class pensioners who are dependent on the state pension, and it is they who will suffer the most, especially in relation to housing.

Mr. Portillo: I am content to address myself to that, because the pensioners who are most in need are those who currently receive supplementary pension on top of the state pension. There are about 1·8 million such pensioners. They will receive full housing benefit, which is 100 per cent. of rent and 80 per cent. of rates because they receive supplementary benefit at the moment, which means that they have capital of less than £3,000. More pensioners will qualify for income support because the capital rule for income support is more generous than that for supplementary benefit. That is why I said earlier that about 10,000 more pensioners will qualify for income support. This means that 10,000 more people coming on to income support will qualify for full housing benefit, whether or not they qualify at the moment for partial housing benefit.

The hon. Gentleman made some remarks about residential care. I shall not spend long replying to that. I have watched with interest the line of questioning that he has been pursuing in the Public Accounts Committee. He was extremely unfair in his remarks about the private sector. I ask him to recognise that there are many excellent private homes, doing a very good job, although there are some homes in which the standards are poor, and which have caused a great deal of concern, but those homes are in both the private and local authority sectors. We have had some bad instances in the local authority sector.

The hon. Gentleman also asked me about the Griffiths report, which is now out for consultation. The Wagner report is also out for consultation, and the Firth report has been out for quite some time. We look forward to comments on those. Obviously I cannot in any way prejudge what the Government will say about that. We will bring forward our proposals in the light of the Griffiths, Wagner and Firth reports, and the reactions that we receive to them, in due course. I am afraid that I cannot yet give the hon. Gentleman any sort of timescale on that.

The hon. Gentleman referred to health care in Nottingham. I shall not pursue him far down that road, not least because it is not my area. Nottingham has the City hospital, which is all new except for one ward, the University hospital, which is new and the General and Highbury hospitals, both of which have recently been refurbished. Only the Basford is an old hospital, and I understand that it is satisfactory.

Mr. Allen: May I briefly correct the Minister? It is proposed that the General hospital should be closed, so the picture may not be as rosy as he paints it.

Mr. Portillo: I give the hon. Gentleman the last word on that.

If the television licence fee is reduced for some, it suggests that it should increase for others. That would mean that other people, many of whom may be poor, would pay a much higher fee. The elderly as a group are not all poor, which is why it would be ill-directed to give people a concessionary television licence simply because they are elderly. The hon. Gentleman understands the Government's position on that.

The hon. Gentleman referred to winter warmth. He will know that under the supplementary benefits scheme about £400 million was spent on heating additions. That was intended to provide people with money all the year round, not just in winter, to help them with their heating needs. In the income support system we are directing the premiums towards groups, such as the disabled and the pensioners, and those premiums more than cover the heating additions and some other aspects of the supplementary benefit system. So there continues to be that particular help all year round.

I could not establish the accuracy of what the hon. Gentleman was saying about the draught-proofing programme. Although the supplementary benefit arrangements cease in April, the Government have kept their pledge to continue to give help with draught-proofing.

From April this will be channelled through the Department of Energy's grants towards community insulation projects by Neighbourhood Energy Action. Government support for community insulation projects is £45 million this year and will rise to between £55 million and £60 million in 1988-89.

The hon. Gentleman will know of our efforts last winter to set up a "Keep Warm Keep Well" campaign, which has been a considerable success, although this has not been a cold winter. Nevertheless, the campaign has involved the co-operation of Age Concern, Help the Aged and several other organisations. The freeline phone service has received 4,000 calls. The Government have produced publicity material for television and radio broadcasts and have extended the programme of press advertising.

Mr. Allen: Will the Minister explain why proportionately more people die of hypothermia in Britain than in Canada and the Nordic countries where winters are so much more severe?

Mr. Portillo: The pattern of hypothermia from year to year is confusing. It is not clear why the figures vary. Speaking from memory, it has been decided that the chief medical officer should prepare a report so that we can consider it. I am pleased to tell the hon. Gentleman that the excess winter mortality figures, which are another measurement, are falling steadily from decade to decade. The latest figures for 1987 are encouraging. Although one should not place too much emphasis on any single year, the trend is downwards.

Finally, we must get away from the notion that elderly people are simply the passive recipients of services. Many have a good deal to offer society and there is a challenge for all of us to help and encourage them to do so. Britain has a proud and long-standing tradition of charitable voluntary action. For many old people voluntary action provides an opportunity to give and to be involved, and for many others help comes from those activities.

Voluntary organisations also have a vital role to play in helping the elderly, but to play that part to the full, they need the co-operation of the statutory services and to share their ideas and plans. That is the real challenge for all of us, because that is the way to keep the elderly involved in society. That, as well as their financial well-being, is important to the elderly.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at one minute to 3 o'clock.

House of Commons

Monday 28 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

ENERGY

Electricity Privatisation

1. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Electricity Consumers' Council to discuss the proposed privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

4. **Sir Trevor Skeet:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Electricity Consumers' Council; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

The Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Cecil Parkinson): I meet the chairman of the Electricity Consumers' Council, John Hatch, from time to time to discuss various matters relating to the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Hayward: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. Has not the Electricity Consumers' Council welcomed the proposals on privatisation, particularly those protecting consumers' rights?

Mr. Parkinson: My hon. Friend is right. The Electricity Consumers' Council has welcomed a number of aspects of the privatisation proposals, in particular the proposal for customers' rights, which will give customers the right to compensation if the boards fail to perform to an agreed standard.

Sir Trevor Skeet: In view of the increase in electricity prices in April, will the Secretary of State bear in mind the crucial needs of the paper, chemical and metallurgical industries, which have to compete in international markets?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes. As my hon. Friend knows, there is a problem under our present law about making arrangements for heavy industrial users. The industry is under a statutory obligation not to show undue preference to any customer, but we recognise the need to help the heavy industrial user, and the qualifying industrial consumers schemes and other measures that have been adopted give substantial help to the heavy user.

Mr. Benn: Will the Secretary of State explain why, now that a proportion of electricity to be generated must, by law, be nuclear, thus denying market forces, he has opened up to investors from America, where they cannot get nuclear power stations built because of market forces, the right to invest in this country? What consumer right is there in that arrangement?

Mr. Parkinson: We have reserved to the distribution companies the obligation to buy a proportion of their electricity from non-fossil fuel supplies, but we have not specified from where. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman is referring to the proposed speech of my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, which he will be making in about an hour's time in America. In that speech he will make it clear that he expects the overwhelming proportion of investment in the British electricity industry to be made by British companies.

Mr. Barry Jones: Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that up to 12 power stations are now redundant in Britain? What are his plans for those redundant stations under privatisation? Does he know that some local authorities, such as the one in my area, wish to purchase and develop those redundant power stations? What is the future of such plants?

Mr. Parkinson: The hon. Gentleman is confirming what the Government have said: that many people, other than the CEGB, wish to be involved in the generation of electricity, and we believe that that competition will provide good hope for consumers in the future.

I notice that the hon. Gentleman is shaking his head, as if to ask me whether the redundant sites will be available for other development. That will be a matter for the CEGB, but there is much interest in buying redundant power stations and remodelling them to meet the highest standards. We hope that the private sector will come along and do some of that.

Mr. Heddle: When my right hon. Friend meets the chairman of the Electricity Consumers' Council, will he also discuss with him the rates of interest charged by regional electricity boards to their customers who want to buy cookers and similar appliances? Is he aware that the Midlands electricity board charges its customers 35 per cent. interest? Is that not horrendously high, and does it not cause hardship to pensioners and others who perhaps do not read the small print? Does it not compare badly with the rates charged by banks, building societies, credit card companies and reputable stores?

Mr. Parkinson: I am sure that the chairman of the East Midlands board will have noted my hon. Friend's remarks. If not, I shall certainly make sure that they are brought to his attention.

Mr. Prescott: When the Secretary of State meets the chairman of the board—and such a meeting is urgent—I hope that he will discuss the 15 per cent. increase that is to be imposed on prices. In the judgment of the Electricty Consumers' Council that increase is unjustified and represents a tax on the consumer. Is he aware that that view is consistent with the view of the CBI, which says that it is unsound in business terms and will cost investment in jobs? Can the Secretary of State tell the House what group, if any, agrees with this imposition of a 15 per cent. increase? Will he review his decision and recognise that in reality the price increase is an energy privatisation tax, burdening the poor for the benefit of the better off?

Mr. Parkinson: I have already explained to the hon. Gentleman why I think he is wrong, and I have also explained to the CBI why I think that it is wrong in the arguments that it has put forward. The price rises are totally justifiable and necessary. The hon. Gentleman was not in the Labour Government of the time, but I can tell

him that, even after these increases, there will be a fall in electricty prices in real terms, whereas there was an increase of more than 30 per cent. under the Labour Government.

EC Energy Policy

2. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he is satisfied with progress towards the development of a European Community energy policy; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Peter Morrison): Yes, Sir. The prospects for attaining the Community's 1995 energy objectives are under review and Commission proposals on completion of the energy market by 1992 are expected shortly.

Mr. Knox: Does my hon. Friend agree that progress has been disappointly slow so far? Do the Government intend to take any initiatives to try to speed things up?

Mr. Morrison: I know that my hon. Friend likes to see fast progress in Europe. Certainly the Government take the initiative to make sure that such progress is made. My hon. Friend will appreciate that the supply of energy in the member states is different and, therefore, it is not all that easy to make progress as fast as my hon. Friend would like.

Mr. Redmond: Does the Minister agree that he is contradicting himself in advocating some sort of common European policy when the Government are operating market forces? How does he relate the two?

Mr. Morrison: No, I do not agree, because, as I said in my original answer, we are working towards 1992, when there will be transparency pricing, which is market policy.

Mr. Marlow: Will the Community energy policy be anything like the common agricultural policy? For example, will those who wish to import coal have to deposit heavy levies, or, like generating companies which wish to use coal in the Community, will they be able to buy that coal from the cheapest source at the cheapest possible price?

Mr. Morrison: No, Sir. It will not be precisely the same, for the reasons that I gave in my second answer, namely, that the supply of fossil fuels in this country is different from the supply in other member states.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Is the Minister satisfied that, in discussions about European energy policy, full cognisance has been taken of the need to allocate orders, for example, to the fabrication yards connected with the development of North sea oil? Is he aware of the concern among workers at Ardersier about the need for the allocation of early opportunities to develop platforms for the North sea?

Mr. Morrison: I know that the hon. Lady is most concerned about fabrication yards and, as she knows, I visited the one to which she referred. As she will have read, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has announced an 11th round. We continue to make progress in the North sea in exploration and development, and that is for the medium and longer-term good of those fabrication yards.

Electricity Privatisation

3. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is his timetable for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Parkinson: The Government intend to introduce legislation to privatise the electricity supply industry as early as possible. I expect that this will be in the next Session of Parliament.

Mr. Patchett: Has the Minister calculated the possible number of redundancies in the British coal industry as a result of privatisation of the electricity industry owing to the import of cheap, subsidised foreign coal, or does he simply not care about those redundancies?

Mr. Parkinson: I have explained before to the hon. Gentleman that our proposals mean that the industry will need about 75 million tonnes of coal a year and that the Government have funded the most extensive investment programme in the coal industry of any Government. We have done that because we believe that, with modern machinery and modern working methods, the British coal industry can capture a very substantial part of those 75 million tonnes.

Sir Anthony Meyer: Will my right hon. Friend, in concert with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services, make it plain to pensioners and others that, despite the increase in electricity tariffs being higher than the rate of inflation, the combined effect of that and social security legislation will leave them better off?

Mr. Parkinson: I am happy to confirm that what my hon. Friend says is correct.

Mr. Maclennan: What account is the Secretary of State taking in his privatisation planning of the fact that the CEGB has been financing the fast reactor programme to the extent of 30 per cent., and that there is great anxiety about the withdrawal of that support and whether the Government intend to continue the fast reactor programme?

Mr. Parkinson: I know of the hon. Gentleman's deep concern about this matter, as he and I first met and discussed it at Dounreay. No decisions have yet been taken. The CEGB has to decide whether to continue with this funding. These matters are for discussion, but I recognise that they should be resolved as soon as possible and that his constituents should be kept fully informed.

Mr. Watts: Will my right hon. Friend ensure that there are safeguards over the operation of the local distribution networks so that privatised area boards cannot exert monoply control to prevent small local generators from delivering electricity to local industrial consumers?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes. We are anxious that the small generators should have an opportunity to get into the system. We believe that under our proposals that will be possible, whereas under the present arrangements it has proved difficult.

Mr. Hardy: At what point in the timetable does the Secretary of State expect to be able to advise the House and the country of the price at which the electricity supply industry will be sold? Would he care to suggest whether an industry with a net asset value of £55 billion will be sold for less than 40 per cent. of its worth?

Mr. Parkinson: I am afraid that I do not recognise the figures that the hon. Gentleman has just used. I have never heard anyone suggest that the net assets of the organisation are worth £55 billion. I am constantly being told by Labour Members that I am seeking too high a price for the industry, so it is a relief to be told now that the Government are thinking of selling it too cheaply. We intend to get a fair price for the industry, and that will become clear as time goes on.

Open and Coke Fires

5. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many households are estimated to have open coal or coke fires; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I understand from British Coal that an estimated 2·9 million households are using coal or solid smokeless fuels on open fires.

Mr. Greenway: How does that figure compare with the previous known figure? Has there been a decline, or an increase? Labour Members call for cheaper fuel for poorer people, so will such people be able to burn imported cheap fuel on their open fires rather than more expensive home-produced fuel?

Mr. Morrison: The available figure shows a slight decrease on the previous year, but that is hardly surprising given the mild winter.

As to my hon. Friend's second point, if British Coal produces coal competitively, more households will be likely to buy.

Mr. Michael Welsh: Is the Minister aware that many coal fires are going out because—*[Laughter.]* I thought that that was rather good. This is happening because smokeless zones have been introduced. Therefore, people have been left with only one fire, so they cannot properly heat their homes. Could British Coal offer grants to such people when an area is made smokeless, so that they can afford to put in central heating, or will he ask the Secretary of State for the Environment to allow local authorities to give such grants?

Mr. Morrison: I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the polite way in which he posed that question. There will be agreement on both sides of the House that the benefits of smokeless zones are substantial.

With regard to the hon. Gentleman's proposition, British Coal's time is already taken up in seeking to increase productivity. That is the most important aim and ambition of its production.

Mr. Patnick: Does my hon. Friend agree that part of the death of coal as a heating product is due to the fact that local authorities do not build chimney breasts into houses? There has been a saving from clean-air zones, but does my hon. Friend agree that part of the price that the mining industry has had to pay is that fewer people burn coal and now use other forms of energy?

Mr. Morrison: I agree with my hon. Friend that there are no doubt many reasons why households decide not to use coal and use instead oil, gas or electricity. I should have thought that the primary reason is cost. That is why it is crucial that British Coal and its labour force should seek ways to improve productivity.

Combined Heat and Power

6. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what further considerations the Government are giving to the promotion of combined heat and power systems.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The Energy Efficiency Office will continue to promote combined heat and power technology. The privatisation of the electricity supply industry will open new business opportunities for all independent generators, including combined heat and power operators.

Ms. Quin: The Government appear to want to rely on the private sector for any development of combined heat and power. Does the Minister accept that if large areas, such as our cities, are to benefit from combined heat and power, substantial Government support and funding will be necessary? Does he further accept that if he introduces combined heat and power into our cities that would be a gigantic step towards the more effective use and conservation of energy for the future?

Mr. Morrison: I accept that combined heat and power can be a great asset in a major city. I have seen examples of it in Sheffield and Leicester. However, I cannot agree with the hon. Lady that Government finance should be available. It is far better that market forces should prevail.

Mr. Rost: Will my hon. Friend acknowledge the contribution that combined heat and power can make in our cities, not only to the production of cheaper electricity and heating to overcome fuel poverty, but to the urban renewal programme? Will he speak to his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, who is supposed to be co-ordinating the Government programme on this, and ensure that there is an input into those programmes?

Mr. Morrison: I agree with my hon. Friend that the contribution that is made, particularly in the two examples that I have seen in Leicester and Sheffield, is a great and good contribution. I shall ensure that my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry sees those examples.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: I join the Minister in looking forward to more combined heat and power generation. One of the ways in which that may take place is through the reopening of smaller coal-fired power stations. Following the Government's rejection of the EEC's offer to reduce sulphur and nitrogen emissions in the air and the resulting acid rain, it is possible that the opening of combined heat and power stations will increase sulphur emissions. How will the proposed privatisation affect that?

Mr. Morrison: The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well what the Government said about emissions. As I have already said in answer to previous questions, the potential for combined heat and power in certain major cities in this country, and perhaps elsewhere, can be great, but it will be subject to market conditions.

Central Electricity Generating Board

7. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of the CEGB regularly to discuss various matters relating to the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Dr. Reid: When the Secretary of State meets the chairman of the CEGB, does he have the same impression as many others, that the chairman has forgotten more about the electricity industry than the Minister will ever know, and does he agree, therefore, that his comments should be taken seriously? Will the Secretary of State respond to the statement by Graham Hadley, the secretary of the CEGB, supported by the chairman of the CEGB, that the separation of the grid from generation will cost the taxpayer up to £1 billion, or 10 per cent., on electricity charges, and will increase the threat of blackouts? What is in that for the consumer, and what makes the Minister think that he knows better than the CEGB?

Mr. Parkinson: I believe that if the hon. Gentleman cared to ring Mr. Graham Hadley he would now discover that he no longer maintains that it would cost £1 billion. Mr. Hadley's figure, which was absolutely impossible to understand, was based on the assumption that the Government would propose the creation of five vertically integrated power boards. We have not. It is agreed between the CEGB and our technical experts that although there may be a cost as a result of our proposals, it can be more than matched by the savings that will result. The hon. Gentleman's information is grossly out of date.

Mr. Wells: When my right hon. Friend next meets the chairman of the CEGB, will he explain how welcome and well-engineered the privatisation proposals are? Will he also explain how the introduction of competition will be welcome to those who supply the CEGB with equipment, as it will enable them to put more competitive designs forward, which will in turn enable them once more to export to the world?

Mr. Parkinson: I should be happy to put those points to Lord Marshall, and at the same time I would remind him that the Electricity Council, the 12 area boards and the Electricity Consumers' Council totally support our proposals. I draw that to the attention of the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Dr. Reid).

Mr. Home Robertson: Has the Secretary of State had any discussions with the chairman of the CEGB about improving the transmission system in England and Wales to make it possible for consumers in those areas to take advantage of the substantial availability of generating capacity in Scotland?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes, I have discussed strengthening the interconnect. It may interest the hon. Gentleman to know that there are plans to spend approximately £7 billion on strengthening the transmission system in England and Wales, including strengthening the Scottish interconnect.

Mr. Colvin: Will my right hon. Friend ask Lord Marshall what he is doing to counter the recent alarmist programme on BBC "Panorama", which linked the magnetic field around high-tension cables with cancer? If my right hon. Friend disagrees with the findings of that programme, may I ask what is his Department doing to put the record straight?

Mr. Parkinson: I believe that the "Panorama" programme was essentially scaremongering. To date I believe that there has been one authority for this thesis, and he has said that the findings of his inquiry are suggestive rather than conclusive. The CEGB is spending £500,000 investigating that serious allegation, but it is confident that it will find that the link is extremely tenuous.

Mr. Prescott: Has the Secretary of State discussed with the chairman the speech that is to be made by his Minister in Miami? Apparently the Minister is begging American capital to come to purchase the British electricity supply industry, thus removing the controls on foreign ownership. Will the Secretary of State tell us whether his promise to the House for tougher regulations to protect the consumer in a privatised electricity industry is consistent with the promise in the speech today to American capital that the regulatory controls will be less restrictive than they are in America? The increasing profits will no doubt be paid for by the consumer.

Mr. Parkinson: I should point out to the hon. Gentleman that my hon. Friend's speech will not be delivered for another hour. When it is, he will find that it conclusively answers the points that he has raised. My hon. Friend's speech will make it clear that in America — it would be beyond dispute if the hon. Gentleman knew anything about it — it is accepted that the regulatory system is so restrictive that it is inhibiting the development of the electricity supply industry and putting the consumers at risk. We have said — and my hon. Friend has my total support — that although we will have a tough regulatory system, we will not have one that is so tough and mindless that it puts the customers' interests at risk.

Electricity Generating Stations

8. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next plans to meet the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board in order to discuss the ordering programme for electricity generating stations.

Mr. Parkinson: It is for the CEGB to decide when to order new power stations. My hon. Friend will be aware that the CEGB has applied for consent for a nuclear plant at Hinkley Point and two coal-fired stations at Fawley and West Burton.

Mr. Hannam: Does my right hon. Friend agree that, as there will be a three or four-year delay before the generating side is privatised, it is important that we keep the ordering programme for nuclear and coal-fired power stations moving, especially in the light of the early closure of the Magnox nuclear stations?

Mr. Parkinson: I believe that it is important that we maintain a steady flow of orders for the electricity supply industry, because we have not had an order for a power station now for eight years and the supply industry has had tremendous problems. As a result of our proposals more people will come forward with proposals to build power stations. That should result in an acceleration rather than a slowing down of orders for the industry.

Mr. Douglas: Does the Secretary of State accept that we found his answer to a previous question in relation to the strengthening of the transmission links between England and Scotland very interesting? Has he discussed the purchase of power from Scottish power stations with the chairman of British Coal so that we may receive a

statement and some clarification about the future of coal-fired power stations in Scotland? There is a great deal of uncertainty over their future as a result of the attitude taken by the South of Scotland Electricity Board.

Mr. Parkinson: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, negotiations between British Coal and the SSEB are under way at the moment. I have made it clear that I want to see those negotiations succeed. I would like to see Scottish pits kept open and Scottish electricity derived from Scottish coal. There is no doubt about where I and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland stand on this matter. With regard to the interconnect, I believe that England offers a good export market for Scottish electricity. I hope that the SSEB will take advantage of its opportunities south of the border.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the timing of the power stations depends very much on the planning process? Has he noticed that Liberal-controlled Somerset county council has allocated £500,000 to fight the planning aspects and the whole concept of nuclear power on the Hinkley C site? As the rates have been increased by 12 per cent. to fund that, does my right hon. Friend agree that the ratepayers are having to pay for the anti-nuclear prejudices of the Somerset branch of the Social Liberal Democratic Alliance?

Mr. Parkinson: It is perfectly proper for the Somerset council to express its views and to ensure that its point of view is put over. We do not want to inhibit that. However, I hope that the council will concentrate on doing that rather than on making party political points about the nuclear power industry. In so far as the council is spending that money to promote political arguments rather than planning arguments, that must be deplored.

British Coal

10. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what matters were discussed.

11. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Coal to discuss the future of the industry in the light of his proposals to privatise the electricity industry.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of the British Coal Corporation regularly to discuss all aspects of the industry.

Mr. Janner: Has the Secretary of State discussed with the chairman of British Coal the plight of Leicestershire's highly skilled coal miners, whose pits are being closed one by one? Is he aware that the opening of the pit at Asfordby is not enough to provide jobs, particularly on the basis on which they are to be allocated? Is he aware that more mines should be opened in the Vale of Belvoir to provide low-cost coal and jobs and because the skilled and excellent band of miners led by Jack Jones deserve the Government's support? They are not getting nearly enough of that support.

Mr. Parkinson: I remind the hon. and learned Gentleman that the Government have invested more in the coal industry than any predecessor Government. We have invested a total of nearly £9 billion since 1979. As he points out, substantial investment is being made in Asfordby. In contrast to the position when the Labour party was in office, miners now have a very generous redundancy scheme and no miner has been made compulsorily redundant. They can have either a generous redundancy scheme or another job. That is the case in Leicestershire.

Mr. Griffiths: In the Secretary of State's discussions with the chairman of British Coal, has he talked about the future of coal imports into the United Kingdom and the possible effect that the exchange rate might have upon the cost of these imports? Has he expressed a view to him about whether the exchange rate policy should be that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or that of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Parkinson: I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his ingenuity, but I hope that he will not object if I concentrate on the energy part of his supplementary question. I have discussed with the chairman of the CEGB the amount of coal-fired capacity that he has. If British Coal continues to improve its productivity, and if miners adopt modern methods to accompany the modern machinery that has been installed, I believe that British Coal can have a bright future as a supplier of choice to the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Andy Stewart: When my right hon. Friend next meets the chairman of British Coal, will he draw to his attention the views expressed to me by some of my constituents that British Coal applies double standards when offering redundancy?

A number of my constituents have been refused redundancy this month, while a gentleman in Yorkshire, who is alleged to have created 51 wildcat stoppages and cost the board £14 million, has been given generous redundancy. Is there no loyalty today?

Mr. Parkinson: If my hon. Friend writes to me about these specific matters, I shall take them up with the chairman of British Coal.

Mr. Oppenheim: Does my right hon. Friend think that sometimes those who purport to represent the coal industry expend rather too much energy on trying to protect their jobs regardless of the cost, when they should be seeking ways of keeping customers happy? Does he agree that that is the best way to secure real jobs?

Mr. Parkinson: I am sure that my hon. Friend is right in saying that the best guarantee of maintaining jobs in the industry is by concentrating on ensuring that coal is supplied to the Coal Board's customers at competitive prices.

Mrs. Clwyd: Is the Secretary of State aware that 1,094 men left the coal industry in south Wales on Friday, and that 694 of them are in my constituency? These are men who opted for redundancy. Only 130 decided to stay in the industry. This is because the majority no longer have any faith in the promises made by those who run the industry.

Will the Secretary of State pay tribute to those who have worked for so long in the industry and who, through no fault of their own, are now out of a job? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the redundancies have pushed male unemployment in my constituency to 34 per cent., which is unacceptable? Will he make additional moneys available to British Coal Enterprise Ltd?

Mr. Parkinson: We are examining the performance of British Coal Enterprise Ltd., and funds are being made available to it on a continuing basis. We deplore pit

closures, but very often pits close for good reasons. Pits become worked out, as it were, and geological faults occur. The hon. Lady has confirmed that anyone who works in the industry has the choice of staying in the industry or taking extremely generous redundancy terms.

Electricity Privatisation

12. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received from alternative energy interests about the White Paper on electricity privatisation.

Mr. Peter Morrison: Our proposal for a specified minimum proportion of non-fossil-fuelled generating capacity has been well received by those involved in the development of alternative energy sources. We hope that this will encourage new ideas in generation.

Mr. Hanley: May I congratulate my hon. Friend on his commitment to non-fossil fuels, which is in accordance with the White Paper? What role does he see for renewable energy sources following privatisation?

Mr. Morrison: There could be a good possibility that there will be a role for them. My hon. Friend will appreciate that that will be subject to further research and development taking place so that renewable energy sources can become competitive. The research and development programme is proceeding. This was demonstrated by an announcement by the CEGB and another by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State last week.

13. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to his statement to the House on 7 March, *Official Report*, column 53, he will place in the Library the technical and scientific evidence upon which he based his conclusion that the grid control will have the same ability to deal with emergencies in electricity supply under the proposed privatisation as it does under the present arrangements.

Mr. Parkinson: No, Sir. This is an operational matter. The full range of powers to deal with emergencies will be available to those controlling the national grid under the proposed arrangements, as under the present ones. This will be built into the contract arrangements and the operating agreements.

Mr. Dalyell: Is the Secretary of State aware that a number of his hon. Friends, as well as a number of mine, went to CEGB Southwark, where we heard at length from Mr. Edgar McCarthy, the controller, about the Sundon incident 20 May 1986, when, if, within two minutes, post-fault urgent action had not been taken by those who had complete command of the grid London and the home counties would have been absolutely blacked out by system voltage collapse? Can the right hon. Gentleman assure Mr. McCarthy and others, on technical grounds, that their fears are groundless?

Mr. Parkinson: Yes. There will be no change in either the assets or the operation of the grid. What will change will be the ownership of the generating stations. The only basis for the assertion made to the hon. Gentleman is that under private ownership generating plants will not respond to orders from the national grid. As I have explained to him, it will be built into their contracts that in an emergency the national grid will have the right to override any other agreements. Therefore, the same assets will be available to the grid controllers, who will be able to give the same instructions in an emergency as in 1986.

THE ARTS

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

49. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister for the Arts to what extent the enterprise allowance scheme has affected those involved in the arts.

The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce): At 30 September 1987 some 7,500 people in the arts—authors, artists, film and television producers—were in receipt of enterprise allowances. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that a substantial number of arts people who receive allowances go on to become self-supporting.

Mr. Knapman: Those figures seem most encouraging, but can my right hon. Friend tell the House what proportion of all people they represent, and what proportion of those who have benefited have become self-sufficient?

Mr. Luce: I think that it is good news that an estimated 7 per cent. of all those who received the allowances are from the artistic world and wish to set up their own businesses, of one kind or another, in that world. Although no figures are available relating specifically to the arts, it is clear that some 77 per cent. of all those who receive the allowances are still self-supporting, on a self-employed basis, six months after the allowances have ceased.

Mr. Bowis: I am sure that the arts have an enormous part to play in this regard. Does my right hon. Friend agree, however, that setting up a new business in the arts is a matter not only of commercial viability but of artistic quality? Where do people go for advice on that when they are setting up their business? Is such advice provided by his Office, or by the Small Firms Service?

Mr. Luce: As my hon. Friend has said, business viability must be taken into account by the assessors at the Department of Employment. But, on a question of artistic merit, it is perfectly possible to go to bodies such as the British Film Institute or the regional arts associations to seek further advice.

Mr. Jopling: Does my right hon. Friend understand that, whereas the enterprise allowance scheme may not be the most effective way of helping the Horniman museum in south London, everything must be done to ensure that that museum has a continued existence as a nationally supported museum?

Mr. Luce: Yes. I acknowledge my right hon. Friend's point about the importance of the Horniman museum. It has been in existence for a very long time and provides an important service. This is a matter principally for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science, but I am in contact with him about it.

Arts Council Funding (Liverpool)

50. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he last met the chairman of the Playhouse theatre and the Everyman theatre, Liverpool, to discuss their level of Arts Council funding.

Mr. Luce: I have not met the chairmen of these theatres to discuss Arts Council funding.

Mr. Wareing: The tragic abolition of the Merseyside county council created a very tenuous future for the theatres on Merseyside. Does the Minister agree that the Merseyside cultural heritage is important, not only for the people on Merseyside, but for a national, and indeed international, catchment area? Should not its continuity be ensured by regular Government assistance and certainty of security? If the Government can ensure the future of the Tate gallery on Merseyside, why not the Playhouse theatre and the Everyman theatre?

Mr. Luce: I hope the hon. Gentleman will agree that the range of performing arts and heritage facilities in the Liverpool and Merseyside area is very remarkable. I feel that Liverpool and Merseyside should do more to get that across to the nation if they want to attract more tourists. The theatres to which he referred—the Playhouse and Everyman — have been very successful. A substantial proportion of the resources are raised by box-office means and through the private sector, but I am very glad that the Arts Council has agreed to maintain its support pending a study of funding arrangements in the Liverpool area and in acknowledgement that the city authority has come in with an extra £200,000.

Mr. Tony Banks: I commend the Liverpool Playhouse to the Minister, especially its production of "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists", which will be on at the Theatre Royal, Stratford in my constituency in Newham from 14 April to 14 May. In view of the funding problems faced by the Theatre Royal, would the Minister care to accept an invitation from me to see this production of "The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists" and, if he comes, I shall buy him a curry in Stratford immediately afterwards?

Mr. Luce: That is one of the most generous and surprising offers that I have ever had and, to use Government jargon, I shall carefully consider the invitation. I have visited the Playhouse in Liverpool, which is an admirable theatre. I am keen on promoting touring around this country, not just from London to outside London but around the regions. That is very important.

Photographs (Schools)

51. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Minister for the Arts how many *(a)* visits and *(b)* residencies of photographers in schools were financed by the Arts Council in the last year for which statistics are available.

Mr. Luce: Detailed information on this subject is not held centrally. The information that is available shows that at least 151 visits and eight residencies of photographers in schools were financed by the Arts Council and the regional arts associations in 1986-87.

Mr. Boyes: I think the Minister agrees that these visits and residencies should be encouraged. We are all pleased at his continuing contribution to and encouragement of photography but does he agree that even more can be done? Can he find more money within his budget to give to the Arts Council so that there can be more visits and residencies? If he cannot, will he look for a bit of creative accountancy and find out whether there can be some burseries from his Department to encourage more photographers to carry out these exercises?

Mr. Luce: I do not under-estimate the importance of photography, in which the public have a growing interest. The hon. Gentleman will acknowledge that the Arts Council and the regional arts associations have a limited sum of money and various priorities to determine, and it must be up to them to decide how to disburse that money. I am glad to learn that some regional authorities are promoting a closer interest between photography and education; for example, the North-West arts association held a seminar on that matter last week.

Theatre Funding (Leicester)

52. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will discuss with the Arts Council the level of funding for the theatre in Leicester.

Mr. Luce: I have no plans to do so.

Mr. Janner: I regret the Minister's lack of plans. Will he pay tribute to the work of the Haymarket theatre in Leicester and to its resilience, especially in supporting and encouraging new writing, and its successful efforts towards meeting its deficits through its plays, which are sent on to the West End stage? Will the right hon. Gentleman provide some assurance of long-term adequate funding for this tremendously useful and excellent theatre?

Mr. Luce: I, too, should like to acknowledge the Haymarket theatre's enterprise. I am glad that the Arts Council, the city council and the county council are undertaking constructive negotiations on its long-term future and funding. It is only right that we should look to theatres to raise resources from the private sector as well. I am looking for more self-reliance by arts organisations.

Mr. Forth: Does my right hon. Friend agree that we should look to those who claim constantly that there is widespread support for the arts in Leicester and elsewhere and that those who want and support the arts should pay for them? Does my right hon. Friend not think it high time that the hard-pressed taxpayer was relieved of this constant burden of the arts and that those who claim that the arts have widespread support were asked to pay a greater contribution more directly?

Mr. Luce: I have introduced the concept of incentive funding so that taxpayers' money can be used to reward those who are capable of becoming more self-reliant. That is at the heart of our policies.

Premium Book Subscription Service

53. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what evidence he has of a desire by library authorities to introduce a premium book subscription service for newly published books.

Mr. Luce: One library authority recently drew up proposals to set up a complementary premium lending service for newly published novels and biographies, but did not proceed because it was advised that to do so would be in breach of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. I have also received letters from members of the public saying that they would like libraries to provide subscription services. My Green Paper therefore suggests that library authorities should have discretionary powers to set up these services.

Mr. Sedgemore: Is the Minister aware that when this harebrained scheme was introduced in New Zealand, 66

per cent. of the income was taken up in administration costs, and when it was introduced in Kiel in Germany it was dropped quickly because loans of children's books fell by 40 per cent.? Are we really to have new books for the rich, and old, dog-eared books for the poor, with each book having to meet a test discount rate and a real rate of return?

Mr. Luce: That is a nonsensical way to consider the Green Paper. The objectives of the Green Paper are to seek ways to enable local authorities to raise extra resources, not just through the public sector, but in harness with the private sector, so that they can raise extra resources to improve the library services for customers. That proposal was one of several designed to achieve just that.

Mr. Gerald Bowden: My right hon. Friend knows my concern about the closure of many public libraries in London because of alleged lack of resources, particularly in Kingswood in my constituency. Will not the premium subscription lending service generate resouces to improve library services generally?

Mr. Luce: Yes, indeed. That is one reason why we introduced for consideration that suggestion, among others. Other suggestions, including the paying of charges for certain specialist services in one field or another, are all designed to increase resources and improve facilities to customers.

Mr. Fisher: Since the Green Paper is a consultative document, no doubt the Minister is taking a keen interest in the public responses to his proposals. Has he seen last week's copy of the Library Association "Record", which describes his Green Paper as

"an impenetrable forest of negatives . . . A dog's breakfast . . . patronising . . . badly written . . . confusing . . . and weak on logic."

Should not the Minister save himself further embarrassment by withdrawing his ridiculous proposals now?

Mr. Luce: I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman is not interested in new ways of finding extra resources. It is regrettable that he adopts that attitide. The views of the chief executive of the Library Association have been positive, constructive and helpful. I look for such an attitude of mind, but I do not expect it from the Opposition.

CIVIL SERVICE

Government Management

71. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received about the implications for the implementation of the White Paper "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps," of the recent leak of a letter from Mr. Paul Gray to Mr. Tom Jeffrey about educational testing; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): I have received no representations about the matter.

Mr. Dalyell: Was it proper for Mr. Ingham's office, a Civil Service office, to give authority for the leak? Will there be a leak inquiry, and if not, why not?

Mr. Luce: Mr. Ingham must be very flattered by the amount of attention that he receives from the hon. Gentleman. The position remains quite clear. The Prime Minister stated on 14 March that it is not the usual practice to give information on such matters.

Mr. Mullin: Will the Minister say why millions of pounds of public money are being spent in bringing management and computer consultants into various Government Departments to do jobs that could be done perfectly well by civil servants?

Mr. Luce: If bringing in consultants is designed to improve the management of the Civil Service and get better value for money for taxpayers, that is the right thing to do.

Examinations

72. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service whether he has any plans to alter the present entry or promotion exams in the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: No, Sir. Selection for entry to and promotion in the Civil Service is on merit. I expect that to continue and shall encourage it. Procedures are, however, altered as the skills and qualities civil servants need change.

Mr. Holt: I thank my right hon. Friend for that answer. Will he tell me why, on the examination forms for entry and promotion, the ethnic origin of candidates has to be stated? Are there two standards, one for those who are indigenous, and one for immigrants? Will he also tell me why, in the Ministry of Defence, there are at present vacancies for 535 clerical officers, while in the north of England there is a desperate shortage of work? What will he do to redress the balance?

Mr. Luce: The question about the Ministry of Defence is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. Let me make it absolutely plain that the Government are equality of opportunity employers. We recruit people into the Civil Service and promote them only on the basis of equality of opportunity. The reason for obtaining information from recruits about their ethnic origin is to ensure, as best we conceivably can, that a policy of promotion on merit and equality of opportunity is properly run and devised by the Government.

Mr. Skinner: I wonder whether in future, when civil servants have examinations to pass, they will also have a paper before them on how to leak without getting caught. If they need any advice on that, could the Minister suggest that it should be preceded by a seminar headed by Bernard Ingham and the Prime Minister to help them out?

Mr. Luce: I am glad to say that the Civil Service does not adhere to the standards that the hon. Gentleman seems to want.

Civil Service Reform

73. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what are the implications for the Office of Arts and Libraries of the proposed reforms of the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: Like all other Government Departments, the Office of Arts and Libraries will be considering how to apply the recommendations of the "Next Steps" report to its own operations, though most of the functions which it funds are carried out by non-departmental public bodies.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: Knowing the meticulous care that my right hon. Friend brings to his Ministry, will he tell the House whether he has yet had discussions with his other half, the Minister for the Arts, and what was the outcome?

Mr. Luce: I know that my right hon. Friend the Minister for the Arts has a mind of his own. He is quite difficult to get alongside, but I will try.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: In the light of the opportunities now offered by the reform of the Civil Service, may I enlist the support of the Minister in pressing for a Cabinet post for the arts in recognition of their importance in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Luce: I think that we are going a little beyond the Civil Service questions. However, I am flattered by the hon. and learned Gentleman's suggestion.

Agencies

74. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service when he expects to meet the Civil Service trade unions to discuss the proposals for agencies for the Civil Service.

Mr. Luce: I have no plans to meet the Civil Service unions at present but the head of the Home Civil Service has made it clear that he is open to consultations.

Mr. Allen: Is the Minister aware that one of the largest Civil Service regional centres is in Nottingham, in my constituency of Nottingham, North, where the Government buildings at Chalfont drive have the Land Registry, the district valuers, the Property Services Agency, the Wages Inspectorate and the Ordnance Survey section? Will he, or one of his colleagues, meet the trade unions representatives on that large site and reassure them that by this time next year they will not be added to the list of Nottingham's 14,000 unemployed?

Mr. Luce: I am glad that there are such a large number of civil servants in the hon. Gentleman's constituency and area. In fact, four out of five of all civil servants are well outside the London region. That policy is one that the Government are encouraging. Meetings with the unions are for the Departments concerned.

Mr. Grocott: Does the Minister recognise the widespread anxiety among civil servants about the effect that the agencies will have on nationally negotiated wage rates? What can he say to the House today to reassure those civil servants, many of whom are long-standing civil servants who have made career decisions over many years, that their position will not be eroded by the Government's policies?

Mr. Luce: There is no doubt about the importance of the agencies and the wide welcome that they have received from many people in the Civil Service. They will devolve more responsibility on to the shoulders of managers and that is more likely to lead to a better use of Government and taxpayers' resources. On the matter of terms and conditions of service, they remain civil servants within the agencies. It is a matter for negotiation between the Departments concerned and the agency being set up as to the exact terms and conditions of service. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the unions concerned will be fully consulted if there are any proposals for changes in terms and conditions.

75. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service if he is yet in a position to give the definitive list of those organisations which will be the first to be formed into agencies, as part of the implementation of the recommendations of the recent efficiency unit report, "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps".

Mr. Luce: An initial list of possibilities was published on 18 February. These and other candidates will be considered on their merits.

Mr. Chapman: I welcome the report and the Prime Minister's statement that the Government intend to implement the establishment of agencies. As the proposal has been widely welcomed, both outside and inside the Civil Service, will my right hon. Friend seriously consider keeping up the momentum and encouraging the establishment of agencies as a topmost priority?

Mr. Luce: Yes, of course I will. The project manager, Mr. Kemp, is now fully settled in the Department and we are working on drawing up the first list for implementation as soon as possible with the Departments concerned. As my hon. Friend knows, there is an initial list of 12, and we shall make an announcement as soon as we have one to make.

Mr. James Lamond: Is the Minister interested in efficiency a bit nearer home? Did he notice that earlier this Question Time a messenger arrived, bewigged from the Lords, and handed a bundle of documents done up in red tape to the Serjeant at Arms, who handed the bundle to the Attendant who normally marks up the times of debates, who handed it to the Doorkeeper, who brought it round via the No Lobby to behind the Chair and handed it to our Clerk? Surely there is a more efficient method for bringing messages from the Lords and carrying them the last 25 yards to our Clerk.

Mr. Luce: I have to answer for the Civil Service and not for procedures in this House, which are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. But the more that can be done to get rid of red tape, the better.

Ex-Civil Servants (Employment)

77. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service how many former civil servants have taken up employment with companies in a contractual relationship with Her Majesty's Government in the last five years.

Mr. Luce: I am glad to report that the system for dealing with these cases continues to work well. Comprehensive information is not available centrally. However, applications which have been referred by Departments to the Cabinet Office in accordance with the business appointment rules show that, between 1983 and 1987, 519 civil servants have sought approval to join companies with which they had had contractual contact.

Mr. Banks: Is the Minister not aware of the concern that exists about the number of people leaving the Civil Service to do precisely what he has just described? It seems that in the Ministry of Defence a large number of contracts are resulting in the British taxpayer being ripped off by private contractors. Would it not be better for the Ministry to prohibit civil servants from going to work for any organisation that has had any contractual relationship with the Government for a period of at least 10 years?

Mr. Luce: If I may say so, the hon. Gentleman takes a very limited view, although not necessarily a very

surprising one. Just as business men have a contribution to make in periods of secondment to the Civil Service, so civil servants have a contribution to make to the outside world. All that matters is that they should take up jobs that do not conflict with their previous appointment. That is why adequate procedures have been provided to deal with the matter, through the Diamond committee.

Community Charges Regulations (Scotland)

3.33 pm

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether you can help us in relation to the regulations that are to be debated for an hour and a half at 10.15 this evening, which relate to the establishment of the register for the community charge — the poll tax — in Scotland. There was lengthy questioning of the Leader of the House during business questions last week, and on at least four different occasions the right hon. Gentleman described the regulations as trivial and technical.

May I ask you, Sir, for your assistance and guidance? First, can the Leader of the House describe in that way a very detailed and important measure establishing the whole registration system for this unwanted and unfair tax in Scotland and get away with it? Secondly, is it in order for the Government to lay before the House regulations part of which the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments has described as unlawful because its provisions require registration officers to undertake something that they have no power to do? Thirdly, can the House give powers to registration officers to undertake something that the House and the Government have refused to define?

Two aspects of the form to be filled in are incomplete. For instance, it asks students——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Those are matters which are best put to the Minister later tonight, although I can answer the hon. Gentleman's first two questions. First, it is in order for the matter to be debated tonight. Secondly, I heard the way in which the Leader of the House described the regulations. I do not think that anything that comes before the House is trivial. I am sure that that is a very important matter and I shall listen with great interest to the debate later tonight.

Mr. Maxton: Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I take your point, but I was going to ask you for some guidance. This is not something that is happening at some time in the future. The process of registration that is to be debated this evening—on Monday—starts on 1 April, which is Friday of this week. Hon. Members may think, "Well, that's Good Friday," but I assure them that Good Friday is not necessarily a public holiday in Scotland. Registration starts on Friday, so matters that are not covered are of great importance to the House.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, your ruling is correct when you say that you cannot interfere, but I suggest that it is time that the House asked you to look into the matter to see whether greater control of statutory instruments should be given to the House.

Mr. Speaker: I have looked at the matter——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover) *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have looked at the matter and noted what the statutory instruments Committee said on it, but there are precedents for what is happening tonight. It is in order for the debate to proceed. On Friday the motion making it a debate lasting one and a half hours was passed.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will remember that I raised this matter on Thursday, along with many of my hon. Friends. There was an expression of great outrage from the Opposition on Thursday. We hoped that the Leader of the House would take account of that and alter the timetable, but nothing has been done about it. There are 101 or more anomalies, points of question and worries that can be raised and only an hour and a half in which to do it. I know that, of the 72 hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies, the vast majority want to speak on the matter—*[Interruption.]* We shall have only one minute each if the debate lasts an hour and a half. Perhaps some of the exiled Scots who interfere in our debates from time to time will also want to speak.

Given all the representations that were made on Thursday and the fact that the Labour Front Bench has raised a point of order today, and as I suspect that several of my hon. Friends are also concerned about it, there must be some way, Mr. Speaker, that you can say to the Government that the measure, which is important, and is not trival and technical, must be given proper time for adequate scrutiny by the House. If you are not able to do so, you should be given powers to enable you to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: That is a different matter. At the moment I have no authority to intervene in such matters. If the hon. Gentleman had been here on Friday, he would have been able to object to the motion that was passed without opposition.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. With great respect to what you have just said, Mr. Speaker, about there being precedents, may I say that the nature of the tax and the intrusion into personal liberty have no precedent, particularly in modern legislation? Conservative Members might reflect on the fact that Scotland is being used as a guinea pig—I am not being disrespectful to my country. Therefore, it would behove them to look at what the statutory instruments Committee said and it would behove the House to look at the modern techniques that are available to Government to use information that the registration officers will acquire for purposes outwith the collection of the tax. Therefore, we need the protection of the House. The House exists to protect the people, not just the Executive. If we were doing our job, we should tell the Executive that the statutory instrument is out of order and ultra vires, and should not be debated.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I say to the hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies who are rising that I can do nothing about the matter. A motion was passed on Friday and it is not within my power to do anything about it. A large number of right hon. and hon. Members wish to take part in the debate on the Education Reform Bill, which is to take place under a timetable motion, and we should get to it.

Sir Peter Emery (Honiton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can we, as a matter of procedure, try to ensure that points of order are raised as points of order and not as arguments about the matter under consideration? On Friday, the House passed the motion without a Division.

[Sir Peter Emery]

The Opposition had an opportunity to vote on the matter, but hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies were not here. Can we maintain the proper procedure and not have people cheating?

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Will you confirm that it is primary legislation that gives the Government the power to introduce statutory instruments, and that that was the time when the detail should have been debated? It was debated and the Opposition lost. Will you confirm that this is not the first time that legislation such as this has been handled in this way? We can remember the selective employment tax, which was just as hideous and odious as some may believe the community charge to be. Will you confirm that there is nothing out of order in what will happen this evening?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already said that.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: I shall call two more hon. Members, but then we must get on.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You advised my hon. Friend the Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) that last Friday it was open to us to object to this procedure. Is it not a fact that that would have curtailed the debate, which is not what we want to achieve? You have said that there is nothing that you can do, but do you appreciate that the problem is that not only is there nothing that you can do but that there is nothing that the elected representatives of the people of Scotland can do? How on earth can we protect the constitution of the United Kingdom in the face of a Government who seem hell bent on breaking up the United Kingdom?

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I should like to raise a point of order with you, Mr. Speaker, on the statutory instrument which was not considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and which many regard as a snoopers' charter. Many hon. Members will have a financial advantage if the poll tax and the related delegated legislation is brought into operation. Would there be a direct pecuniary interest to Conservative Scottish Members—handful of them that there are—if they voted for the statutory instrument? It would be worthwhile if you, Mr. Speaker, examined this matter to see whether they can vote for it.

Mr. Speaker: It is perfectly in order for hon. Members to cast a vote where it is a matter of public policy, as this would be.

Mr. Skinner *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am not taking any more points of order.

Mr. Skinner: Why?

Mr. Speaker: Because there is a timetable motion, and the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) may wish to take part in the debate on the Education Reform Bill. The House might benefit from his speech.

BILL PRESENTED

NORTHERN IRELAND (TERMINATION OF JURISDICTION)

Mr. Tony Benn, supported by Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Ken Livingstone, Mrs. Alice Mahon, Mr. Bob Clay, Ms. Dawn Primarolo, Mr. Chris Mullin, Mr. John Hughes, Ms Mildred Gordon, Mr. Max Madden and Mr. Bernie Grant, presented a Bill to make provision with respect to the termination of Her Majesty's jurisdiction in Northern Ireland: and for purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time tomorrow and to be printed. [Bill 133.]

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I will put together the two motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the Value Added Tax (Confectionery) Order 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 507), be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Redundancy Payments (Local Government) (Modification) (Amendment) Order 1988 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

Orders of the Day

Education Reform Bill

[4TH ALLOTTED DAY]

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered,

Clause 135

ABOLITION OF ILEA

3.43 pm

Mr. Jack Straw (Blackburn): I beg to move amendment No. 375, in page 127, line 26, leave out 'On 1st April 1990', and insert

'The Secretary of State shall secure a review of the Inner London Education Authority to be undertaken in pursuance of section 22(2) of the Local Government Act 1985, and on a date not less than two years after the conclusion of that review the Secretary of State may by affirmative order provide that'.

Mr. Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 499, in clause 136, in page 127, line 32, at beginning insert—

'Subject to the provisions of subsections (3) and (4) below'.

No. 356, in page 127, line 32, after 'date', insert 'subject to subsections (3) and (4) below'.

No. 357, in page 127, line 38, at end add—

'(3) The Secretary of State may by Order, which shall be subject to affirmative Resolution of both Houses of Parliament, designate two or more inner London councils as a single education authority, to which references in this or other Acts shall apply as in subsection (1) above.'.

No. 358, in page 127, line 38, at end add—

'(4) The Secretary of State may make an Order, subject to affirmative Resolution of both Houses of Parliament, which—

(a) may designate any former function of the inner London Education Authority which shall be discharged by a body, other than an inner London council or an education authority established by virtue of subsection (3) above;

No. 500, in page 127, line 38, at end insert—

'(3) Before the abolition date, the Secretary of State shall review development plans published in accordance with the provisions of section 138 of this Act and any other evidence or representations he considers approriate (including, in particular, reviews of matters relating to—

(a) special educational needs; and

(b) further and continuing education,

in the Inner London Education Area).

(4) If it appears to the Secretary of State in the case of any one or more inner London councils that all or any of those councils could with advantage make joint arrangements for the discharge of all or any of the functions of a local education authority, he shall by order under Part II of Schedule 1 of the 1944 Act establish for the whole or any part of the Inner London Education area a joint committee for the purpose of exercising such functions as he may prescribe accordingly.'.

No. 504, in clause 138, in page 129, line 3, at end insert

'(5A) An Inner London council shall, in preparing a development plan under this section, ensure that there is adequate financial support for the effective running and management of each of the following—

(a) the teaching of mother-tongue or community languages,

(b) the teaching of English as a second language,

(c) holiday play schemes,

(d) supplementary schools,

(e) the Education Liaison Service, and

(f) access courses leading to higher and further education.'.

No. 501, in clause 143, in page 133, line 16, at end insert 'provided that for the purposes of an order made under this section, when a school is designated by an order made under section 139 (so that an inner London council has a duty to maintain a school previously maintained by the LEA) the persons employed at that school shall be regarded as members of one class or description of employees'.

Mr. Straw: The amendment raises the crucial issue of whether the abolition of ILEA should take place on 1 April 1990 with no serious study or review, or whether a review should take place first. Before I deal with that, I want to place on record my great regret that the Secretary of State is unwilling to reply to this debate. He is here, but he is putting up the Minister of State to reply—and I mean her no disrespect by saying that. It has been crystal clear throughout that this is a crucial matter that is central to the Government's and the Secretary of State's reputation and he should have had the guts to reply to the debate on it.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Kenneth Baker): The hon. Gentleman knows that Mr. Speaker has selected six groups of amendments for debate and I shall reply to at least two of them—provided that we get to them, which we should be able to do. I have every confidence that my hon. Friend the Minister of State will be able to reply.

If the hon. Gentleman wants my reply to the amendment, let me say that we are wholly opposed to it. It will only lead to delay, which is not good for the interests of the children of London. The greatest service he can do is to encourage the London Labour boroughs to start planning for taking over their children's education on 1 April 1990, which is what the Conservative boroughs and Tower Hamlets are doing.

Mr. Straw: I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for that intervention, but it does not lie in his mouth to suggest that we can get on to debate the second and third groupings when he guillotined the Bill ruthlessly so that we are likely to be able to discuss only the first group, as he knew all along. He also well knows that we have the interests of the children of London at heart, which is why we are proposing a review first.

There have been two major reviews of ILEA's work under this Administration — one in 1980 and one in 1984. The one in 1980 was prompted by the findings of a committee of which the Secretary of State, then a Back Bencher, was chairman. The then Secretary of State, Lord Carlisle, with the advice of Her Majesty's inspectors before him, came to the House on 4 February 1981 to announce the conclusion of the review in these terms:

"the overriding factors are educational and financial. The weight of educational opinion, including the voluntary bodies and the churches, is that the problems of inner London call for a single authority of adequate size and with adequate resources to administer its schools as well as further and higher education, and the careers service; and that responsibility for the schools should not be separated from the rest of education. The Government share that view."

—[*Official Report*, 4 February 1981; Vol. 998 c. 296.]

A further review was conducted alongside the White Paper "Streamlining the Cities" in 1983-84.

I am glad to see the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) here——

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): Why?

Mr. Straw: Because I can address some of my remarks to him. His presence shows at least some token concern for the education of London's children; but the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) is absent——

Mr. Banks: Because the sun is still up; he is waiting for it to go down.

Mr. Straw: In any case, his absence shows the cavalier manner in which he regards the future of inner London.

The right hon. Member for Henley broke the 30-year Cabinet rule and told us that only five years ago — I hope that the Attorney-General has noted his indiscretion and that summonses under the Official Secrets Act will follow, under section 2 if not section 1 — he argued strongly within the Cabinet in 1983-84 in the run-up to the general election for the break-up of ILEA. Sad to relate, from his point of view, he failed in that, and the break-up was not included in the 1983 manifesto. Moreover, the right hon. Gentleman went on arguing for the break-up of ILEA after 1983—but still failed.

We had a number of arguments with Lord Joseph, but never doubted his concern about the education of our children. He said to the House: .

"Those whom we consulted, in particular those Members of the House and others with a close understanding of the needs of education in inner London, were overwhelmingly in favour of a directly elected authority. We have been persuaded by their arguments. The nature, the scale and importance of the education service in inner London, taken together, justify a directly elected authority in this special case."—[*Official Report*, 5 April 1984; Vol. 57, c. 1124.]

I understand that the consolation prize for the right hon. Member for Henley was that a power of review should be written into the Local Government Bill so that there could be a facility for abolishing ILEA by order, if the Government came to that conclusion, after about five years. If at any stage I have the chronology, the history or the facts wrong, I shall give way to the former Secretary of State so that he can give away some more official secrets.

The power to abolish ILEA by order was overturned by the House of Lords in mid-1985 and the matter came back to this House. May God please preserve the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the hon. Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), the longest serving junior Minister in this Administration. So pleased have we been with his comments that we are forming a Bob Dunn preservation society, because every time he speaks he makes our case. He said:

"The strongest objection to clause 21"—

as it then was—

"has been to the proposal that there should be a power for my right hon. Friend to reallocate the new ILEA's functions by order. We have been convinced by those arguments."—[*Official Report*, 8 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 817.]

It is interesting to look back at the history of that period to see what became of section 22 of the 1985 Act. Right from the start everyone in the Government accepted that before ILEA was broken up there had to be a review. That was written into the original legislation and was accepted by the right hon. Gentleman who is now the Secretary of State for Education and Science. I understand that it was also accepted by the right hon. Members for Henley and for Chingford and by the Prime Minister. Indeed, it was about the only matter on which those four right hon. Members agreed. All four of them knew that before there was any serious change to the structure of an organisation as complex and important as ILEA there had to be a review.

There has been some reference to well-wishers who keep sending me plain sealed envelopes containing information about what goes on in the Government or in the Conservative party. I shall come to the latest brown envelope that I have received.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Robert Jackson): The hon. Gentleman should not encourage public servants to break the law.

Mr. Straw: The hon. Gentleman should be careful in his allegation.

I have yet to receive a white envelope containing details of exactly what the Secretary of State said to "E(EP)", the Cabinet Sub-Committee that deals with all these matters, when he was faced with the efforts by the right hon. Members for Henley and for Chingford who were trying to railroad him into breaking up ILEA against his will. I understand, and I am certainly open to correction, that even at that stage the Secretary of State argued quite strongly against those two right hon. Gentlemen and said that there should be a review. I see that the Secretary of State is smiling like a Cheshire cat. If I am wrong, I shall give way so that the right hon. Gentleman can correct me and tell me exactly what other arguments he used against the two right hon. Gentlemen. We know, because we were able to observe it, that during the weeks when the Government were deciding whether to accept his advice or theirs he was walking around looking as black as thunder because he knew, and we knew, that he was being rolled over.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): There was an argument at the time, and it was that we should make a success of getting rid of the GLC and the metropolitan counties before dealing with ILEA. Now that we have made a triumphant success of getting rid of the GLC and the metropolitan counties, there seems to be an overwhelming case for saying that ILEA should go the same way.

Mr. Straw: That was not the argument that convinced the Secretary of State or the right hon. Gentleman, the chairman of the Conservative party, because only nine months ago in the Conservative manifesto they put forward quite a different proposition. As I understand it, the right hon. Member for Henley was a party to the decision in 1983-84 that there had to be a review of ILEA before any decision was made about its abolition. If I am wrong about that, I shall give way again to the right hon. Member for Henley. Once again, the right hon. Gentleman is trying to hide behind jokes and trivialities to mask the fact that he and the Government hav gone back on their word.

In order to reinforce the point that the Secretary of State was rolled over, I can tell the House that I had never seen him as uncomfortable as when he made his statement to the House on 4 February. He was trying to explain that black was white, and that a manifesto commitment that he had written and the right hon. Member for Chingford had endorsed, to keep ILEA intact, with at most three boroughs and the City of London withdrawing, was the same as the manifesto commitment to destroy it altogether.

Mr. Norman Tebbit (Chingford): Where in the Conservative party manifesto was there an undertaking that ILEA would be kept intact and only three boroughs would be allowed to withdraw? The trouble with the hon. Gentleman is that he cannot conceive that anybody's second thoughts would be better than his first. In his case, his third, fourth and fifth thoughts would be better than the one he is putting forward now.

Mr. Straw: The Conservative party manifesto said:

"In the area covered by the Inner London Education Authority, where entire borough councils wish to become independent of the LEA, they will be able to submit proposals to the Secretary of State requesting permission to take over the provision of education within their boundaries."

Mr. Tebbit: The hon. Gentleman said that there was an undertaking that ILEA would not be dismantled. There was a proposition, which has now been improved, that it should be dismantled. That is the fact.

Mr. Straw: The right hon. Gentleman cannot have it both ways. First, he said that this was a second thought, suggesting a complete change of policy. Now he is saying that it was a manifesto commitment, and the new policy is an improvement. He knows that there is not a word in the manifesto about the abolition of ILEA. He also knows that only three Conservative boroughs and the City of London, and possibly Tower Hamlets—I see the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) shaking his head, and he knows the Liberals in Tower Hamlets better than I do. The right hon. Member for Chingford knew the reality at the time of the general election, and he knew it when he put forward the amendment in the form of an early-day motion. If he thought that the manifesto was the mechanism for breaking up ILEA, why did he bother to have second thoughts and try to force on the Secretary of State an about-turn of policy?

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): To set the record straight, I should inform the hon. Gentleman that the view of Tower Hamlets council has always been that it opposes the abolition of ILEA. If ILEA were to be broken up, as was the original Tory proposal, it was considering what it should do. It never reached a conclusion because it never had time to do so, and it is opposed to the present proposal as much as any other borough in inner London that is not run by the Tories.

Mr. Straw: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that explanation.

Mr. Tebbit: Let me get back to the point. The hon. Gentleman claimed that there was an undertaking in the manifesto that what is being done in the Bill would not be done. He has to face the fact that no such undertaking was given. If he would come clean and not overstate his argument, he might do a lot better.

Mr. Straw: It is nice to know that the right hon. Gentleman now presents himself as Mr. Clean. The right hon. Gentleman has claimed for himself many reputations, but being Mr. Clean is not one of them. The phrase I used was that a manifesto commitment that he had written would result in ILEA being kept intact. On the basis of what was written in the manifesto—and he knows the words as well as I do—that was an entirely reasonable inference to draw. Not more than three boroughs would have withdrawn. We are grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for his confirmation that these were indeed second thoughts, and a major change of policy.

The fact that the Secretary of State was rolled over by the right hon. Members for Chingford and Henley is crystal clear from the information that I have been sent by well-wishers. There was first the report of Mr. Eric Bolton, the chief inspector, who wholly rebutted the claim that ILEA had not improved. That claim has been central to the argument for abolition without review. The Secretary of State knows that Mr. Bolton's minute, which was attached to the paper that no doubt went to "E(EP)", in which the Secretary of State argued for the review of ILEA and not for its break-up, praised four out of seven ILEA services and said that two were around the average. It was critical about secondary schools, but went on to say:

"Whatever its previous shortcomings, over the past two or three years there has been a marked move towards the improvement of quality, notably through an increase in inspection and in school improvement strategies, arising from the findings of inspection, as well as from the policies of the authority. In fact, there are clear signs that the findings of inspection are beginning to have an influence on the formulation of policy in the Inner London Education Authority."

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): The hon. Gentleman says that ILEA has improved in recent years. Does he accept that, whatever improvements have taken place, it is still almost bottom of the league?

4 pm

Mr. Straw: I do not accept that. We have had many debates about the performance of ILEA. I can claim to have some knowledge of ILEA, both as a member and as a consumer. It is a good authority. Even the Secretary of State had to correct himself when he claimed that its results were bottom of the league. He had to admit that there were about 12 authorities below it. Given the socio-economic background of the children, both the hon. Gentleman and the Secretary of State know that ILEA's results are about the same as those for Oxfordshire and better than those for the borough of Waltham Forest, when it was Conservative-controlled.

Mr. Richard Tracey (Surbiton): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Straw: I shall give way in a moment.

The remarks of the chief inspector suggested that ILEA was improving and thus emphasise the Secretary of State's discomfort that the abolition of ILEA was forced upon him without a review. The Secretary of State and his political advisers have sought to brief Conservative Members about the fact that abolition could go ahead without review. I have no doubt that the series of questions and answers written at the Department of Education and Science and put out by Conservative central office to explain away those second thoughts—which, according to the Secretary of State, are first thoughts slightly changed—were written with the intention that no one should be convinced by them.

That series of questions and answers is very defensive. Question one asks:

"Doesn't the announcement that ILEA is to be abolished mean a complete change of policy?".

The right hon. Member for Chingford says that the answer is yes and that it shows second thoughts. The Secretary of State says that that is not the case. That is another

[Mr. Straw]

indication of division. How can the Government abolish ILEA if the matter was not put to the electorate in the 1987 manifesto?

Question seven reflects the second thoughts in the minds of the drafters at Conservative central office and in the Department of Education and Science. Question seven asks:

"Why abolish the ILEA without first having a review under section 22 of the Local Government Act 1985?"

The answer states:

"There have been a long series of such reviews, but these have not resulted in any noticeable improvement in the ILEA's educational or financial performance. There is no reason to believe that a new review would be any more successful in raising standards in the future. On the contrary, it would merely postpone a positive decision, leaving the current climate of uncertainty."

I have dealt with the issue whether there has been an improvement. The Secretary of State was so angry about the leaking of Mr. Bolton's minute because it gave the game away and showed that there has been an improvement in ILEA's secondary school system and that four of the other seven services were among the best in the country. I asked the obvious question—whether it was correct that there had been a long series of reviews such as that anticipated by section 22 of the Local Government Act 1985. It took the Secretary of State 10 days to answer that simple question and I received the answer only this morning.

The Secretary of State mentioned two internal Government reviews, both of which I have referred to and both of which concluded that ILEA should remain intact. He then mentioned five other reviews. Only one review, the one that he wrote himself in 1985, said that ILEA should go. He has changed his mind since then; Lord Carlisle changed it for him.

I was referred finally to a document produced by the Centre for Policy Studies entitled "The Inner London Education Authority After the Abolition of the Greater London Council", published in 1983. Conservative Members, particularly those on the Right of the party, know about the Centre for Policy Studies because it provides them with the way, the truth and the light. My heart sank when I borrowed that from the Library and saw that it was written by John McIntosh, Fred Naylor and Laurence Norcross. However, this review, the last carried out by the Government, concludes:

"Although we have considered the solutions put forward by Mr. Kenneth Baker and Sir Frank Marshall, we do believe there are some powerful arguments for retaining broadly the present administrative structure of the ILEA."

The review goes on to recommend a directly elected authority and says that there should be direct elections. The authors of the report got their way because they persuaded Lord Joseph to go down that road.

Finally, in case the Secretary of State says, "Oh well, that was in 1983", the report goes on to say:

"The reform which we are advocating should be subject to review after ten years."

Even those three ideologues on the Right of the Tory party understood that the reforms had to take time before they could bear fruit.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will the hon. Gentleman deal with the important issues which ILEA has not faced — the constantly neglected need to go for higher expectations of its pupils, as many pupils fail to have high expectations, and its failure to relocate staff on the scale required?

Mr. Straw: I am not so pessimistic as the hon. Gentleman about teachers in London and pupil expectations, but I accept that there is a problem, not just in London but in many inner city areas. There is a vicious circle regarding teachers' expectations of their lower-achieving pupils. That is not surprising, given that over the past eight years the economic prospects of children emerging from school with either low or no examination results have been very low. The blame for that lies not with us, but with the Government. The last way to raise standards in inner London is to put ILEA and the education of inner London children through the disruption which is bound to be faced over the next 18 months or two years, if the proposal to break up ILEA is approved by the House.

Mr. Tracey: I wish to bring the hon. Gentleman to the core of the point. He has been arguing about whether the manifesto should stand firm and boroughs should opt out, or whether ILEA should be abolished at a stroke. Presumably he accepts that the manifesto commitment was perfectly valid and received an overwhelming mandate. Would he prefer to see ILEA wither on the branch as boroughs opt out? Undoubtedly more than the three or four that made it clear that they would opt out would have done so. The Labour boroughs would have opted out and ILEA would have withered on the branch. The hon. Gentleman's colleague, Lady Blackstone, has advised against that and surely he does not want to see that. That is why the Government have taken those steps.

Mr. Straw: I knew that I was right in hesitating to give way to the hon. Gentleman. As both my hon. Friends the Members for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) have said, Lady Blackstone did not say that. The hon. Gentleman knows that. Lady Blackstone and the Labour party believe that ILEA should not be broken up. We are not going to offer the hon. Gentleman and his party advice on the best method of executing an institution that we hold dear.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman has given us an interesting review of the reviews. He has said nothing new today. Everything that he has said has been on the record and has been known for some time. One of the little ironies of his review of the reviews was that he quoted from a 1983 Centre for Policy Studies pamphlet and, as a result, managed to cast my right hon. Friends the Members for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) as being against Right-wing ideologues and pictured them, as they are correctly presented in public life, as the moderates in this matter.

The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that the review by the senior chief inspector reflected real concern about standards in secondary schools in ILEA. There has been no progress in improving value for money in ILEA. It is still the largest spending authority. Many other authorities are concerned that so much money is being spent. In the manifesto that the hon. Gentleman read out we clearly signalled a change of policy. My right hon. Friend Lord Joseph went for a unitary authority, but in our manifesto we signalled the end of that by allowing London boroughs to opt out. We are building upon that.

The hon. Gentleman referred to my statement—[HON MEMBERS: "Come on."] Well, the hon. Gentleman wanted me to debate with him and I am happy to do so. He referred to my statement on 4 February and he said that it was unconvincing. What was unconvincing about the hour of that statement was that, the longer it went on, more and more Labour Members left the Chamber. By the end of the statement there were fewer Labour Members in the Chamber than there are even now. That shows the concern of the Labour party.

Mr. Straw: I notice that the Secretary of State was looking over his shoulder——

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Mr. Two Per Cent.

Mr. Straw: I shall come in a moment to the unhappy news from the weekend polls.

I forgot to answer the question posed by the hon. Member for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey). It is well known that ILEA has had difficulties with the reallocation of teachers, but that problem has been dealt with, I accept with difficulty, but with great firmness by the current leadership of ILEA. It lies least of all in the mouth of the Secretary of State to complain about spending. It is he who has controlled its level of spending and manpower over the past five years. He endorsed that spending, yet he could have cut it at any stage. We have heard before the weasel-words about the change being signalled in the manifesto. If an engine driver had been following that signal he would have crashed straight into the buffers. That is where the Secretary of State will end up.

The most significant thing about the reply that I received from the Secretary of State this morning is that there has not been a review by the Government or by the Centre for Policy Studies, which stands behind the Government these days, in the past five years. In 1983 the decision was made to abolish the GLC, but to keep ILEA intact. That illustrates that the Secretary of State's claims are threadbare and how unconvinced he is about the case for the wanton break-up of ILEA.

I believe that the Secretary of State is aware that the break-up of ILEA will damage not only London's children, but his reputation. The fact that it will damage his reputation is one of the few things about which he and the right hon. Members for Chingford and for Henley agree. I am distressed because the Secretary of State should take advice about his future political decisions from his true friends, from people such as myself. He may have forgotten that on 1 February, during the guillotine debate, I said:

"So I was distressed to read in the papers at the weekend"

—this was six weeks ago—

"that the odds on the Secretary of State in the Conservative leadership stakes have lengthened slightly as a result of his performance. That is a matter that causes me considerable distress. As I have told him, our interest, apart from trying to defeat the Bill, is to ensure that he remains upright when the leadership contest takes place." — [*Official Report*, 1 February 1988; Vol. 126, c. 760.]

That was before the Secretary of State was mugged by the two political hooligans.

Mr. Heseltine: Before the hon. Gentleman seeks an opportunity to get away from the substance of the case and therefore reveals the paucity of his arguments, will he explain how this trivial diversion equates with the fact that two prominent members of his party are now trying to destroy his party's leadership?

Mr. Straw: That is a diversion if ever there was one.

What I am talking about is central to the issue because we all know that the reason why ILEA is now to be broken up has nothing to do with the future of London's children, but everything to do with the squalid argument between the Secretary of State and the right hon. Members for Chingford and for Henley about the future of the Tory party.

4.15 pm

Today is the 20th anniversary of the Secretary of State's election to this House—he won a by-election in Acton. Has he had a card from the right hon. Members for Chingford and Henley?

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The fact that I have not had a card is obviously due to the fact that my right hon. Friends could not remember that notable day. I am sure that I shall receive their congratulations later in the Smoking Room over a drink.

Mr. Straw: The Secretary of State will need more than a drink. I have already said that, second only to defeating this Bill, I am concerned about the Secretary of State's future. Yesterday I opened my copy of *The Observer*, and saw something about a "Tory hero". I expected to see the name "Baker" at the top, but instead it said "Heseltine". It said that, according to an opinion poll, 17 per cent. of voters would prefer him to succeed the right hon. Lady the Prime Minister. The article went on to say:

"Among Conservative voters, however, Mr. Tebbit is preferred as successor (22 per cent.) against Mr. Heseltines 16 per cent.".

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Has this anything to do with the matter that we are supposed to be discussing?

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I hope that both Front Benches will set a good example by speaking to the amendments before the House.

Mr. Straw: It has everything to do with the debate because the changes before us have arisen as a result of the competition for the Tory leadership between the right hon. Members for Henley and for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker).

I have a great deal of respect and admiration for the right hon. Member for Henley, and, according to *The Observer* article, he has the support of 17 per cent. and the right hon. Member for Chingford has the support of 22 per cent. of Tory voters. It appears that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has the support of 8 per cent. and the Secretary of State for Energy 6 per cent. I asked myself, where is my hero, the Secretary of State for Education? The Secretary of State for Wales had 3 per cent. support and below him was my hero, the Secretary of State for Education, with 2 per cent. — [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] I am going to see my doctor after this because I am so distressed.

The case for the review, as agreed in 1983——

Mr. Tebbit: In this interlude of frivolity the hon. Gentleman is suggesting that the popularity of my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley and myself has gone up, remarkably, ever since we became associated with the abolition of ILEA. In those circumstances, knowing that the hon. Gentleman is extremely ambitious, I suggest that he joins in and does himself a bit of good.

Mr. Straw: That is an interesting idea. Where does that leave Mr. Two Per Cent.? The Secretary of State keeps telling us that he agrees with the right hon. Member for Chingford, but his support has gone down to 2 per cent.

I believe that there should be a review because, as Lord Joseph said, ILEA is unique, it has a small geographical area, and its services have developed without reference to borough boundaries. He also said that it was unique because of its immense good work in careers, adult education, further education and the London compact. All of those things will be put at risk because of the ad hoc, rapid changeover that will take place without review.

If there was a review, however, it could take into account the views of teachers, head teachers and parents. The Secretary of State may dismiss the interests of teachers as though they do not matter. I believe that they matter greatly. The Secretary of State keeps telling us that the views of the head teachers are of crucial importance. In a survey conducted by Mass Observation, published today, nine out of 10 head teachers in inner London oppose the break-up of ILEA and believe that it will result in a lower rather than a higher standard of education.

The next issue concerns parents. No man has made more of parents and their interests when it suited him than the Secretary of State. However, we have learnt that parents' interests are to be discarded whenever their conclusions differ from those of the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State made much of a by-election that took place in Wandsworth last November, just before the Education Reform Bill was presented. The issue then was not the break-up of ILEA, but the withdrawal of individual boroughs from ILEA. He suggested that that was a mandate for this policy. However, it was not a mandate for this policy because the policy did not even exist. The second thoughts had not been thought.

It is fascinating to consider the election literature issued by the Conservative party at the time of that by-election. That literature states:

"The facts about consultation are these. It is however for the people of Wandsworth to decide with particular reference to parental views."

The Conservatives in central Government have an opportunity to implement what the Conservatives in Wandsworth have a mandate for, and that is to consult parents. At the moment a parents' ballot is being conducted across London. London parents have raised £80,000 to pay for the ballot. It is a testament to the feelings of parents of all shades of opinion and none that they have been able to devote voluntary energies and fund raising to get the ballot off the ground.

I do not know what results will flow from the ballot. I only know how I voted in it as a London parent. However, I received some information today in the form of a letter from Conservative central office. That letter was sent by Mr. David Simpson to Members of Parliament and others for the use either of Conservative speakers or people dealing with the press. The letter reveals that Conservative central office believes that the ballot will result in an overwhelming victory for ILEA in the form of an overwhelming "No" vote. Central office is now trying to set up disgraceful and discreditable alibis to rubbish the ballot's result.

Mr. John Marshall: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Straw: No, I will not.

No doubt the Secretary of State, who is burying himself in his papers, has seen this document. Indeed, the Minister of State must have seen it as well. I hope that they will wholly disown it. It states:

"It is claimed that the poll will give a valid reflection of parents' views. In fact, the result is bound to be distorted for the following reasons:

(a.) Schools have been flooded by propaganda hostile to the Education Reform Bill and this has been paid for by the ratepayers since it represents the official view of ILEA."

It hardly lies in the mouth of the Secretary of State or members of the Conservative party to complain about flooding schools with propaganda when a head teacher cannot open his or her mail on any day of the week without finding another glossy pamphlet from the Secretary of State. Indeed, people visiting the Ideal Home exhibition to buy a new washing machine are bombarded by 24 video screens showing the Secretary of State trying to sell his wares.

I hope that my hon. Friends will note these next comments very carefully. The document continues:

"Where a child has two parents . . . ILEA is permitting only one vote. This obviously discriminates in favour of one-parent families."

What a disgraceful notion. It also shows that Tory central office believes that the ballot is being run by ILEA. In fact, it is being run by the independent London Parents Action Group.

Mr. Tracey: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Straw: No; sit down.

The document continues:

"It is claimed that the poll will be honest and above board since it is being conducted by the Electoral Reform Society. In fact, the method of organising the poll provides opportunity for ballot rigging on a considerable scale."

That is a wholly disgraceful allegation for Conservative cental office or Ministers to make against the Electoral Reform Society and the independent, apolitical, non-political London Parents Action Group. I ask the Secretary of State now to disown the quite scandalous and scurrilous claims made by the Conservative central office that there will be ballot rigging in the ballot.

The independent London Parents Action Group has raised £80,000 precisely to ensure that the ballot can be conducted with scrupulous rules by the Electoral Reform Society. If the Secretary of State is complaining about that, let him put up the money for the ballot in the same way that he is to put up money for ballots for grant-maintained schools. Come on, let us hear from the Secretary of State.

The simple fact is that the Tories are scared of a ballot of parents in inner London because they know what the result is likely to be. They are afraid of the truth and they are afraid that the result is likely to be a resounding rejection of their policies.

Mr. Tony Banks: They are not just afraid of the truth; they are contemptuous of it. They know very well that if the ballot went ahead it would show a complete rejection of their proposals for the abolition of ILEA. We should never believe a word that the Government say when they talk about democracy. They are hypocrites and liars.

Mr. Straw: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The Government are not only contemptuous of us; they are contemptuous of the electors of London and of people like the hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) who, along with my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch, received a petition today from 20,000 parents

from just three boroughs — Hackney, Islington and Wandsworth — which will be presented to the House. Indeed, many more thousands of signatures will be added to petitions. The Secretary of State preaches parent power and parent participation. However, the moment that they are inconvenient to his ambitions or the views of the real Secretaries of State — the terrible twins the right hon. Members for Henley and for Chingford — he ignores them.

Mr. Brian Sedgemore (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): Does my hon. Friend realise that one of the objections that parents made this morning when they came to see the hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden) and myself was that the Secretary of State, unlike his predecessor Lord Joseph, had refused to see parent governors or the parents' consultative committee, and the Secretary of State's argument for not seeing them was that they might put forward views with which he disagreed?

Mr. Straw: I agree with my hon. Friend. What he says leads me to another reason for a review of inner London's education before we abolish ILEA. The Secretary of State must be able to find out about London's education for himself. He has received the chief inspector's report which concludes fundamentally that there is no case for abolition.

Mr. David Madel (Bedfordshire, South-West): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Straw: No.

The most scandalous part of the Secretary of State's record is that, during the whole two years that he has been Secretary of State, he has visited just one school in the Inner London education authority, and that was a voluntary aided school. He has not visited any of the schools about which he is so critical. No wonder he is Mr. Two Per Cent. If there is a review, the Secretary of State can visit schools and learn about the realities of London's education.

The present policy to break up ILEA in this way is a consequence not of concern for the future of London's 270,000 children, but of the crude internal politics of the Tory party. We are all aware of that, and the Secretary of State knows it as well. However, he should also be aware of his duty by law as the holder of his high office to promote the education of the people and to secure a varied and comprehensive service in every area. He fails in that duty unless for once he and the Government think before they act.

Mr. Harry Greenway: The proposal of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science to abolish ILEA has stirred my memories. I worked for the London county council education committee for three years and for ILEA for 20 years. I reckon to know ILEA better than almost anyone because I have worked for it from so many angles. I remain president of two organisations concerned with sporting aspects of schools throughout ILEA and beyond it. I regularly enter ILEA schools and meet teachers and head teachers, many of whom are my friends.

The Inner London education authority has much in its favour, but there are substantial points against it. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), who replied to my intervention, did not face up to ILEA's failure over many years to relocate teaching staff. For five or six years ILEA should have had a great deal more courage and relocated several thousand teaching staff from highly favoured schools with pupil-teacher ratios as low as 8 : 1 to other schools, notably Church schools, which have never been favoured by ILEA or its predecessor, where pupil-teacher ratios were much inferior to their county school counterparts.

I remember with sadness and concern the vindictive attitude taken by ILEA to Church schools. That attitude goes back to the days of Mrs. Chaplin, who did much that was good for education in London. However, on one notable occasion she met the heads of Church schools, and one of them told me that she said "We are going to do you." That is what ILEA proceeded to do. It is to the eternal shame of the authority that it has not supported Church schools. Indeed, it has taken every opportunity available to it to favour county schools against Church schools. It has failed also to have a substantial religious education policy in its schools. Instead, it has opted for a broad syllabus that has lacked substance.

4.30 pm

Mr. Chris Smith (Islington, South and Finsbury): I cannot accept the hon. Gentleman's assertion that ILEA does not support Church schools. On the contrary, it is extremely supportive of Church schools of both denominations. If the hon. Gentleman doubts that, he should consult Church authorities.

Mr. Greenway: I think that the hon. Gentleman should meet Mrs. Chaplin, who formerly represented the area with which he is so familiar. If he does so, he will improve his political education.

I have criticisms of ILEA but I have much to say in its favour. I believe that there is enough responsibility within the authority for it to do its duty and to accept the verdict of the House of Commons today. I am certain that the House will decide that the authority should be abolished——

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Greenway: No, I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman will have an opportunity to make his own contribution to the debate.

I hope that ILEA, with the London boroughs, will prepare for the future education of children in inner London. It is imperative that it talks to the boroughs about its powers and responsibilities for many schools, which will be devolved in about two years' time. If it fails to do so, that will be its most significant and serious failure for London's children. I charge it with the duty of entering into discussions with the boroughs.

I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take account of the valuable work that ILEA continues to perform in adult education. I hope also that the Government will consider preserving the adult education service as a cross-borough service, or will ensure at least that there is substantial inter-borough co-operation on adult education. Similarly, we shall need inter-borough co-operation on special needs education after the abolition of ILEA. Boroughs cannot act alone in providing that education. Throughout London there are units providing education for delicate children, children with partial hearing and maladjusted children, for example, and these responsibilities cannot easily be

[Mr. Greenway]

devolved to individual boroughs. If there is such devolution, it must be written into the Bill. It must be understood clearly that where a special school has accepted children from throughout ILEA, and sometimes outside it, it will be enabled so to continue.

The success of ILEA in providing sports facilities for children has been significant and important. Children in inner-city areas need a window on the countryside, on some grass and plenty of physical activity. I hope that there will be co-operation across London in the provision of sports facilities. I am the president of the London Schoolboys' Hockey Association, which has affiliated to it schools throughout London. Playing fields are scattered about London and it would not be easy properly to provide playing fields for individual boroughs.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. Gentleman is advancing some good arguments. Has he put them to the Secretary of State? If so, what was the right hon. Gentleman's response?

Mr. Greenway: I have advanced these arguments and I know that my right hon. Friend is considering them. I am putting them on the record because I consider them to be important.

About 24 years ago I founded a scheme to enable children from special schools and ordinary schools to have lessons in horse-riding and stable management. The scheme has benefited many children enormously. Many an autistic child who has found difficulty in learning to speak or accepting the need to socialise, along with all the other difficulties that such children have, has become a new being while learning to ride on the back of a pony and learning how to care for it. It is to the great credit of the London county council, as it was, and ILEA that they chose to support the scheme. It would be a tragedy if that sort of scheme were to be lost with the disappearance of ILEA.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): I know many teachers who knew the hon. Gentleman when he was a member of the teaching profession, and I know that he was deeply respected. He knows as well as I do that music is one of the most important features of education. He knows also that ILEA is admired throughout the country for its attitude to music education. The life of any school is lacking if music is not a feature of it. ILEA has a lively musical life and in Pimlico, for example, there is a music centre and a lively youth orchestra. I ask the hon. Gentleman to seek an assurance from his right hon. and hon. Friends that that approach to music throughout the area for which ILEA is responsible will be continued by the boroughs by means of a joint approach.

Mr. Greenway: I understand that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has already given such assurances.

I was dealing with sport, which is one of the three cross-borough activities that I wish to see continue after the abolition of ILEA. I have mentioned especially horse-riding for disabled and ordinary children. Every child can benefit from horse-riding and learning to care for horses. There have been CSE courses on riding and caring for horses and I understand that these will be developed as GCSE courses.

It is necessary to consider the shortcomings of ILEA, which have ultimately undermined its successes. It has been wrong of ILEA not to have a high expectation of all children. It has failed seriously the children of single-parent families and many children of ethnic minority families. This is not because it has failed to show a heart or because it has chosen not to care for these children. In effect, ILEA has said, "This child is an orphan and we cannot expect too much of it. This child has a difficult background and this child has an ethnic minority background. We cannot expect too much of these children." I never knew my father. He died when I was one year old. That has been on of the sadnesses of my life. When I was a little boy I was told that I had to work twice as hard as everybody else because I did not have a father. I was not told that there was no need for me to do anything because I did not have a father and therefore society would look after me. Many children have been let down by ILEA's approach to children with difficulties. My right hon. Friend has picked that up, and he was right to do so.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I am sorry to see the right hon. Members for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) and for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) walking out, because I feel that they should listen to my remarks. By not listening, they show their contempt for debate in the House. They seek support from Conservative Members, and walk out when a case for the retention of ILEA is to be made. That reflects their personalities.

I am very pleased to follow the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway). He and I have a number of experiences in common, most of them relating to being professional teachers in the employ of either the London county council or ILEA. I must make that declaration of interest. For 14 years, my three children went to ILEA schools, and close relatives of mine are employed by ILEA. My children are benefitting or have benefited from ILEA further education grants. That is typical of many citizens of this country, and it is not the usual kind of financial interest declared by hon. Members.

I agree with much of the spirit of what was said by the hon. Member for Ealing, North. His conclusions are in favour of the amendments selected—but probably not taken—in my name. I must, however, contest what he said about church schools. I have a circular from the London Diocesan Board for Schools at 30 Causton street, headed "The future of the ILEA," and dated 13 February 1988. The second paragraph states:

> "The reasons for keeping a unitary education authority far outweigh the reasons for abolishing it, as can be seen in this paper."

There follow no fewer than 13 reasons why the unitary education authority should be retained.

Of course, ILEA is not without fault. Councillors in the past may have said things with which the hon. Member for Ealing, North did not agree. I knew the lady to whom he referred, Mrs. Ena Chaplin. She contributed much to the education scene in London. I see that the hon. Gentleman is nodding. But the fact that I disagreed with some of ILEA's actions, both past and present, does not mean that the statutory and administrative structure of any unitary education authority in London should be destroyed, whether it is dominated by the Conservative or the Labour party. It does not mean that if an authority is falling short of expectations, we should do away with it. The right hon. Members for Chingford and for Henley, who walked out—the parliamentary cowards who are not listening to the debate—would have us, the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State decide that, because it is felt that the

goods are not being delivered, the factory should be destroyed. The obvious course is to adjust, rather than destroy, the factory.

My amendments do not negate the destruction of the factory; they suggest that it should not be split into 32 different bits by statute. Amendment No. 356 reads:

"Page 127, line 32 *[Clause 136]*, after 'date', insert 'subject to subsections (3) and (4) below'."

Subsection (3) reads:

"The Secretary of State may by Order, which shall be subject to affirmative Resolution of both Houses of Parliament, designate two or more inner London councils as a single education authority, to which references in this or other Acts shall apply as in subsection (1) above."

Subsection (4) reads:

"The Secretary of State may make an Order, subject to affirmative Resolution of both Houses of Parliament, which—

(a) may designate any former function of the Inner London Education Authority which shall be discharged by a body, other than an inner London council or an education authority established by virtue of subsection (3) above."

The amendments would give the Secretary of State an optional flexibility. The present rigidity in the Bill is that, irrespective of size and current provision, each London borough shall be an education authority under the Education Acts. We all know the difficulties inherent in that. The Secretary of State has said, "Ah, well, we shall set up some joint authorities under the 1944 Act." He said that when he introduced the measure on 4 February, and it was reiterated on 27 February, but it is not in the Bill. It is left to the Secretary of State, on a subsequent date, to do that if he wishes. If the right hon. Gentleman accepted my amendments, they would give him more room for manoeuvre, and much more flexibility to meet the needs of children and teachers in the classroom.

4.45 pm

The Secretary of State has made great play of the suggestion that it is the inability of teachers to deliver the goods that is causing him to introduce these clauses. It is the ability of an education authority to assist the teacher in the classroom that I wish to discuss today. Eighteen years ago, I stepped straight out of the classroom into the House and made my maiden speech as a classroom teacher, and that is how I make my speech now. My hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) laughs, but it is no laughing matter. Time has gone on. Things were difficult enough then; they must be much more difficult now.

The object of education administration — and the duty of the House — is to give the teacher in the classroom the tools that a professional requires for the job. Without that, the needs of pupils cannot be met. I think that I carry the hon. Member for Ealing, North with me all the way — indeed, I should carry the whole House with me, and certainly the Secretary of State and Education Ministers — because that is the duty of the community to the schools.

I wish to speak on three broad issues, and to wind up with two true stories to illustrate my themes. The first issue is special education, to which the hon. Member for Ealing, North has referred. The second is higher and further education, and the third is sports facilities. Curiously enough, all three were picked out by the hon. Member for Ealing, North. I did not know that he was going to do that.

Special schools were referred to in the debate on 17 February by a number of hon. Members. They were referred to specifically by the Minister of State who, in winding up, said:

"Every local education authority is under a duty to secure adequate provision for children with special educational needs. Every local education authority in the country meets that duty by co-operating with other authorities as the hon. Member for Greenwich said. Even the Inner London Education Authority does not and cannot provide every form of specialist provision for every form of handicap." — [*Official Report*, 17 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. 1071.]

I see the Minister nodding. It is here; that is what she said.

Of course, that is true. The point is that the larger the education authority, the more able it is to do that very thing. Conversely, the smaller the education authority — and, in small towns or counties, that is the optimum size — the more difficult it is. In London, for over 100 years we have built up a system of meeting pupils' needs on a unitary basis. There are no fewer than 8,300 statemented children in the ILEA area, of whom no fewer than 6,600 are in special schools. It is a very big affair.

The whole of the specialist service for those children costs £50 million a year. Although there is overlap nowadays with statemented children in ordinary schools, the specialist service is almost an education authority in itself. But even that authority has its internal specialists — more than a dozen of them, each with its own particular responsibility: for example, impaired hearing units. There is only one boarding school, one specialist secondary school and two primary schools for the whole of London, and pupils are brought to them by transport. There are those with specific behavioural difficulties, and those who require special services because of various special difficulties, which I have not time to discuss. Nineteen specialities must be considered.

There are but two specialist schools in Westminster while Kensington and Chelsea has none. Clearly, there must be some co-operative arrangement. We have no specific pledge, but my amendments would make it possible for the Secretary of State to designate the whole of the existing ILEA area as a special education authority. Obviously, that is common sense for special education and for further and higher education, to which the hon. Member for Ealing, North referred. ILEA's further and higher education facilities are enormous. I do not know whether the right hon. Members for Chingford and for Henley know that every week 500,000 people use this further and higher education service, some full-time, some part-time during the day and some at evening classes. The service requires £250 million a year.

Facilities have been built up on a London-wide basis. There are the specialist services for industry and commerce — the national bakery school, at the South Bank polytechnic, the London College of Furniture, the London Printing college, the Westminster Catering college, the London College of Fashion, and so on. There are also the specialist institutions — for example, the 13 building schools throughout London which deal with special city and guilds building crafts. I think of building in particular because that was my specialist provision as a secondary school teacher, but I could continue listing many of the facilities required in London.

There are also the voluntary colleges — Morley college, which is always mentioned, the Central School of Speech and Drama, the Mary Ward centre, the Royal School of Needlework, the Cordwainers college and the

[Mr. Nigel Spearing]

Working Men's college, all of which fit together in a comprehensive service for Londoners. Why should it not be retained as a single, comprehensive service? It could be retained if the Secretary of State accepted my amendments.

Mr. John Marshall: The hon. Gentleman is a former Member for the London borough of Ealing. Does he accept that boroughs in outer London are able to co-operate? Residents who live in one borough go to classes in another, which is reimbursed by their borough? As a former resident of the London borough of Ealing, I point out that I never heard the hon. Gentleman make a speech suggesting that the London borough of Ealing was incapable of running its education, so why say that the inner London boroughs are?

Mr. Spearing: I am not saying that they are incapable. It is a matter of whether they are better able to serve the needs of the teachers and pupils in the classroom and of the parents than some modification of the present system. The answer to the question is plainly historical development. Acton, which I had the honour to represent, was a part III authority which ran its own schools, but, as it was not big enough, it became part of Middlesex. The development of education, which is similar to an organic process, depends on commitment.

The hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) has a point. Ealing borough council ran a good course for librarians at the Ealing technical college, which is now a polytechnic. That course served not only the rest of London but the whole nation. It developed over time. The point is that the authority was not split up. The Ealing authority was put together from a number of education authorities and worked in its own community. I am speaking purely of the administrative development of the service.

I endorse everything that the hon. Member for Ealing, North said about sports. The playing fields in Ealing serve London pupils. The Oxford-Cambridge boat race is next week, when those crews will row past the swell boathouses of London and Thames and of Putney. They will then pass the Barn Elms boathouse of the Inner London education authority, which was founded by the LCC. There is another boathouse at Clapton, which means that there are just two in London. When I coached at the Barn Elms boathouse, pupils came from all over London. There must be an organisation to keep that system going. The same is true of the riding places, the specialist schools and the groups who sail on the reservoirs. Provision cannot be made overnight. There is no reason why those facilities should not be kept as a unitary system.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Does the hon. Gentleman agree that if those facilities were lost they would never exist again? They must not be lost.

Mr. Spearing: Yes. We can look at the unitary facilities in the rest of Britain and at the provision in terms of capital, maintenance and skilled staff. There are skilled administrative and coaching systems for sports. The Bill is an anti-sports measure.

Mr. Tracey: Rubbish.

Mr. Spearing: I challenge the hon. Gentleman to look at the record of the LCC and ILEA and their contribution to sport over the past 50 years and then to tell me that I am wrong.

Mr. Chris Smith: I urge my hon. Friend, who has rightly identified ILEA's excellent sports record, not to ignore the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) about ILEA's musical education record. On 17 February 1988, in a letter to *The Times*, most of the foremost composers and conductors, headed by Sir Michael Tippett, said:

"The ILEA justly enjoys an international reputation for the quality of its musical education."

The signatories went on to spell out the fact that good musical education requires, first, funds; secondly, the necessary scale of authority; and, thirdly, a unitary authority to give direction and drive. Will that not go as part of ILEA's abolition?

Mr. Spearing: My hon. Friend reinforces my case. I shall go further: for that reason alone, this is an anti-music Bill — *[Interruption.]* Yes, it is an anti-music Bill for London and, as the Minister of State suggested in Committee, it casts doubts on musical education all over Britain, and I challenge the hon. Lady to deny that.

Mr. Sedgemore: Some Conservative Members seemed to snigger when my hon. Friend said that this was an anti-music Bill. Last night, at the Albury theatre, there were many music groups from ILEA, and they all thought that this was an anti-music Bill. Will Conservative Members snigger at that?

Mr. Spearing: I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Chingford, who is an expert sniggerer, is not present to hear this. If Conservative Members snigger, it illustrates their profound ignorance not only of education as a whole but of ILEA in particular.

I shall conclude with a story which I shall call the Wandsworth incident. I had the privilege to teach in two schools in Wandsworth during my teaching career. My story concerns a specialist service for ILEA—the ILEA careers service—which gave specialist advice which I, as a tutor, could not give to many of my pupils, some of whom could not read and write and others of whom went on to university. I was personally responsible for seeing about 300 of them through school. The incident happened 30 years ago but is up to date because education is far more than regurgitation of facts and testing at particular ages. One cannot test people at particular ages and development, as the Bill tends to assume.

I had a pupil, whom I shall call John Jones, who could not pass examinations. I doubt whether he would have done very well with the GCSE, but there was no doubt that he could not pass the CSE. He was a good lad, who worked hard and was obliging. The careers service did its best for him and asked what I could do. I said that I would write a letter, so I wrote to the effect:

"This boy is not able to pass examinations easily and he may not achieve any success in public examinations. However, he has great common sense. He is reliable. He is practical. He is willing to learn, thoroughly honest, tidy and obliging. Any employer will be fortunate having this person in their employment."

He came to me a few weeks later and said, "I shall be away tomorrow morning as I am going for an interview." The next day, after lunch he came back all smiles. I said, "What

happened?" and he said, "I got the job, sir." I said, "What was it?" and he said "Office boy at Conservative central office."

5 pm

Mr. Gerald Bowden (Dulwich): I rise to urge my right hon. Friend to reconsider his proposals for the future of ILEA. It gives me no satisfaction to express my opposition, and I am sorry to say that, if there is a vote, I may be in the Lobby voting against him.

I hope that those who have expressed views in support of the many good things that ILEA does will join me in looking for review rather than abolition. It will be little consolation to me if I find myself the only Tory Member supporting socialists of one sort or another asking for these proposals to be looked at. I urge my right hon. Friend to reconsider them. As they stand, they are impracticable and unworkable in boroughs such as my own of Southwark.

Southwark is unable to run its housing. That is demonstrated by its rent and rates debts of £30 million. It has no ability to run its social services. That is demonstrated by its scandalous control of the old folk's homes within the borough, one of which has been condemned outright and another three of which are under investigation. In those circumstances, it is utterly irresponsible to require Southwark to take on the education of children within the borough.

I ask my right hon. Friend to look again at the situation and bear in mind many of the points that have been raised in the debate. London-wide services have been built up over 50 or 100 years to serve inner London. If we were to seek to recreate such services today, we could not bring them to their present standard of maturity. I refer particularly to what might be called special, social, sports and informal education. Special education assesses the needs of children who, for one reason or another, do not fit into the normal school system. Adult education makes provision for giving skills and training to those who might have missed out somewhere along the line. At the same time it provides a social education and social contact for those who might not have any immediate connection with their fellow human beings. In that sense it is part of a social service as well as an education service.

We have mentioned, and we shall mention again, the routine, day-to-day adult education classes which bring great comfort, support and help to those who live nearby, and the centres of excellence such as Morley college, the City Literary Institute and others which could not be recreated today. I suggest that they could not survive if the proposals before us go through. It is necessary to find some way to hold them together.

The youth service does so much in social education. ILEA makes a contribution of resources, either in terms of money or professional expertise working alongside and in partnership with the voluntary sector, to make sure that there is provision for those who might otherwise not feel happy or comfortable within the school system but respond to other forms of youth or community work. Only this morning, I had a letter from the chairman of the London Federation of Boys Clubs, who made a great case for the contribution that ILEA makes, financially and professionally, to that organisation in supporting the clubs throughout London. That is likely to disappear if ILEA is abolished.

In addition, to be parochial, in my constituency, Dulwich art gallery, which is a private charitable institution, is a great education resource to school-children throughout London, as are the Horniman museum and the Geffrye museum. ILEA has provided an education officer to help in that museum, who has introduced a most innovative and excellent programme of education for children, getting children into arts galleries to see what is going on and making them feel that it is an exciting, vibrant and living experience. If ILEA were to go, that grant would go, that education officer would go, and the children of Southwark and of south-east London would be deprived.

It is in those areas of education that fall outside the normal run of primary and secondary schooling that the greatest damage will be done. I know that my right hon. Friend wishes to cure some of the ailments that exist within ILEA, but I fear that his proposals are going for overkill. As a result, the ailments might be cured but the patient might expire at the same time.

I believe that we are right to allow those boroughs that wish to opt out to do so. I have made that perfectly clear in all I have said. It was a matter of our manifesto. ILEA is not a perfect organisation. There are many misgivings about its secondary and primary school education. Those boroughs that have shown that they have the competence and confidence to take on education should be allowed to do so. Most of those boroughs have tested that in their own manifestos with their own electorate. It would be wrong to stand in their way and forbid them to opt out if they can do a better job than ILEA can do at the moment. Having said that, we cannot overlook the fact that boroughs such as Southwark do not have that confidence or competence and have made it quite clear that they are unwilling to take over education. In those circumstances, we would be throwing the children in those boroughs to the mercy of who knows what and who knows who.

There is a case for retaining a London-wide residuary body to cover special educational needs, sports and music and such matters which transcend individual borough boundaries. There is need for reform, but it might be possible to reform ILEA to make it a more responsive organisation, strategically capable of planning for the needs of a sector and, at the same time, more alert to the real needs of that sector.

The proposals are not practicable. A practical way to improve them, pragmatically, would be to look at what is left after those boroughs which have chosen to opt out have done so. I suggest that south London, Lambeth, Southwark, Greenwich and Lewisham together form a geographical unit making up a big enough body of schools and pupils to allow planning on a sector-strategic basis. I hesitate to say what that would be called. The South Inner London education authority — or SILEA — is not a happy acronym, but I am sure that another name could be found. There would be a case for allowing those boroughs which individually do not have adequate resources or expertise to work together as one group.

This morning I was impressed by the deputation I received and the petition that was presented to me from three boroughs, amounting to some 20,000 signatures. I hear there are more to follow. I hope that other Conservative Members will be prepared to receive such petitions whether or not they initially support them. I put before the House a way in which we can reform ILEA and make this great reform Bill a reformation Bill and not a

[Mr. Gerald Bowden]

revolutionary Bill. ILEA requires an evolutionary review, not a revolution. I urge my right hon. Friend to consider again the proposal that he has put before the House.

Mr. Simon Hughes: I am happy to follow the speech made by my parliamentary neighbour, the hon. Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden). We happen to be Members of Parliament for the only borough in London which is represented by all three large parties in the House. The constituency between the hon. Gentleman's and mine is represented by the Labour Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman). It is a telling commentary on the proposals in this part of the Bill that, despite our party differences, the three of us agree that in relation to ILEA the Government are moving in the wrong direction. I know that that view is shared not just by the three of us but across our borough, irrespective of political party. The Under-Secretary of State was a former Southwark councillor and I hope that he will pay particular attention to the views expressed by his parliamentary colleague and in the borough, which is also the London borough that he knows the best.

I do not think that I have ever received as much post on a single issue as I have on this. I also have not received one letter arguing in support of the Government's case. There has been massive concern, in standard form letters, but in personal letters, some of them written with great difficulty by people who have only just learned to read and write, saying how concerned they are for education in London and how committed they are to the retention of the ILEA. I have now been to two meetings organised in response to the Government's proposals. The first was in Tower Hamlets and the second in Southwark. There was unanimity across the whole range of social opinion among teaching staff—we have heard today that nine out of 10 teachers are against the proposal—other staff employed by ILEA, parents, pupils the churches and the voluntary sector. Although, as the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) rightly pointed out, there are things one can criticise about ILEA, on balance the overwhelming opinion is that its continuing existence should be supported.

During the debates on the abolition of the Greater London council it was important for those of us in London that the review clause about ILEA should be written in and that no hasty decision on ILEA should be made at any later stage. That is why my hon. Friends and I will support the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and his hon. Friends which again argues the case for a review.

Mr. John Maples (Lewisham, West): The hon. Gentleman referred to the abolition of the GLC. When that was first proposed, was there not exactly the same concern among the public, the same public meetings, letters written and speeches made in the House? The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) numbe ed himself among those who predicted that the world in London would come to an end without the GLC. In fact, the GLC has sunk without trace. It was not mentioned to me once during the general election. Does he not think that the concern now may be totally unfounded and grossly exaggerated, as it was for the GLC?

Mr. Hughes: The hon. Gentleman has made a perfectly proper point. My view is that London and the government of it is worse for the abolition of the GLC. Although life goes on, as it inevitably does, there remains the question of the standard of life and the quality of provision. My argument is that the review provisions for ILEA were built in because there was concern, including concern among some Conservative Members, that ILEA needed to continue to exist. As the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) will know, ILEA, in one form or another, goes back over a century. It meets the pan-London needs that boroughs such as Southwark and others would not particularly be able to meet, strapped as they are for resources and the ability to cope with present responsibilities.

Mr. Tracey: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

5.15 pm

Mr. Hughes: I will not give way because I want to make a relatively brief speech so that other hon. Members can speak in this short debate.

I want to try to persuade the Government that they should listen to the London Parents Action Group. It is not a party political body. It consists of concerned parents who are trying to persuade the Government by facts that their proposals are wrong and misguided. That is why today's debate is important. It shows a substantial degree of unity across the House.

The amendment in this group which is in my name and not that of my hon. Friend the Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) refers specifically to some of the matters that have already generally been raised and demonstrates our especial concern that special education and further and continuing education should be the subject of the Government's particular consideration now. We believe that those matters, above all others, will show the folly of the present proposals. They will show the need for a provision that goes wider than single boroughs because many needs could not be met by single boroughs within London.

There are two relative Acts that determine the criterion for educational review. In the Education Act 1944, there is provision for the Secretary of State to set up cross-authority provision if, otherwise, there would be no ability to

"tend to diminish expense or to increase efficiency"

or if such a provision

"would otherwise be of public advantage."

The same Act permits such provision on the basis of expediency. In the Local Government Act 1985 abolishing the GLC, cross-London educational provision was said to be something that the Secretary of State should consider and implement if it could be secured "with advantage". I believe that it would be to the advantage of education in London and it would be expedient and helpful in terms of expense and efficiency if there were a continuing cross-London authority. Also—the point has been well made—it is vital to preserve certain types of provision, which, once destroyed, could not be recreated. Such provision includes special education and further and continuing and adult education. Such provision should be secured at an early stage, whatever else is done.

Many examples could be given—I do not intend to list all the examples that we could all give from personal and local experience—of the special needs that could not be met without a cross-London authority. There are many sorts of disability that have not been referred to

because there are so many that it would be difficult to mention them all. For example, there are visually impaired, physically disabled and delicate children. There are ILEA schools in all inner London boroughs for children with severe, moderate or specific learning difficulties. There are schools for children with behavioural difficulties. There are boarding schools and day schools and schools for children with language impairment. There are schools for autistic children. There are six hospital special schools and all sorts of central services that could not be sustained, such as home tuition, special inspection, specialist careers officers for pupils with disabilities, senior youth work educational psychologists and so on. There is an enormous range of services that could not be provided by any single borough, let alone all of the boroughs. There are certain types of school of which there is only one in London. There is only one secondary school for the deaf and only one boarding school for the blind. Those schools cost a lot but are vital because children who attend them are entitled to the same education and opportunity in life as anybody else.

Further and continuing adult education has been the subject of a massive campaign. The hon. Member for Dulwich and I were privileged last week to receive a deputation from the Southwark institute. Those people had done beautiful craft work. Some of them did not have a high intellect and had mental disability but they produced a wonderful piece of work as their protest. It was an appropriate physically creative protest against what is being done. The hon. Member for Dulwich has also mentioned Morley college, which Southwark shares with Lambeth. Other institutions such as the Working Men's college have been mentioned. They too are vital to providing an extensive range of education across London.

There are thousands of people in London, a higher percentage than anywhere else in Britain, who avail themselves of adult education. A total of 15 per cent. of all adult education provided in England and Wales is provided by ILEA. One in seven Londoners over the age of 16 avails him or herself of adult education. It is particularly useful for helping with the education of those who are unemployed or disadvantaged. Many of those who use it pay no fees because they have had severe financial difficulties in the past and have lost educational opportunities. Those are exactly the sort of people we need to support and encourage.

There is a plea going out to the Secretary of State and his colleagues from both sides of the House. In their blindness—I believe it is due to an incorrect view of issues such as expenditure and performance and so on in ILEA—they are in danger of destroying so much. Even if they want to preserve what are, at the moment, some of the component parts of ILEA, some other provisions will be destroyed. ILEA can be reformed, but one cannot fundamentally tamper with the whole without destroying many vital services.

Let me finish on a personal note. Before I came to this place I was a youth worker in inner London for seven years, so I know of the vital need for that non-statutory service. That is one aspect of additional provision that I have not mentioned—nursery provision is another—that is threatened by the abolition proposals. There are many people with special needs for whom ILEA has set out to provide. I ask Ministers to think again, to consider the evidence—both of ILEA's record and of the opposition to abolition—to conduct a review and, in particular, to consider the needs of those who will be hit hardest if ILEA is abolished.

Mr. John Bowis (Battersea): Hon. Members on both sides of the House have advanced their arguments against abolition very moderately. Those arguments come down to two assertions. The first is that in some boroughs abysmal Labour administrations cause problems. The second is that some services require the resources of more than one borough.

First, we should bear in mind that we are not starting from scratch, but are trying to build on the existing provision of services in boroughs such as Southwark. I am sure that if such boroughs need help, the Government will be the first to provide it. Secondly, the co-operation of boroughs in providing services is precisely what we should be discussing now. We should be moving on from the debate about whether ILEA should be disbanded to a debate on how it should be disbanded. It is right for hon. Members to express their worries and to convey the worries of parents and the problems of children with special needs and their families and to say, "Let us get together and sort these matters out." That should be the next stage, once the Bill is passed.

The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) opened the debate with a somewhat frothy call for surveys, research and ballots. We know the facts by now, for goodness sake. We have been surveying ILEA for years and years—as have parents, politicians, the Department of Education and Science and Her Majesty's inspectors. We do not need a great new exercise. In particular, we do not need phoney ballots.

Mr. Corbyn: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Bowis: Let me finish my point.

Two ballots have been referred to today. The first was a ballot of a quarter of ILEA heads. It is rather hard on heads to be put on the spot in this way. When one talks privately to head teachers they tell one that, whereas many years ago they had the greatest respect for ILEA, they would not cross the road to save it now. They say, "We cannot say it publicly now, but come the day that ILEA is abolished, we shall not be sorry."

Mr. Corbyn *rose*—

Mr. Bowis: The second ballot was supposed to be a ballot of parents, and the hon. Member for Blackburn said that he had cast his vote this morning. He may have cast his vote, but the House may be sure that his wife has not cast hers, because the ballot does not provide for both husband and wife to vote. It is an odd ballot that precludes individuals from voting. In most ballots in this country, we operate the one person, one vote principle. Furthermore, the parent with six children has six votes. If that does not distort the results, I do not know what does. If the hon. Member for Blackburn tots up the votes in the ballot, he will find that parents whose children have left ILEA schools have had no vote and that parents whose children are to attend ILEA schools have had no vote. There is no vote for employers who take the product of the schools. Above all, there is no vote for parents who have opted out of the system and sent their children to schools outside ILEA or in the independent sector. In other words, there is no vote for those who have already voted with their feet.

Mr. Corbyn: I thank the hon. Gentleman for giving way at last. He seems to me to be spitting in the wind. Perhaps he would care to consider that the Government refused to include in last year's Tory manifesto a proposal to abolish ILEA, that they refused to meet a delegation of parents to discuss the abolition of ILEA and that they refused to fund a ballot of parents of children at ILEA schools. Who is the hon. Gentleman to complain, therefore, that a confidential ballot of head teachers came out overwhelmingly in support of ILEA and that an independently counted and organised ballot is being undertaken? Is not the hon. Gentleman demonstrating contempt for the views of parents who wish to retain ILEA?

Mr. Bowis: No. I have already explained why the ballots are not genuine. The hon. Gentleman's point about the manifesto is more important, although I thought we had dealt with it at the beginning of the debate. In our manifesto, we pledged ourselves to abolishing ILEA, but abolition was to come piecemeal, after a given number of boroughs had opted out. Since then many people, myself included, have decided that that would be a rather messy way of going about things. We feel that it would be better to make a clean break and to move on from there.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The hon. Gentleman says that he is concerned about the views of head teachers, and he is right to question the figures. May I invite him to go to the Grand Committee Room when he has finished his speech —I am sure that the House will excuse him—where he will find the head teachers gathered. If he does, he will hear the results of the opnion poll—which showed that only three out of the 232 heads surveyed supported abolition —confirmed with emotion and commitment by people who know what they are talking about because they are the people concerned.

Mr. Bowis: The hon. Gentleman cannot have been listening. I said what I thought about that matter. I also said that I talked to head teachers——

Mr. Corbyn: How many?

Mr. Bowis: They told me that they look forward to the new system being introduced once the debate about abolition is over. I am happy to talk to head teachers at all times——

Ms. Diane Abbott (Hackney, North and Stoke Newington): How many?

Mr. Bowis: I have been round a lot of heads in my borough——

Mr. Corbyn: How many?

Mr. Bowis: I have been round head teachers of primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and special schools. They have all told me the same thing.

Ms. Abbott: How many?

Mr. Bowis: We need to take into account the large number of parents——

Mr. Corbyn *rose*——

Mr. Bowis: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman again.

We need to take into account the large number of parents who have opted out of the system in division 10 in Wandsworth. Some 45 per cent. of parents have chosen to take their children away from mainstream ILEA schools. That is a damning percentage, and I seek to rectify that. I do not blame the parents, the teachers or the schools, but I want to improve matters. We must find a way of ensuring that more than a bare majority choose the local schools.

Mr. Straw: The hon. Gentleman has referred to the number of parents who opt out. Does that not make the case, also made in the Conservatives' propaganda before the Southfields election, for consulting all parents in Wandsworth? Why does not the hon. Gentleman urge Wandsworth systematically to do that? Is it because parents came out in favour of ILEA in the opinion poll?

Mr. Bowis: They did not come out in favour. As I have just pointed out, many of them voted with their feet and moved their children elsewhere, and a bare quarter of parents were satisfied with secondary education, with which I wish to deal in particular.

We know the sad facts about ILEA's results. We know the numbers of children who leave school with no examination passes and no qualifications. For the past few years, more than 22 per cent. of pupils leaving ILEA schools have left with no examination passes. That is more than twice the national average of 10 per cent. A breakdown of that figure shows that 22 per cent. of children of British origin, 15 per cent. of children of African origin, 13 per cent. of children of Caribbean origin and only 6 per cent. of children of Indian origin leave school without qualifications.

One cannot argue that it has to do with deprivation or multicultural problems. It is the mainstream, traditional child—if I may use that term—who is suffering most under the system.

Mr. Spearing *rose*——

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett (Denton and Reddish) *rose*——

Mr. Bowis: Perhaps I may finish this point before giving way.

The other side of the coin is the percentage of children who leave school with defined results—five O-levels or CSE grade 1 passes. A mere 16 per cent. of children leave ILEA schools with those results—as against a national average of 24 per cent.—and the figure for Wandsworth is only 9 per cent.

Mr. Spearing: Is not the hon. Gentleman ignoring my earlier point, to which I have received no reply? Whatever the results — good or bad —, why does the hon. Gentleman believe that borough education, which is prospective and unknown, in Wandsworth and elsewhere, will do better? It is surely a matter of faith rather than an attempt to rectify existing difficulties.

5.30 pm

Mr. Bowis: Of course it is a matter of faith—the hon. Gentleman is right — but it is faith based on the experience of the boroughs' ability to run things. It is based on the fact that the boroughs are much closer to the parents and that every councillor in every ward will have a say in education. Every parent will be able to go to his local councillor and there will be 60 voices in the council chamber talking about education, not two people going off to the dim and distant corridors of county hall. That faith is well justified.

Ms. Joan Ruddock (Lewisham, Deptford): The hon. Gentleman is putting a great deal of faith in the local authorities' abilities, but surely it has been the Government's intention to remove powers from local authorities and consistently to criticise the way in which they carry out their duties. The Government have rate capped them so that it has become impossible for them to carry out those duties.

Mr. Bowis: That is not true. The purpose of the rest of the Bill—I hope that the hon. Lady is looking at the Bill as a whole—is to improve standards in schools and give parents, governors, heads, and so on, more say and control over resources so that they can raise standards. The Bill is a way of getting some of the burden of bureaucracy off the backs of schools in inner London so that the resources can be redirected to where teachers say they are needed—in the classroom, not at county hall.

The figures from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for 1986-87 show that teaching costs per secondary pupil in inner London are £1,133 compared with a national figure of £813—only 72 per cent. of the ILEA figure. Perhaps that is a reasonable difference. However, let us look at the figures for the back-up costs. For support staff, the figure for inner London is £374 per pupil compared with £122 for the rest of the country, which is 33 per cent. of that for inner London. For supplies and services, the figure for inner London is £143 compared with £61 — 43 per cent. of inner London's costs. Under the heading "Miscellaneous", the figure is £93 in inner London compared with £38 elsewhere, which is 41 per cent. of the inner London figure.

Let us compare inner London with another city, Birmingham, which is Labour-run. The miscellaneous item is not £93 per pupil but £19. Premises-related costs in Birmingham are not £194 but £66. Non-teaching costs are not £360 but £101. That is where the savings can be made. The resources can be transported and redirected to where we all want to see them: in the classroom, supporting the teachers—supporting the successors of Opposition Members who have been teachers. The figures show that we can do it.

If that massive overspending resulted in good results, I should not begrudge it. Nobody would begrudge ILEA spending twice as much as the rest of the country if, by doing so, it brought the standards up to a par—no more than that. If standards were higher than average through ILEA spending twice as much, we should say that that was good, but ILEA has not done that. How much more money would ILEA have to spend to raise its standards to those of the rest of the country? Would it be twice as much again, twice as much on top of that, or twice as much on top of that? The Opposition must face that argument; they must face the costs. It is misdirected overspending, not just overspending in itself.

ILEA itself says that the costs in secondary education

"are an area where the discrepancies between ILEA and other similar LEAs are among the largest."

That was a quotation from "Approaches to the Authority's Forward Financial Planning for 1988 to 1991."

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: If ILEA is abolished, one of the crucial questions will be the financial problems created by the run-down of ILEA and the boroughs taking responsibility over the next few years. Does the hon. Gentleman envisage that each of the boroughs will have at least the same amount of money to spend as ILEA has now, or does he expect the boroughs to have less money?

Mr. Bowis: I shall expect the boroughs to talk to the Department of Education and Science when working out their priorities and needs. Then the Department can argue the case for resources with other Departments. We must look ahead. There is no reason why adequate resources should not be there to support education in inner London. No doubt boroughs that need more will receive more.

Hon. Members have referred to the HMI report, which the hon. Member for Blackburn said was so good. He said that it stated that no change was needed. In some cases the HMI verdict highlights good quality. For example, it says:

"overall the quality of ILEA's primary schools is similar to that found generally in the country. The range of good, average and poor is not exceptional."

I agree with that. It bears out my belief that things go wrong at the secondary, not the primary, education stage for inner London pupils.

On Friday night, I went to a primary school in my constituency, where we saw a show called "Rats", which is a version of the Pied Piper. I thought that it was a better performance than the National Theatre's version a year or two ago. It was excellent. It was based on traditional learning. The children learnt lines — even some from Robert Browning. There was good music. The staff worked out of school hours and there were volunteers. Parents came in to help, and the performance was based on contacts and donations. It was based on good traditional teaching. It had nothing whatever to do with ILEA and everything to do with a well-led school. A well-led school in that category, music and all, has nothing to fear from the change and everything to gain from the reputation that it has built up.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The hon. Gentleman makes the valid point about whether ILEA's costs and standards are as satisfactory or as good as they could be. Does he not realise that if he, like me, says that primary education is normally good in ILEA, but secondary education leaves much to be desired, the best thing to do would be to carry out a review? A review would prove that, compared with other services such as the police, health and social services, education is relatively cheap in inner London. It would be best to review it in a steady and considered way and decide what is weak and needs to be reformed rather than to abolish much of what the hon. Gentleman says is good.

Mr. Bowis: The HMI has done a review, which is why we are moving on to take action now.

Mr. Bolton says:

"Secondary education in the ILEA is generally rather poor, though there are a few schools of high quality, mainly in the voluntary sector."

We knew that. Of the 2,500 lessons seen by HMI, a mere 20 per cent. were judged to be good, only 40 per cent. were satisfactory and a further 40 per cent. were unsatisfactory or poor. Worse than that, of the three core subjects, the report declares mathematics to be variable and science not good, with fewer than half the lessons seen reaching acceptable standards and some being very poor indeed. On public examinations, the report says:

"Some pupils do better than can reasonably be expected; but the fact remains that many others fail to achieve the high grade results of which they are capable."

That is despite

[Mr. Bowis]

"the level of staffing and resources which are always generous and sometimes to excess."

That is what we know from the officials. Much has been made of letters that people have received. I should like to quote from a letter from a teacher who took early retirement from ILEA, having worked for ILEA for 30 years. That person, who is not a Conservative and makes it clear that he has never voted Conservative in his life, says:

"Conservatives now are talking more sense about education than the Labour party has done for many a long year, so I support Kenneth Baker's education Bill and the decision to axe ILEA."

He goes on:

"In my opinion the major factors in ILEA's decline are:

1. the uncritical, wholesale adoption of teaching methods solely on politically ideological grounds rather than on educational grounds,

2. the ease with which 'empires' were allowed to grow"—

that is important—

"3. the enforcement of VI form reorganisation,

4. an intolerance of criticism."

It is fascinating that the writer of the letter goes on to say:

"The ILEA swallowed whole the claims of the self-styled 'progressive education' lobby and made sure by one form of pressure or another that it became the new universal orthodoxy in spite of its unproven validity. As a historian, I find it highly ironic that so called left wingers so zealously espoused the educational theories advocated by Giovanni Gentile, Mussolini's first minister of education. Incidentally, Gentile's successor in that office was a man called Radice. Is this a coincidence?"

I shall now proceed from that first-hand experience to more recent information in a newspaper in the past few days, in which we are told that the Leader of the Opposition has been supporting books by the Marxist organisation Liberation for use in London's schools. The right hon. Gentleman has endorsed those books, saying:

"They should be part of the syllabus of every school."

The book is edited by Left-wing activist and teacher, Chris Searle. In particular, he likes some poems, one of which is called "Racist People." In its third verse, it says:

"Mrs. Thatcher don't give a shit,
I think it's time she got hit."

Of the poems, the Leader of the Opposition says:

"They inspire us, they give us hope and life, they fire us. They give us that insight, that piercing view of our society that has been put in such a beautiful and proud way in this book."

It gives other examples, including the unpleasant one of a play in which a gang of black youths go to Stoke Newington police station and are told by the police,

"I don't want no lip from you, Sambo."

That is the sort of book that the Leader of the Opposition considers worth while passing round ILEA schools. I am not entirely surprised that there is a challenge to his leadership. I hope that the hon. Member for Blackburn, who has fled to check his credentials and reading list, is not under threat from the list that the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) is drawing up for his ticket.

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Gentleman is being grossly unfair to the work that Chris Searle has done over many years—writing poetry, reproducing the views of London children and bringing Caribbean culture into London schools, thereby allowing children the opportunity to express their views. The hon. Gentleman is deliberately misquoting and quoting out of context parts of poetry and comments about that poetry. I suggest that he should be a little more honest when he is condemning someone who has done much good work for the culture of London schools.

Mr. Bowis: Out of the mouths, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I did not expect any Labour Member to defend the booklet. I thought that the hon. Gentleman would say that it is all a mistake and that he did not support it. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for saying that he supports that wonderful poetry and these wonderful books.

It is, perhaps, guess who time. It might be guessed that the quotation,

"I parted company with them when I began to question whether my duty was to the children or to some notion of being a militant trade unionist. They saw school as the factory and the children as the product,"

comes from an officer of the Inner London Teachers' Association.

I shall give a quotation from a national newspaper:

"'Union action in inner London pre-dates and extends beyond' the industrial action of the main teacher unions. 'Their motives are not for the good of children or the benefit of teachers but a fundamental reordering of society.'".

That might not easily be noted as coming from *The Guardian*.

I shall give a quotation from a well-known politician, who said:

"What we have in the Inner London Teachers' Association is a group of warring sectarian Trots, trying to play a completely different agenda . . . If the Inner London Education Authority has lost ground, it is largely due to the ILTA."

Perhaps the hon. Member for Blackburn will recognise his words.

I said earlier that there are problems that we should be tackling. There are matters, such as special needs, about which boroughs should be talking. This is the time to look for solutions to problems, because problems, concerns and anxieties there will undoubtedly be.

Let nobody say for one minute that we are condemning the whole of the ILEA out of hand. I am the first to pay tribute to good parts of ILEA, and some parts of it are excellent. At the same time, we must recognise that too much needs radical review for it to be done by piecemeal reform.

I ask that one sector be considered—the museums of London, the Horniman museum and the Geffrye museum in particular. When the GLC was abolished it was suggested that some museums should be attached to the British museum or to the Victoria and Albert museum. That suggestion was turned down, so they became part of ILEA for the time being. However, those museums have no tradition of being part of ILEA. A stream of letters has come in from people and international and national bodies in New York, Paris and Berlin which show that those museums are of international repute. They should be nationally funded. I hope that my right hon. Friend will make a brief response to that request.

I shall give a quotation that sums up the Bill—certainly this part of it—from the National Union of Teachers' education officer, who said:

"The Baker reforms could lead to higher standards and an improvement in the education service."

I think that he is right.

5.45 pm

Ms. Ruddock: I rise to support the review proposed and to tell the Secretary of State and his hon. Friends—it

should not be forgotten that they do not send their children to state schools—what effect their actions will have on education in Lewisham.

Teachers and parents in schools, nursery schools and colleges in my constituency are deeply worried about the prospects for education if the Education Reform Bill and the Local Government Finance Bill become law. The Secretary of State has clearly shown himself to be uninterested in the views of the majority of parents, teachers and, indeed, head teachers, who have all expressed concern about the effects of the Bill on London's children. Surely if the right hon. Gentleman had any integrity left he would wait until the results of the parents' ballots are known and then listen to their views about the abolition of ILEA before he acted.

According to Government plans, the abolition of ILEA will come into effect simultaneously with the imposition of the poll tax. At the same time, boroughs will be expected to bear the responsibility for running an education service while being denied the power to control their expenditure. Under the proposed new system of local government finance, the Government will control over 70 per cent. of local authority expenditure. Local authorities will be able to raise money only through the poll tax. In Lewisham, it is estimated that the poll tax will be about £1,350 for a two-adult household, which will be a massive burden on my constituents. Of course, the Government are hoping that such large poll tax bills will force local authorities to spend less money on services, including the new education service. We are entitled to ask what would be the effect on each inner London borough—I am referring particularly to Lewisham—if it could spend on education only at Government-set grant-related expenditure assessment levels.

I can tell the House what that would mean—the decimation of the education service. Some 445 primary school teachers would be sacked, along with half the support staff. Over 400 secondary school teachers would have to go and—perhaps even more shamefully—almost half of the teachers of children who have special needs. That would have devastating consequences for children in my constituency, one quarter of whom are from one-parent families and one in five of whom have both parents unemployed. How will those children receive the education that they need and deserve if ILEA is abolished?

Against that background of a deteriorating basic service I should like to refer briefly to three specific education services in my constituency that ILEA funds. The future of those services is directly threatened by the abolition of ILEA and by the Government-determined needs assessment.

My constituency houses one of the largest colleges of further education in Europe—the South-East London technical college. There are 13,000 students attending courses at SELTC — courses which range from vocational to community and arts courses. The college runs a certificate of pre-vocational education course to advise and assist young people, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, about their choice of career. It also runs engineering, business and catering courses. As an equal opportunities college it attracts an even higher number of students from ethnic minority groups than ILEA does generally. Of the 13,000 student intake, about 5,000 are from the borough of Lewisham and the rest are from outside the borough. It would impose considerable administrative burdens on a single local authority if it had to run the college and recoup moneys from all the other authorities concerned.

The college is already being forced to leave lecturing posts vacant and it is justifiably concerned that Lewisham borough council alone would not be able to provide the resources that it needs. I hope that the Secretary of State or the Minister will reassure the staff and students at the college, who have drawn up a petition for the Government, that the Government's proposals will match current funding levels, no matter what the arrangements for the future, and that the diversity of courses will be maintained. If the responsible Ministers cannot give that assurance they must agree with us that, for the sake of this college of real excellence, ILEA should be retained.

I am also concerned about the future of community education, particularly child guidance. In my constituency there is a clinic that provides a vital service in an area of great need and much deprivation. The Forest Hill clinic deals not only with acute problems but has pioneered work with the under-fives, working with parents in the home to prevent the worst problems arising.

The service is ILEA-funded and it is because, and only because, of that that it can work with the many professionals who make up the multi-disciplinary teams that can help these children with problems that may have physical repercussions, such as diseases like anorexia, which have a psychological basis. The clinic has a specialist unit that is concerned with cases arising from child abuse which, as we all know, is tragically on the increase. I do not believe that there is any way in which a single London authority in inner London, faced with all the problems of inner London, would be able to provide a service such as that being provided across London now by the ILEA child guidance service. The service takes a multidisciplinary approach, training social workers in Lewisham and in neighbouring boroughs and in Bromley and Croydon. The service is efficient and cost-effective and can remain so only if there is a single, unitary authority in inner London.

I ask the Minister for reassurances, if it is possible to give them, that a single authority running such a service would be able to attract staff of the calibre of the present staff and support such a wide range of services with such a heavy case load.

Finally, I want to refer briefly to the Horniman museum, which has already been mentioned in the debate. It provides a valuable education resource for schoolchildren and all my constituents. It has been a fundamental principle that it should be free and accessible, and the success of that belief is shown by the 229,000 visitors that it attracted last year. How would Lewisham be able to run that service alone? This year, Lewisham is rate capped, with the result that we have had to close two branch libraries, reduce the opening hours of others and curtail several leisure services. The council would not be able to support the running of what is, in effect, a national museum without a level of special funding that I do not believe the Government would make available to a single borough. That being so, the Government must agree with us that ILEA is necessary to preserve this valuable resource, and it should be retained for all the reasons that Opposition Members have advanced.

Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury) *rose*

Ms. Ruddock: I have nearly finished.

[Ms. Ruddock]

There is no doubt that the abolition of ILEA and the imposition of an unpopular and unjust poll tax can only have appalling consequences for education in Lewisham, and I urge the House to support my hon. Friend's amendments.

Mr. Maples: I am happy to follow the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) and to give a three-out-of-three plug for the Horniman museum. My hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) made the same point about it as the hon. Member for Deptford. That shows a good degree of cross-party support and I am sure that hon. Members of other parties would be willing, in the right circumstances, to signify their agreement that it would not be right to hand over the control and responsibility for the running of the museum in this way.

The museum is not only a London-wide institution; it serves the whole south-east, and many teachers take their classes there. It has a world-class reputation for its anthropological exhibits, a world-famous collection of musical instruments and many other educational features. I hope my hon. Friend will be able to say how the Government propose to deal with the problem. The director of the museum, and all who have examined the issue, would like something along the lines of nationally appointed trustees and some degree of national funding. There does not seem to be any suitable alternative umbrella organisation.

Unfortunately, I can agree no further than this with the hon. Member for Deptford. I do not think that pressure on resources need be of anything like the order that she has described. The reason why the poll tax is potentially so high in Lewisham is the profligacy of the council. It could easily reduce its spending and have a poll tax of well under £300 without touching education spending. If the hon. Lady is concerned that the Labour council will be unable to run education, there is a simple solution—to advise her constituents to vote Conservative in May 1990, because there is no question that we shall have a policy for, and be capable of putting into operation, a proper education service in the borough after that time.

Conservative Members made two criticisms of ILEA. They are not comprehensive, all-embracing criticisms, but they consist of two fundamental themes to do with wasteful spending and low standards of achievement in ILEA schools. Opposition Members largely avoid those points when they attempt to support ILEA. Their alibis are, for example, that it is always more expensive to do things in inner London and that many children there are from socially deprived homes, but those alibis do not answer the central criticism, which is that ILEA is an expensive authority that does not deliver the goods.

I made these points and gave countless examples of them on Report last week, during the ILEA debate a few weeks ago and on many other occasions and I do not want to reiterate them now, except for two, which arise from this debate. ILEA's music centre at Pimlico—there is also a branch in Tower Hamlets — has been hailed as an example of ILEA's service. It is true that it offers an excellent musical education and provides an opportunity for a few children in inner London to study music and develop their skills. No one wants that service to go, but I wonder whether hon. Members who support it know what it costs. It costs £1 million a year to run the service for the 470 children who attend it—more than £2,000 per child. It defies belief to suggest that it is impossible to organise music education for musically talented children in London for less than £2,000 per child per year. It is a scandal that it should cost so much. Of course, the service must continue, but anyone who suggests that that is what it needs to cost is out of touch with the world.

Mr. Simon Hughes: Will the hon. Gentleman remind us of the lowest fees per child at an independent school in London?

6 p.m.

Mr. Maples: ILEA's cost per child at a secondary school are greater than half of the fees in the independent schools in London. I was speaking about music education which costs £2,000 per child per year in the Pimlico centre, and the children go there only on Saturday mornings. The centre operates for only 32 weeks of the year. That is a staggering unit cost. The hon. Gentleman cannot attempt to defend that by comparing those costs with costs in an independent school. I think that it costs ILEA £2,600 per child per year in a secondary school. It costs 80 per cent. of that just to give music education. That does not make sense.

Mr. Hughes: If the hon. Gentleman came to the House with evidence about the costs in Chetham's school in Manchester, which has special music provision, we could have a reasonable debate. He cites one example about a special provision that caters for many children who would otherwise be deprived of that type of education. ILEA does it very well and the hon. Gentleman's argument proves nothing. He must realise that.

Mr. Maples: That is the most awful nonsense and the hon. Gentleman knows it. If the parents of those children were given £2,000 per year to spend on each child they could easily organise their own music education for considerably less. To suggest that it should cost almost as much to give music education on Saturday mornings as for the whole of a child's secondary education flies in the face of logic and reason. It is an example of ILEA providing a service which it is right to try to provide, but which it provides in an inefficient and profligate way. I am afraid that it is symptomatic of the way in which many of ILEA's other special services are provided.

My other example deals with the education standards that are achieved as a result of this expenditure. There are countless such examples. The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) made a point on which I was unable to intervene. He prayed in aid the Bolton report, and I understood him to say that the report said that ILEA was getting better, that its standards were rising and that for that reason the Secretary of State ought to have a review and not abolish ILEA. If its standards have been rising over the past few years, I hate to think what they were like before that. As the hon. Gentleman probably knows, a quarter of the children who leave ILEA schools achieve no GCEs or CSEs.

Mr. Andrew F. Bennett: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Maples: I am in the middle of making a point in reply to one made by the Member for Blackburn to whom I should be happy to give way.

Only 10 per cent. of children leaving ILEA schools get five or more GCEs or CSEs. A crippling indictment of

ILEA is that of band 1 children, those who at the age of 11 are reckoned to be the most able quarter of children —I know that that is a rough estimate—only a third get five or more GCEs or CSEs. Of the band 2 children, the 50 per cent. average in the middle, only 6 per cent. achieve such results. That is what ILEA is achieving and I and most of my hon. Friends think that that is a serious indictment of the education standards of ILEA. If that is the result of an improvement, can the hon. Member for Blackburn tell us what ILEA's education achievements were like before the improvement took place? They must have been simply awful. The two central points of our argument that are never answered by the defenders of ILEA are that the standards that it achieves are low and that it spends an inordinate amount of money achieving them. Both of those faults can and should be remedied.

Ms. Abbott: I should like to make a special plea for the Geffrye museum in my constituency which serves children all over London. Thousands of children have benefited from visits to that museum, including me when I went there 25 years ago. Any arrangements made after abolition should preserve that museum as a free museum for the children of London.

When speaking about abolition, the hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis) said that well-led schools have nothing to fear. Schools in inner London, especially those in the poorer areas and however well led, have everything to fear from abolition. My case comes back to a point made before in the House and I should like to make it again. It is about the arrangements for finance. However well led, schools that will have to be run with substantially less money than they had before abolition will have everything to fear in terms of standards and the prospects of the children.

In my borough of Hackney, we stand to lose at least £60 million under the abolition arrangements. Currently, Hackney puts in £33 million to ILEA and takes out £93 million. I have asked and asked, but I have yet to receive a clear commitment from the Secretary of State that the people of Hackney will not be financially worse off as a result of abolition. I ask again for the last time if the Secretary of State will commit himself by saying that the people of Hackney will not be worse off as a result of the abolition of ILEA.

What will the equalisation arrangement be? It is even worse than it looks, because not only will we be £60 million worse off in the first instance, but the imposition of the poll tax will widen the gap. After abolition, the poll tax in Hackney will be £744 per head. The people of Hackney want to hear from the Ministers some clear and concrete proposals about equalisation. We want to know where the money will come from to run our education. We are giving the Ministers a last chance to tell us that.

How can Ministers and Conservative Members talk about their concern for education prospects for children in inner London and how can the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) wring his hands and express totally bogus concern for education standards when children in Hackney are faced with a drop of £60 million? That could mean cuts in staffing, books and buildings of 25 per cent. When ILEA goes, teachers will be faced with losses in career prospects and support services. Hackney will have special difficulty in attracting staff. The loss of money, support structures and career prospects will lead to enormous difficulties for the poorer boroughs in attracting staff. How can the Government seriously talk about an increase in standards for areas such as Hackney?

No one has spoken about the effect of ILEA's abolition not just on poor children in London but on black children. One of the consequences of abolition is that the poorer boroughs will have far less to spend on education. As it happens, most of those poorer London boroughs are the centres for the black population. It is legitimate to raise the interests of black children in the debate because, as many Conservative Members may or may not know, 45 per cent., nearly half, of black schoolchildren are educated by ILEA. An attack on education in London is an attack on the education prospects of nearly half the black schoolchildren in Britain. I wonder whether the Secretary of State wants to go down in the history books as the man who built into education in London differentials in spending related to race that were commonly seen in schools in Atlanta and in New York before the campaign for civil rights. Does he really want to build in differentials in spending that closely parallel the distribution of black people in the capital? That will happen if ILEA is abolished without making proper arrangements for the equalisation of finance.

Those are the two points that I wanted to make. I wanted to talk about the money and about whether the Secretary of State had seriously considered the effect of abolition on poor children and specifically black children. I have been lobbied by hundreds of parents in Hackney and have had hundreds of letters from parents as a result of the Secretary of State's proposals. They want to know where the money will come from, and they want a commitment that standards will not drop. I would like a statement from the Secretary of State that he has seriously considered the ramifications of his proposals.

Mr. Alan Amos (Hexham): The fundamental question before the House is whether the continued existence of ILEA will lead to an improvement in education standards in inner London. The answer to that question is no, it will not, and the evidence for that is based on experience of ILEA. Another question is why it is not better to have education provision delivered at the most local level, that is, at the borough level. In outer London there are boroughs with two or three constituencies, and, regardless of size, they are able to deliver a satisfactory, if not good, education system.

Also, the House must ask why an education authority which is supposed to gain tremendous advantages from economies of scale is the most profligate in the country. Another question is why Opposition Members constantly expect that if one is working class or lives in an inner city, one's academic performance will be lower.

There are good educational, financial and political reasons for getting rid of ILEA, as I hope to show. In the words of *The Economist* earlier this year:

> "Labour-controlled ILEA has a reputation for administrative inefficiency, low standards and political interference in schools."

The article goes on to talk about political tyranny and the existence of corruption and inefficiency, and says:

> "ILEA is better at political posturing than at running things."

It talks of ILEA's "labyrinthine bureaucracy". No other local education authority has aroused such hostility, spent so much and achieved so little. We have not seen such a large drift into private education anywhere else. ILEA is

[Mr. Alan Amos]

blinded by dogma and divorced from the needs and wishes of ordinary people. Opposition Members must listen a little more closely to what people are telling us as politicians.

ILEA seems to have worked—I say "have" because I am sure it will be a thing of the past—on two misguided assumptions. The first is that one has only to spend more money to get better academic results. The second is that one can insinuate insidious political dogma into school classrooms with impunity. Before Opposition Members ask for examples, I will give one, which is based on experience and which concerns me considerably.

A little while ago, I visited Camden girls' school for a speaking engagement and the deputy head there told me about how ILEA had politically interfered with the good running of the school, and showed me evidence. It had subtly starved the school of resources just because it happened to be a former grammar school and it wanted to remain a single sex school.

Mr. Corbyn: The hon. Gentleman has just made a serious allegation against ILEA. He owes it to the House either to withdraw it or substantiate what he means by talking about vindictive behaviour by ILEA — those were the words he intended to use—against individual schools. That is a most damning thing to say, and if the hon. Gentleman cannot substantiate it he should shut up.

Mr. Amos: If the hon. Gentleman wants substantiation of it, I suggest that he goes to the school and speaks to the staff unofficially, and they will tell him the truth. At the school, while there was a shortage in certain basics, there was no shortage of irrelevant and wasteful anti-racist and anti-sexist propaganda, which I can assure the House goes straight into the bin.

Let us look at the state of ILEA's education system, because if we are to discuss whether it should continue we should look at what it is doing. Let us start with staff morale, which we are constantly being told is bad because of the Government. I assure the House that, as chairman of the education committee in the London borough of Enfield, which is close to ILEA, I know that staff morale in ILEA was low eight or nine years ago, and morale has continued to sink since then. There was a growing number of applications for schools in Enfield. Despite all ILEA's money and its so-called training schemes, hundreds of ILEA's teachers were trying to get out of ILEA. Unfortunately, the quality of those teachers was not as high as one would have expected from the comments of Labour Members, despite the training schemes that ILEA undertakes.

6.15 pm

Mr. Tony Banks: Geography is obviously not one of the hon. Gentleman's strongest subjects if he thinks Enfield is close to ILEA. If he thinks there is such a feeling among teachers, would he be prepared to support a referendum among teachers as well as among parents about the Government's abolition proposal?

Mr. Amos: My constituency is large, and to travel 50 miles is no distance. With all due respect to the hon. Gentleman, the southern part of the London borough of Enfield is but a few miles from the boundary of ILEA.

The quality of many of ILEA's teachers was not as good as it should have been, despite all the money and training schemes. One wonders precisely what was going on. Despite this so-called haven of harmonious happiness, 2,500 secondary pupils leave Lambeth for Wandsworth every day and morale in the teaching force is not good. One can only assume that that is because of the actions and inactions of ILEA.

Mr. John Fraser (Norwood): If the hon. Gentleman is attacking ILEA because about 2,000 pupils leave Lambeth every day for education in Wandsworth, which happens to be a better distribution of services, why does he think that the breaking up of ILEA will solve that problem?

Mr. Amos: That is an easy question to answer because decisions will be made at local level and the authority in charge will not have money to waste on political propaganda. They will have to spend their resources on education and nothing else. That is why education will be better.

Mr. Tony Banks: So children will go from one ILEA school to another.

Mr. Amos: ILEA will be remembered for its disgraceful quality of education. Its reputation has gone before it not only in London but throughout England. *[Interruption.]* It is all very well Opposition Members shouting and heckling, but ILEA is a disgrace. People regard it with horror. They constantly ask me, in many capacities, what goes on in ILEA and whether the authority has any chance of helping children to break out of their cycle of deprivation and inequality. They have no chance of doing that, which is why we must get rid of ILEA.

Let us judge ILEA by its exam results. Peter Newsom, a former education officer of ILEA, said something about which I should remind Opposition Members, because they often forget the facts. He said that exam results are

"below the national average",

and that

"a significant feature of them . . . is how stable they have been".

So they are bad, and getting no better, despite all the extra money that is being spent. This terrible state of low morale in the teaching force and appalling exam results has been going on for a number of years. It has nothing to do with a lack of money and everything to do with political manipulation. I would be the first to vote in favour of extra spending if I thought there was a direct correlation between spending levels and exam results, but there is not.

It is an insult, and typically Socialist, to assume that children who live in inner-city areas, who have a high incidence of living in one-parent families or having divorced parents, are bound to have poor exam results. As *The Economist* said, the fundamental problem with ILEA is that of low expectations, to which hon. Members have already referred. It is the tragedy of ILEA that political masters have expected so little from their pupils that they have achieved so little and are satisfied with so little. The 1980 HMI report talks about under-expectations of what pupils could achieve, but this is merely the logical extension of what the political masters expect.

It is no good the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and other Opposition Members saying that, if one allows for this and that, ILEA's results are as good as those of Oxfordshire. It is an utter fraud to try and twist figures to suit what one wants when they do not deliver what they are supposed to deliver.

Mr. Straw: I was quoting from the Department of Education and Science circular 13/84.

Mr. Amos: It is like the Labour party saying that, if it had not been for its disastrous policies, it would have won the general election. There is a direct link between disastrous policies and socialism. They go hand in hand. One cannot fiddle the figures to get what one wants. It will not work. Unemployment is coming down. We are achieving success on all those fronts.

Let us consider the academic and financial record of ILEA. It spends 50 per cent. more per secondary school pupil than the outer London boroughs do. Clearly that is not due to inner city problems because ILEA is still spending 75 per cent. more than Birmingham, which is at present Labour-controlled. One could argue that the running of schools in inner London needs a smaller unit to obtain comparable results, yet classes in ILEA are on average 20 per cent. smaller and the results still no better.

Surely ILEA must have some advantages. The one advantage constantly vaunted is that it has economies of scale, but even that bears no relation to reality because its administrative costs are twice the national average and it has two and a half times as many bureaucrats as any other local education authority. Despite higher spending, smaller classes, more teachers and more support staff, academic results in ILEA are twice as bad as the national average.

If we are serious about giving youngsters in inner London equality of opportunity, we must allow them to break out from the suffocation of ILEA, which has clearly been unable to raise standards. If we want competition and excellence, ILEA must be broken up. It has not even reached the level of mass mediocrity. Opposition Members must face the fact that it has failed and must be prepared to do something about it.

I wish to ask the hon. Member for Blackburn two questions. He claims to be concerned about the possible disruptive effect of the abolition of ILEA. Should we assume, therefore, that his party will not be seeking to restore ILEA? In view of his comments extolling the virtues of ILEA, if it is not going to be restored, why not?

Mrs. Rosie Barnes (Greenwich): Over the last few days I have listened with great interest to the debate on the Education Reform Bill and I have held my fire because I specifically wanted to speak in this part of the debate. I should like to put my comments into the context of my support for much of the rest of the Bill because I hope that, in that way, my criticism of this part will be taken more seriously.

I support proposals for diagnostic testing, if it is properly done, to show the performance of a particular school and to show parents how their children are doing in relation to others. I do not support competitive testing where one child is shown to be bottom of the class, deemed to be a failure and gives up. Testing must be done with great care.

I do not even oppose the controversial issue of opting out as a matter of principle, if it is implemented properly. I am sorry that the Government have not had the courage of their convictions in respect of opting out and have not allowed the proposals to go forward on the basis of a ballot and a simple majority of all those eligible to vote. On the present basis, after a vote of only three parents, if two vote to opt out and one does not, the proposal is accepted. That makes nonsense of the system. If the proposal is as good as the Government say, they should back it by allowing it to go through with a straightforward majority of parents eligible to vote, because it will work only if it has the commitment of the parents of the children in that school.

If the national curriculum is implemented with sufficient flexibility and sensitivity, it will be a long overdue reform and will raise standards. Let us raise standards and expectations. Low expectations are a serious problem in our education system. Until we address that matter, everything else is irrelevant.

What has been wrong with our education system for so long is performance at secondary school level, perhaps to a greater extent in ILEA than elsewhere in the country. The focal point of any reform should be in our secondary schools. The children are under-achieving, demotivated and playing truant. Demands are not being made of them and they are not even enjoying being at school.

In last week's debate we spent considerable time considering what we should do to encourage more 16 to 19-year-olds to stay on at school. We discussed financial incentives for them to do so. However, we overlook what happens between the ages of 11 and 16. So many children do not want to stay on at school because their experience between the ages of 11 and 16 is so poor that, at best, they cannot see any point in staying on, and, at worst, they cannot wait to get out. We have to make experience between 11 and 16 stimulating, dynamic, exciting and rewarding so that children value their education and want to continue it. Whatever we do beyond that stage will have no bearing on whether more children take up that option, unless their early experience has been enriching.

In view of my wholehearted commitment to and welcome of some parts of the Bill, I hope that my limited and constructive criticism of this part of the Bill will be received with an open mind. I see the proposals for the abolition of ILEA and the devolution of children's education in London to the boroughs as nothing less than madness. I speak from a heartfelt conviction, not just as an inner London Member of Parliament, but as a parent of children in the inner London state education system and as the mother of a boy who is not yet three and about whose future education I despair if the proposals are accepted.

A hideous game of political football is being played with inner London children. ILEA's performance can be criticised and I have never been backward in saying what was wrong with it. Its administrative tier is heavy both in terms of expenditure and bureaucracy. Its performance at secondary school level leaves a great deal to be desired. The politicisation of children's education over the past 10 years is undesirable. However, the Secretary of State's proposals will do far more damage at one stroke than 10 years of Left-wing Labour administration has done. Let us preserve what is good in ILEA and reform what needs to be reformed.

What is good and under threat? Nursery provision in ILEA leads the rest of the country. Many education authorities of the size of Greenwich or Lewisham have virtually no nursery provision. We do not want that situation to develop here. We are prepared to spend money on those things that matter and nursery education comes into that category. Special needs have been extensively discussed in this debate and ILEA ranks high among the authorities with regard to such provision. The careers

[Mrs. Rosie Barnes]

service provided by ILEA is hardly matched anywhere else and its provision of further and adult education is among the best in the country, if not the world.

6.30 pm

There are a wealth of examples of good education practices that may go to the wall if ILEA is abolished and one of those is the City Literary Institute. It is the largest education institute in this country. It is physically located in three boroughs, so where will it go after abolition? It offers advanced as well as adult education. It does not just provide for the people of inner London. It provides a regional, national and international service. It has 25,000 people in its main institute and 15,000 in outlying colleges. Those figures do not include the 5,000 applicants who have been turned away and the countless others who have not bothered to apply because they know it is over-subscribed.

The institute, apart from its specialities in humanities, languages, and creative and performing arts, also has special facilities for the deaf and mentally handicapped. It provides the only training for hearing therapists in Europe. It operates a scheme called "Fresh Horizons", which is pioneering access to advanced education for those youngsters who missed the boat at school. For many people that institute is a lifeline. It is entirely funded by ILEA. What will happen to it?

What evidence have we been given to suggest that to transfer the education of our children from ILEA to the London boroughs will put matters right? How will the schools, in particular the secondary schools, improve when they are run by boroughs which have no experience of education, which are rate capped and which have notoriously under-performed in many other services?

We have heard today that head teachers have not been at the forefront in the defence of ILEA in recent months, but they have criticised this measure. If the Secretary of State under-estimates their opinion he will be making a severe mistake.

What should be done to reform ILEA? I will not provoke the House unduly by dwelling on the basic issue of proportional representation, but that would have eliminated extremism from ILEA at a stroke. If the Government will not reconsider the abolition of ILEA entirely they should seriously consider establishing a statutory, unitary body for those parts of education provision that come outside the statutory education age of five to 16. Such a body would cover not only nursery and tertiary education, but the colleges of further education, adult education, the careers service and special needs. Time and time again today it has been demonstrated that those services will suffer irreparable damage if some provision is not made for them.

We must seriously consider the outcome of the measure. It is my contention that it will be calamitous. Conservative and Opposition Members who represent London seats will rue the day that the abolition of ILEA was allowed to go through. We need reform and acknowledged wrongs put right, but abolition is not the answer.

The Minister of State, Department of Education and Science (Mrs. Angela Rumbold) *rose*—

Mr. Corbyn: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for the Minister to rise at this point when only seven inner London Members have been able to speak in this debate? I have not been called in this debate despite the fact that I am sponsored by a union that has 15,000 members who will be adversely affected by the break-up of ILEA. Is it not a disgrace that the debate should be guillotined to three hours, given this monstrous *attack* on education in inner London?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): The guillotine and today's proceedings are not in my hands. The debate is guillotined and if the Minister rises I feel duty bound to call her.

Mrs. Rumbold: We have had a serious debate and the amendment has been discussed well by my hon. Friends and Opposition Members.

I was somewhat nonplussed by the opening speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). It was extremely long and it reminded me of the rather enjoyable times that I had in my childhood when I read stories about children at prep schools. I suspect that neither he nor I have had much experience of what happens in boys' prep schools, but I am fairly certain that the events that took place earlier this afternoon were rather reminiscent of the goings on at such schools when the boys get excited. I dare say that other hon. Ladies sometimes feel out of it, as I do, when they witness such extraordinary scenes in the House.

The hon. Member for Blackburn spoke of the independent London Parents Action Group. He stressed that it was independent. The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) also spoke about it. It is alleged that the ballot that that group has organised will ballot all ILEA parents—I assume that that is correct. So far my hon. Friend the Minister for Overseas Development, who is an ILEA parent, has not yet received a ballot paper. I understand that the hon. Member for Blackburn, also an ILEA parent, has received his. We shall wait to see whether those of our colleagues who are ILEA parents—there are some—receive their ballot papers.

The hon. Member for Blackburn should remember that in the recent election the Labour party did worst in London.

Mr. Corbyn: Is the Minister suggesting that some parents will not be given ballot papers deliberately? The Minister should be extremely careful because the ballot campaign is being efficiently and independently run. The votes will be counted by the Electoral Reform Society. She is making a most disgraceful slur on those people who are attempting to give parents a voice when her Government deny them that chance.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman must be careful in what he says. I was extremely careful in what I said and I was merely seeking information. The distribution of the ballot papers is not in the hands of the Electoral Reform Society, which, of course, is an extremely reputable and highly honourable organisation. No one would say anything different.

Mr. Straw: The Minister is making a disgraceful attack upon the independent London Parents Action Group. That group has independently and without any form of party allegiance raised £80,000 as a result of voluntary efforts. At my children's school parents of all political persuasions are supporting ILEA. I could also tell her what has been going on in the school attended by the children of the Minister for Overseas Development, but, in deference to his children, I shall not name it.

I received my ballot paper only on Saturday and I dare say that as the Minister for Overseas Development often flies halfway around the world he has not opened his post from Saturday.

The Minister is reading quite well the poisonous words that have been put out by Conservative central office, but I cannot believe that she will totally ignore the views of London parents if they show overwhelming opposition to the Government's intention.

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Gentleman makes many assumptions as to what I am or am not assuming. I have simply said that while my hon. Friend the Minister of Overseas Development was sitting beside me this afternoon he told me that he had not yet received his ballot paper. I am sure that he has had plenty of time in which to open his post. We shall watch with interest to see what happens.

The hon. Member for Blackburn rehearsed many arguments which have been repeated frequently in Committee and on the Floor of the House. It is very important that I should stress two points as a general theme before I answer the points made on specific amendments.

The first point was made very well by my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Mr. Bowis), who referred to the extravagance of ILEA and the recognition that many of the reasons why ILEA has been so unsuccessful are due to the fact that it is a two-layered authority. One layer of bureaucracy imposes on the local level. Opposition Members must accept that the Government have made up their mind. The Inner London education authority will go and delay is therefore pointless.

One of the most important tasks lies with Opposition Members who represent London constituencies. They must take the advice of ILEA's chief executive and start planning for the future. Some boroughs are already doing that. They include three Conservative boroughs, and I must tell the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey that Tower Hamlets takes its responsibilities equally seriously and has already entered into discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about plans for the future.

If Opposition Members say that they care for children —and I am sure that they are genuine when they say that they care—it is very important for the children's education and the services that ILEA provides across the boroughs that they go to their constituencies and boroughs and urge them to come to my right hon. Friend with their plans.

Mr. Simon Hughes: The Minister said that delay is pointless. Does she not believe that delay which secures better education is worthwhile, not pointless?

Mrs. Rumbold: The delay will be pointless. It would therefore be far better if all delay was put behind us and people got on with the job. They should produce development plans for the boroughs to deliver education sensibly and suitably by 1990.

It may help if I set out briefly the timetable that we envisage leading up to April 1990. Shortly after Easter we hope to issue our draft guidance on the development plans that we are asking boroughs to produce. Throughout the remainder of the spring and early summer I would expect the inner London unit—which my right hon. Friend has set up in the Department of Education and Science—to engage in serious discussions with the boroughs in the light of that draft guidance.

The full guidance will be issued formally immediately after Royal Assent and at that point we might expect that the boroughs would seek more detailed discussions as they prepare their plans. To allow sufficient time for local consideration of the plans, and for the necessary work leading to staff and property transfer orders that will be based on them, I envisage requiring those plans to be submitted not later than the end of February 1989. That is why I urge Opposition Members to take these measures very seriously.

In the light of the development plans we will be able to consider jointly with the boroughs whether it is necessary to establish formal co-operative arrangements in respect of particular aspects of the education service. Many hon. Members have referred to those co-operative arrangements.

I anticipate that the initial property and staff transfer orders will be laid in late summer next year, but that the process will continue until the abolition of ILEA. During that time the boroughs will work closely with ILEA to ensure that the transfer of functions takes place as smoothly as possible in April 1990.

Ms. Mildred Gordon (Bow and Poplar): Is the Minister saying in effect that she will ignore the result of the ballot being organised by parents in a desperate attempt to hold on to some democratic rights to free choice?

Mrs. Rumbold: The hon. Lady will be aware that Parliament is the institution that makes alterations to the way in which local government is run. That is a constitutional matter. A ballot cannot affect Parliament's decision in this matter.

6.45 pm

Mr. Tebbit: I very much agree with my hon. Friend. This is a very important matter. After all, if we took notice entirely of what the parents say, we would have very much tougher legislation concerning homosexual teachers and the teaching of homosexuality in schools. That might not suit some Opposition Members.

Mrs. Rumbold: I understand my right hon. Friend's message and I am sure that he is entirely right in his supposition.

The Government recognise that the preparatory work involved in becoming a local education authority will inevitably impose some additional financial burdens on the inner London boroughs. We therefore intend to provide specific grant aid in 1988-89 and 1989-90 which can be used by inner London councils for preparatory work such as the appointment of consultants, making preliminary appointments of administrative staff and establishing information systems.

The sums available for distribution between the inner London councils will be up to £3 million in 1988-89 and up to £10 million in 1989-90. Grant will be paid at 100 per cent. and we shall want to ensure that the money is spent wisely and effectively. We shall announce after Easter the criteria against which the grant will be available.

I am sure that the grant, which takes careful account of what boroughs such as Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster have been telling us about their start-up costs, will be generally welcomed and recognised as a mark

[Mrs. Rumbold]

of the Government's commitment to ensure the successful and orderly transfer of education responsibilities to the boroughs. We now look forward with this measure of our goodwill to close co-operation with the boroughs as they begin to set in place the arrangements to be supported by the grant.

Mr. Straw: I am grateful to the Minister for her courtesy in giving way. I understood what the Minister said about start-up costs between now and 1990, should that be approved by Parliament and another place. When will the boroughs learn about the post-1990 arrangements? The arrangements post-1990 will critically depend on the issue of grant.

Mrs. Rumbold: That is exactly why we are asking the boroughs to have discussions with the Department. They can then iron out and discuss those points.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) made much the same points as the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing). My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North referred to special education. I share his view of the importance of special education in inner London. I guarantee that the guidance that we shall issue shortly after Easter will pay careful attention to that aspect. That is not to say that we believe that some form of unitary structure is necessary for special schools. That is not necessary in outer London or in any other major city. Co-operation between the local education authorities is necessary to ensure that children are properly placed in schools which will benefit them and that co-operation exists elsewhere. We cannot accept that there are such differences between inner London children and those in the rest of the country as to make it impossible for those co-operative arrangements to work. That process will not be hindered by any of our proposals.

Any change in the pattern of special schools provision would require the approval of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. He would withhold that approval unless he was certain that the interests of the children with special education needs would in no way be jeopardised. Recoupment between local education authorities for special education is at full cost. Taking into account the volume of the current provision, there is no prospect whatever of children finding it difficult to get into the right school wherever it is located. We will discuss with the boroughs the way in which to preserve the range of special education provision while allowing it to come under local management in the boroughs.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North also referred to sports facilities and I am aware of his great interest in that matter. With regard to the physical provision of sports facilities, all sites inside or outside inner London will pass to the boroughs. If there is no case for transferring a particular establishment to a borough, it will pass to the London residuary body. The Secretary of State can direct the most appropriate long-term home for the facility. Either way, the Bill empowers the Secretary of State to require boroughs to agree user rights with one another. There is no question of facilities being lost. Specific provision for the use of facilities will be the reponsibility of the boroughs, and I have no doubt that they will wish to maintain valuable classes, such as the horse-riding classes for autistic children to which my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, North referred.

Mr. Tracey: The result of a time constraint is that the House has not reached an amendment tabled by some of my hon. Friends and myself that touches on facilities in outer London boroughs and in other boroughs further from London. These facilities must be kept for young sportsmen and clubs, perhaps by setting up a charity or partial charity. My hon. Friend the Minister has mentioned the London residuary body, but many of us are unhappy about facilities being transferred to the LRB and then being locked up, as it were, for many years. That is the position of a large facility in outer London at this moment.

Mrs. Rumbold: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recognises that concern. I shall take my hon. Friend's point to heart.

The hon. Member for Newham, South argued that, because some features of education are currently organised on a cross-London basis, they will be so organised in future. I reject that general thesis. Special education, further education, adult education and youth service are all facilities that are organised in outer London boroughs and by individual boroughs. It is certain that individual boroughs can organise effective services and be responsive to local needs. There is no reason to doubt the ability of inner London boroughs to do exactly the same.

Mr. Spearing: That may be the position in outer London boroughs, but does the Minister agree that fixed facilities, their geographical location, administrative arrangements and, above all, the experience and co-operation of the staff — this applies especially to specialist services in central London—require continuation on a unitary basis if they are to be satisfactory?

Mrs. Rumbold: I do not accept entirely what the hon. Gentleman said. However, we have an open mind about whether some services could be continued co-operatively between boroughs. That is one reason why it is essential that representatives of the boroughs come to the Department to tell us what they wish to provide for themselves and what they wish to provide through co-operative arrangements in future. Although services will be organised by individual boroughs, we have acknowledged that co-operation between the new inner London authorities is likely to be helpful for the provision of certain services. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will be content with that.

I have great respect for the views of my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich (Mr. Bowden). He is concerned that the boroughs are not capable of functioning effectively as education authorities. I hold no brief for the way in which certain boroughs have operated in recent years, but I think that my hon. Friend has overlooked two important considerations. The Bill provides for a national curriculum, open enrolment, local financial management and a system that will allow schools to be grant maintained. These provisions offer powerful safeguards against local mismanagement. I ask my hon. Friend to bear in mind that for the first time many inner London parents will be able to choose the local education authority in which their children are educated. No local education authority in London, no authority anywhere else, will have a monopoly of provision. In these circumstances, no borough will be able to avoid doing its best to offer acceptable education.

The second concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Dulwich is that some services will not be provided as effectively by individual boroughs as by ILEA. If he were to visit the metropolitan areas, he would find that boroughs provide effective and responsive local services, with sensible co-operation where necessary. The local education authority will be responsible, and at the end of the day it will be responsive, as a result of the ballot box, to the needs and requirements of those who vote. That is one of the most powerful reasons for wishing to devolve education responsibility to local authorities.

The hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) talked about further education and referred to colleges that receive many students from outside London. The funding and organisation of such colleges will be principally the responsibility of the maintaining local education authority. In drawing up development plans, we are requiring boroughs to consult other authorities in their area. In doing so, boroughs will have the opportunity to take acount of the views of their neighbours on the shape of further education provision, for example. They will be able to recoup the cost of provision under existing mandatory arrangements. I remind the hon. Lady that under the Bill colleges will be given much greater responsibility for running their own affairs. None of that will be affected or impaired by the fact that the maintaining local authority is a borough rather than ILEA.

Ms. Ruddock *rose*——

Mrs. Rumbold: I shall not give way. I must complete my speech.

The hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) spoke about the grant-related assessment arrangements for 1990 and after, which are currently being reviewed. They will be discussed with the local authority associations later this year. The grant-related expenditure assessments for education for individual London boroughs will take account of their needs, including differing needs between boroughs. It is wrong to compare contributions and spending by ILEA in each borough with what might happen after 1 April 1990. The new system will mean that each borough will receive a needs grant that will make an allowance for individual needs and socio-economic factors. It will be the same assessment system that will apply to other inner-city areas throughout the country.

Finally, I shall read a gentleman's letter to me. He wrote:

"Dear Madam, I was given this piece of paper and the envelope in which it was posted at the Camden Institute of Adult Education, where I attend a music appreciation class. I was expected to write to an MP on the Education Committee to protest at the losing of ILEA and also at the cuts that, we are told, will come into effect. I am writing instead to say that it has taken too long to deal with the ILEA which is, to say the least, extravagant with taxpayers' money, and that I have every confidence that when you consider what is to come after the ILEA you will give due consideration to adult education classes."

That letter was written by a pensioner, and I think that it provides a perfect conclusion to the debate.

Mr. Straw. If ever there were a case for a review before making hasty decisions, it has been made this evening by the Minister of State. The hon. Lady has admitted that it is not possible to hand over the running of ILEA's services to individual boroughs, even if the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) wishes to see that happen. In the same way, it was not possible to break up the GLC and hand it over to individual boroughs. Even the hon. Member for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey) has recognised that we shall find ourselves with a series of ad hoc arrangements in an attempt inadequately to replicate the services that are now provided by ILEA.

The Minister said that it is for Parliament to decide. Of course it is. We all know what the constitution is, but that does not mean that Parliament has to ignore the clearly expressed wishes of parents. There has been a curious contradiction in the debate. Conservative Members have tried repeatedly to legitimise their views by waving before us letters from constituents or well-wishers. I include in that comment the letter that the Minister has recently quoted. Why do we not take that process a stage further in a scientific way? Why do the Government not approve of balloting parents so that we may ascertain whether it is true that the Minister's mailbag and that of the right hon. Member for Chingford are representative of what parents feel?

If the arguments of Conservative Members were correct, there would be no support for ILEA and they would not have to worry about the result of the ballot to which my hon. Friends and I have referred. Instead, they are going to extraordinary lengths to denigrate the ballot. They know that parents, with their eyes wide open, support what ILEA is doing and the services that it provides.

If there was any need for persuasion of the case for time to consider the approach, and for a review to be undertaken, that need would be met by the sheer vulgarity, as well as the ignorance, of the contributions from the right hon. Member for Chingford. London's children deserve better than an education policy devised and written by the right hon. Gentleman. That is why the House should support the amendment.

It being Seven o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution [23 March], to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair,* That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 212, Noes 310.

Division No. 233] **[7 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Caborn, Richard
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Callaghan, Jim
Allen, Graham	Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Armstrong, Hilary	Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Ashdown, Paddy	Canavan, Dennis
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Cartwright, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*	Clay, Bob
Barron, Kevin	Clelland, David
Battle, John	Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Beckett, Margaret	Coleman, Donald
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Bermingham, Gerald	Corbett, Robin
Bidwell, Sydney	Corbyn, Jeremy
Blair, Tony	Cousins, Jim
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*	Cox, Tom
Boyes, Roland	Cryer, Bob
Bradley, Keith	Cummings, John
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*	Cunliffe, Lawrence
Buchan, Norman	Dalyell, Tam
Buckley, George J.	Darling, Alistair

Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*

Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on amendments moved by a member of the Government up to the end of clause 166.*

Clause 148

LIABILITY OF LONDON RESIDUARY BODY FOR REDUNDANCY AND COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

Amendment made: No. 429, in page 136, line 46, after 'made', insert 'on or'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 163

EDUCATION ASSETS BOARD

Amendment made: No. 137, in page 147, line 16, leave out 'had'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 166

WRONGFUL DISPOSALS

Amendment made: No. 430, in page 150, line 12, after 'local', insert 'education'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 176

APPLICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LAW DURING FINANCIAL DELEGATION

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): I beg to move amendment No. 386, in page 155, line 36, at end insert—

'(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as leading to any consequential diminution of rights for employees in respect of employment conditions already enshrined in existing statutes and local authority agreements.'

Clause 167 gives this Secretary of State and any future incumbent of the office sweeping powers on employment law. They will enable the Secretary of State, at a stroke of his pen, to change the employment law for all those who work in teaching and non-teaching posts in those schools covered by local delegated financial management.

These powers have been granted to the Secretary of State for Education and Science, not to the Secretary of State for Employment. I noticed when re-reading the Committee debate that the Minister of State said that there would be consultation with the Department of Employment. That is at least the minimum, but it is scandalous that the Secretary of State for Education and Science should have this almost unfettered right to alter employment law rights for thousands of individuals.

7.15 pm

These powers, by the back door, through stealth, give the Government the ability to change rights which have been built up over more than a century. They give the Government rights to change the law on health and safety —a law which has given individual employees statutory protection against certain health and safety hazards. The Government have moved significantly against the drift of European labour law. That law tried to build up the rights of individual employees, but the Government have tried consistently and systematically to reduce those rights.

[Mr. Derek Fatchett]

The Bill will allow all these rights which have been built up over the past 20 years, starting with the conditions of employment legislation in the 1960s and continuing through the employment protection legislation, to be amended by the Secretary of State. All those important rights — the right to time off to carry out public functions, such as duties as a magistrate or as a local authority member and the right of women employees to have maternity leave — can be changed by the Government.

There are also problems with procedures for recognition. Although this matter is not directly covered by clause 176, the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Jackson), worried many of us in Standing Committee when he referred to the possibility of the right of non-teaching members of staff to be represented by a trade union being taken away because of the process of local financial management. We would strongly object to that, because the democratic right to belong to and be represented by a trade union are crucial to a pluralistic society.

The Government are taking powers to change our employment laws in an education rather than employment Bill. That is interesting, because it comes from a Government who repeatedly lecture the trade union movement that trade unions must abide by the law and by agreements. Much of the industrial relations framework in education has been based on current employment law and agreements. The Government seem willing to get rid of those agreements at a stroke. If they do that, they have no right to lecture trade unionists on the way in which they should stick by and honour agreements.

What do we hear from Ministers in response to our fears? In reply to a debate in Committee, the Minister of State offered us three excuses, or reasons, for the Government's position. First, she said that we should not worry; that the measure applied only to schools covered by local financial management. But the schools to be covered will be all secondary schools and all primary schools with more than 200 children. A substantial proportion of education employees will be affected. It is no use saying that not many people will be affected by the clause. Many people will be affected. Furthermore, it is no excuse for the Minister to say, "We know that this is an outrage, but do not worry too much because it will not affect many people." If it were an outrage inflicted upon a minority, I suspect that we should be even more worried about it.

Secondly, the Minister offered the simple explanation that the powers will be used only when the Secretary of State considers them to be necessary or expedient. That argument has been used by Ministers on many occasions. They say, "Trust this Secretary of State; he is a good man. He will use these powers in a way that is reasonable because he is a reasonable man." The Secretary of State seems to be having great difficulty in convincing the public that he is a reasonable man. Mr. Two Per Cent. seems to have more success with his own Back Benchers than he does with the general public. The weakness of that argument is clear. It fails simply because, if it is necessary and expedient and this Secretary of State will use the power reasonably, by inference it admits that another Secretary of State will not use the power reasonably. We condemn the power for that reason.

Of course, we have little trust in the Secretary of State because he considered it necessary and expedient to take away from 400,000 teachers the right to bargain collectively with their employers. If he can do that at a stroke, he can take away other employment rights.

Thirdly, there are the reassuring words of the Minister when she said that we should not worry about the clause and the Government's intentions. In Committee, the Minister replied to my intervention with the following words:

"I can see no reason why there should be any consequential diminution of rights for employees as a result of the clause."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 25 February 1988; c. 1808.]

If that is the Government's intention, we ask them simply to accept the amendment, because it is based on the Minister's words. If the Minister is true to her word, she will give us that reassurance tonight. If she asks us to withdraw the amendment simply because it is not technically correct, we shall do so; but if she does not accept the spirit of the amendment her words in Committee will have little value and worth and many thousands of teachers and non-teaching staff will be worried by the absolute powers in relation to their employment rights that the Secretary of State and Government are taking.

This is a challenge to the Minister. Is she true to her word? Are the Government true to the Minister's word? If not, we are worried. If they are, we are delighted, and hope that she will accept the amendment.

Mr. Flannery: Clause 176 is possibly the most draconian clause in a draconian Bill. The Bill is bespattered with the words:

"The Secretary of State shall by order"

and it then mentions regulations. It is necessary to understand the precise wording of clause 176. The teachers' organisations and all the unions that are interested in their members who work in schools fear clause 176 more than almost anything else. It is lamentable that the guillotine allows us only until 7.45 pm to discuss this very important subject. I hope that there will be a vote on it, but I do not know what my hon. Friends have decided.

Mr. Fatchett: We are hoping that there will be no vote, because we expect the Minister to stick to her words in Committee.

Mr. Flannery: My hon. Friend has more faith in the Minister than I have. I would want to vote on the amendment.

Clause 176 states:

"The Secretary of State may by order make such modifications in any enactment relating to employment".

It then uses the following words which are used continually throughout the Bill:

"as he considers necessary or expedient in consequence of the operation".

As I was reading that for the umpteenth time in a monumental Bill, which is as big as five ordinary Bills, and which, no matter how long we discuss it, has been discussed insufficiently, and as we have only a few minutes to discuss this matter, I decided to turn casually to any two pages in the Bill. Those two pages and many others contain exactly those words.

The hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) is laughing like a Cheshire cat at this draconian piece of legislation which will undo negotiations that have

existed for more than 100 years. It is appalling that Conservative Members are so docile that they go along with this catch-all clause which allows the Secretary of State to tamper with employment legislation, with teachers, school meals workers and anyone working in schools and "by order" to do anything that he wishes.

Conservative Members do not understand that the words in the Bill are draconian. The Minister kept saying in Committee, "We hope that the hon. Gentleman will withdraw this because we accept the spirit of the amendment." It was said time and again that the Government accepted the spirit of the amendment. The spirit of the Bill, and the clause in particular, attacks everything that we hold dear in the education system.

People have come here representing the vast majority of the people in ILEA, the head teachers, those who work in schools, parents and all the organisations of teachers and head teachers. They are all looking with care at clause 176. The amendment adds a subsection to that clause that will not be withdrawn. It provides:

"Nothing in this section shall be construed as leading to any consequential diminution of rights for employees in respect of employment conditions already enshrined in existing statutes and local authority agreements."

I have spoken before about the centralisation of powers by this elective dictatorship with a majority of more than 100, dizzy with success and with power concentrated in the hands of one particular Minister. Such a concentration as is proposed would need a Pentagon instead of the DES; it would need a building vaster than the DES. Conservative Members do not understand exactly what they are doing. My hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) referred to the fact that the negotiating rights of teachers were withdrawn. When any democratic right is enshrined in legislation, the Government pass a new piece of legislation, destroy the democratic right and say, "That is democracy, because we have a majority." That was one of the problems we faced when Lord Hailsham said that the Labour Government were an elective dictatorship, and when Lord Pym warned that it was dangerous for a Government to have such a large majority.

Clause 176 is only a little clause but it is feared by the teachers' organisations, the unions and other people who work in the schools. It will deprive teachers of the rights they have now. Those rights will be concentrated in the hands of the Secretary of State, whom we do not trust to use them properly. Those powers would also be put in the hands of any subsequent Secretary of State. Therefore, I would love to think that our amendment No. 386 will be accepted by the Government.

7.30 pm

Mr. Paddy Ashdown (Yeovil): The hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery) finished so suddenly that he caught me by surprise. During his speech he said that this clause was an affront, not just to the network of rights held by teachers now, which have been negotiated as part of their employment rights for the past 100 years, but, perhaps more importantly, was an affront to the democratic system in Britain. I say that because I believe that that is the main burden of the clause.

We are concerned by the centralised power in the Bill. My concern with the Bill lies as much in the fact that it will damage our democratic system as with the fact that it will damage our education system. I do not believe that putting 183 powers in the hands of the Secretary of State, whether of this Government or any subsequent one, is good for our democratic system. This clause is, as the hon. Member for Hillsborough said, the most dangerous clause in the Bill without exception. As the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett) said, it could be the instrument by which we take away the rights that teachers have to redundancy provision and could even attack the basis on which they receive their redundancy pay. It might attack their rights to trade union time off and time off for public duties and maternity leave as well as attacking other essential parts of their employment provision, which are part of the way in which we construct employment for teachers.

Much more damaging is the fact that this clause enables the legislation democratically passed through the House to be obviated by the Secretary of State for the day at the stroke of a pen. When we pass legislation we do so for the whole nation. Yet we are allowing a single Secretary of State to say that it will not apply to teachers, probably a majority of teachers, in certain circumstances. How can the House give the Secretary of State for Education and Science that power which, as far as I know, is not given to any other Secretary of State? How can Conservative Members, who subscribe to the process of democracy and the processes of the House, simply allow circumstances in which the Secretary of State can, at a whim, say that what is passed in the House does not apply because he says so?

The Minister may say that that must be done by order passed via the negative resolution procedure of the House. She knows, as I do, that that is a farce and a charade. At best, it would mean a debate in Committee, and we know that that would not be brought before the public's attention. We know perfectly well that there is no possibility of a Secretary of State, who wished to use those powers, being overturned by such a system. Therefore, that does not provide the safeguards we need.

I believe that the clause makes a mockery of the process of Parliament. I do not understand how Conservative Members can allow a Secretary of State, of this Government or any subsequent Government, the power to override legislation that passes through the House in respect of employment for teachers. Conservative Members should have a care because in this clause, as in so much else, the power they now give to their own Secretary of State could fall into the hands of others and could be the instrument by which a Labour Secretary of State or Democrat Secretary of State could do things that they would find inimical. I recall the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) in 1976 bringing forward legislation that enabled him to create workers' co-operatives. The Conservative party, which was then in opposition, asked from where he got the power to do that. He pointed sweetly to the Conservative Government's own Industry Act 1975. That is where he got the power from and that is what will happen with a subsequent Secretary of State who will hold the power to overrule legislation passed by the House.

I do not believe that Conservative Members should so lightly place power in the hands of the Secretary of State, which is what will be done if the clause is passed. In so doing, I believe that they will damage the established rights of teachers, which have been put together over so many years, and will potentially damage the system of democracy and the power of the House. I hope that

[Mr. Paddy Ashdown]

Conservative Members, some of them at least, will find the stomach and the will to vote against this, for that reason, if for no other.

Mrs. Rumbold: I have listened carefully to what has been said by Opposition Members. I must say that they are grossly exaggerating the scope of clause 176. The scope of the clause is restricted simply to the powers that the Secretary of State gives to schools in relation to financial delegation.

Perhaps I should remind the House of the Government's approach to staffing in schools and colleges with financial delegation. Staffing costs will amount to about 80 per cent. or more of the budgets of those institutions. Therefore, when delegating powers to governing bodies we must make those powers meaningful, and that must include the management of staff. Therefore, the Bill provides for the governing bodies of institutions with financial delegation to select staff for appointment, to have control of discipline and grievance procedures and of suspension and, where necessary, to require the dismissal of a member of staff.

Governing bodies will, of course, have at their disposal full professional advice from the chief education officer of the local authority and his staff and from the head teacher or college principal. We believe that that professional advice will be crucial, and we introduced several amendments and gave a range of assurances in Committee to make it entirely clear that the advice will be given and that the governing bodies will have to consider it. However, at the end of the day, if financial delegation is to mean anything, the governors will be responsible for taking decisions. Many of those decisions will be taken by the governing bodies of schools and colleges with financial delegation, even though the local education authority will remain the employer of staff, other than in aided schools. Therefore, it is appropriate that governors should be accountable for management decisions, and that is the essence of clause 176.

Local education authority interests were rightly concerned that LEAs might be held to account for an unfair dismissal, for example, when they had had no control over whether the person was dismissed. They have been reassured when we have told them that the governing body will have to respond for its actions before an industrial tribunal, because of the operation of clause 176.

There is a precedent for that distribution of responsibility in the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978. Where an aided school dismisses a teacher whom it employs on the instruction of the LEA, it is the LEA and not the school governors which appears before an industrial tribunal, since it has taken the relevant decision.

Such transfers of responsibility will equally be in the interests of the staff. For example, section 23 of the Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act 1978 provides that an employee has the right not to have action short of dismissal taken against him for the purpose of preventing or deterring him from becoming a member of an independent trade union. In circumstances where the governing body manages the school, it must be right that the governors should not be able to take such action and should be held to account before an industrial tribunal if they were to do so. Similarly, under sections 27 to 29 employees have the right to time off work for trade union duties and activities and public duties, and there are similar responsibilities and duties that governing bodies will have to undertake in respect of matters such as maternity leave, which was referred to by the hon. Member for Leeds, Central (Mr. Fatchett).

It was suggested in Committee that we might list the relevant changes to employment law in the Bill itself. As I said then, we do not yet have a fixed view of what will be appropriate in every case. Therefore, we believe that it is right to consult the local education authority interests and the trade unions representing both teaching and non-teaching staff before the Secretary of State makes an order.

Mr. Fatchett *rose*——

Mrs. Rumbold: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me, I shall finish my point, because it may help the House.

I give a firm undertaking that, after Royal Assent, we will consult those interests on the content of an order under the clause and that we shall listen very carefully to the views that are put to us. The process will be entirely public and the order will not be made without full consultation.

Mr. Fatchett: The Minister says that the Government have no final view on the implications of the clause and that the matter will now go out to consultation, which we welcome. How does she square her first comment with her remarks in Committee? I am sure that she was speaking for the Government when she said:

> "I can see no reason why there should be any consequential diminution of rights for employees as a result of the clause"—[*Official Report, Standing Committee J*, 25 February 1988; c. 1808.]

Is she still saying that, or have the Government changed their position?

Mrs. Rumbold: I do not think that what I have just said undermines the importance that the Government attach to consultation or to ensuring that we take into account all the different interests and views put forward in reaching a conclusion about making an order under the clause. It is on that basis, which I believe to be absolutely right and very open, that we shall be proceeding.

Mr. Fatchett: We can understand the process of consultation. Is the Minister now saying that the matter will go out to consultation with the Government's view clearly stated that there should be no consequential diminution of rights? Is that what the Minister is saying?

Mrs. Rumbold: I think that the hon. Gentleman's concern about the diminution of the rights of employees under the clause is somewhat misplaced. I do not see that we are doing anything different from what has been practised in the voluntary-aided and special agreement schools, in which the governing bodies have had considerable freedom in relation to the employment of staff. It seems to me that there are powerful constraints on any diminution of rights. There are powerful constraints on the governing bodies, in two forms. First, no governing body is likely to take action representing a diminution of employees' rights. The governing body will know perfectly well that it will be advised by its local education authority on exactly how to proceed. That will be a powerfull constraint. Similarly, local education authorities have discretion to say that the financial delegation schemes

applying in their schools should be withdrawn from a school if they believe that the governing body of that school is not acting properly.

Mr. Fatchett: I wonder whether I can tempt the Minister simply to answer the question. Do the Government have a view? If they do, it may be beneficial in the context of the consultation process. Is it still the Government's view that there should be no consequential diminution of rights? The Minister keeps saying that it will not happen, but we want to know whether the Government want it to happen or whether they will resist it. Is the Minister's answer to that question yes or no?

Mrs. Rumbold: I hope to make it clear that the clause is not about diminishing employees' rights, but about ensuring that power and responsibility for the governing bodies go hand in hand. The amendment is unnecessary, and it is also unacceptable because it could lead to disputes about what employees' rights are and what constitutes diminution of them. For example, some might be tempted to claim that it is a diminution of rights simply to have decisions made at school rather than at local education authority level. We do not accept that. We make no secret of the fact that many decisions will be taken at school level under financial delegation and that, therefore, employment rights should be seen to operate at school level. I hope that I have managed to reassure the House about the Government's intentions and that the Opposition will withdraw the amendment.

Mr. Fatchett: Far from being reassured, we are even more worried. I offered hope to my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Mr. Flannery), but I suspect that his experience in this matter was well founded. The Minister has again worried us with her reply. All that we needed the Minister to do was to reinforce the proposition that there would be no diminution in employees' rights. She would not give us that commitment. We can come to only one conclusion: that local financial management will be used as a vehicle by which employment rights for teaching and non-teaching staff will be reduced. On that basis, we shall push the amendment to the vote and hope that Conservative Members who have understood the argument will support us.

It being a quarter to Eight o'clock, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *proceeded, pursuant to the orders [1 and 17 February] and the resolution [23 March], to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair,* That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 207, Noes 300.

Division No. 234] **[7.45 pm**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith

Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Atkins, Robert
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Woodcock, Mike
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd.

Question accordingly negatived.

Madam Deputy Speaker *then proceeded to put forthwith the Questions on the remaining amendments moved by a member of the Government.*

Clause 180

ORDERS AND REGULATIONS

Amendments made: No. 238, in page 157, line 26, after '24(1)', insert

'*(Replacement and variation of schemes)* (6);'

No. 239, in page 157, line 26, after 117(1) insert

'*(Replacement and variation of further and higher education funding schemes)* (6)'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Clause 184

COMMENCEMENT

Amendments made: No. 240, in page 160, line 14, at end insert—'section 99;'.

No. 241, in page 160, line 15, at end insert—

'sections 116 to 130 and 132;'.

No. 431, in page 160, line 16, leave out

'156 and 157; sections 163'

and insert '135'.

No. 118, in page 160, line 19, at end insert

'sections *(Grants related to aided or special agreement schools)* and *(Grants: miscellaneous)*;'.

No. 244, in page 160, line 21, at end insert 'section *(stamp duty)*;'

No. 269, in page 160, line 21, at end insert

'section *(Superannuation for staff of Further Education Unit)*;'.

No. 342, in page 160, line 24, leave out 'paragraph' and insert 'paragraphs 51 and'.

No. 242, in page 160, line 27, at end insert—

'(1A) Notwithstanding anything in section 99 of this Act, until the end of the year 1989 any education provided by an institution for which immediately before the passing of this Act there is in force an instrument of government made under section 1 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1968 (government and conduct of colleges of education and other institutions providing further education) shall for the purposes of—

(a) the Education Acts 1944 to 1988; and

(b) any other enactment referring to further education within the meaning of those Acts or of the 1944 Act;

be treated as further education, and not as secondary education, within the meaning of that Act.'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Schedule 10

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Amendment made: No. 344, in page 188, line 27, leave out from beginning to '(determination' and insert—

'—(1) Section 67 of the Act (determination of disputes and questions) shall be amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (3) (determination of question whether religious instruction is in accordance with trust deed), after the word "voluntary" there shall be inserted the words "or grant-maintained".

(3) In subsection (4)'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Schedule 11

REPEALS

Amendments made: No. 432, in page 203, line 18, at end insert—

'1963 c. 33. The London Government Act 1963. Section 32(7).'

No. 433, in page 207, leave out lines 36 and 37.

No. 119, in page 207, line 45, at end insert—

'1974 c. 7. The Local Government Act 1974. Section 8(2) and (3).'.—*[Mr. Kenneth Baker.]*

Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's Consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]

7.57 pm

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

The Education Reform Bill is a landmark in our education system. Future historians will see the Bill as the turning point, when the country moved forward from a long debate on education to a programme of action to improve the education system—action to improve the quality of education in our schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities; action to raise the standards achieved by pupils and students; action to extend freedom of choice and to enhance the position of parents. It is right, therefore, that the House has now debated the Bill for over 200 hours on the Floor and in Committee. That massive allocation of time marks the significance of the Government's proposals. When it comes back from the House of Lords, it is likely to be the most debated Bill since 1945——

Mr. Straw: It feels like it.

Mr. Baker: I feel as fresh as a daisy. Although I am now moving the Third Reading, I should be happy to move the Second Reading again, but that would give the hon. Gentleman too much of an opportunity.

Since becoming Secretary of State in May 1986, I have visited many excellent schools and been very impressed by the work being done, often in difficult circumstances, by teachers in schools and colleges throughout the country. But too often they have been isolated examples of excellence. Too many of our pupils achieve less than they could and should and less than their counterparts in foreign countries. Nine out of 10 16-year-olds in West Germany get a hauptschule certificate covering German, maths, a foreign language and two other subjects. Fewer than four out of 10 English school leavers attain the equivalent qualification — the certificate of secondary education, grade 4 — in English, maths, a foreign language and one other subject.

As a country, we have been letting too many of our children down. The brightest do not suffer — they can survive — but not all of them are fully stretched and challenged. Too many of the average and below-average are not stretched; they get bored and bunk off as quickly as they can. They do not return. Legislation alone cannot put this right. What it can do is create a framework which focuses the creativity of our professional teachers and taps into the energies and commitment of parents, employers and local communities.

I want to inject into the education service a clear sense of purpose and direction. I know that the expertise, energy and enthusiasm are all there, and I want to release those forces. The central purpose of the Bill is to recreate the

[Mr. Baker]

excitement and urgency and to channel the enthusiasm that has gradually ebbed away since the passing of R A Butler's great 1944 Education Act.

The central reform in the Bill is the national curriculum. The 1944 Act does not give parents any clear idea of what they should expect their children to get out of 11 years of compulsory education. But that carefree attitude to content is now a thing of the past and the change has occurred over 10 years. There is a wide measure of agreement that the time has come to introduce a basic school curriculum. Religious education — first among equals — and English, maths and science will be at the centre. In addition, all pupils will study seven other foundation subjects. The Bill does not lay down the amount of time to be spent on those basic subjects. Schools will be able to offer other subjects.

A great deal of contingency work is going ahead so that we can get moving on introducing the core curriculum subjects in primary schools in September 1989. Parents will also know that their children's achievements will be fairly assessed, in a way which helps teachers to get the best out of their pupils and gives parents clear information about what their children know and can do and how well they are progressing.

There are two final but central points that I should like to make about the national curriculum.

First, it will not be the Baker curriculum. I would find it constitutionally unacceptable for the holder of my office to impose his own national curriculum. The Bill builds in the essential checks and balances. Only after the most thorough statutory consultation, centring upon the National Curriculum Council and after the House has approved them, will the new arrangements be introduced into the schools.

Secondly, the national curriculum now embodies a new religious settlement, which assures religious education of its central position in schools without detracting from the proper local arrangements for agreeing religious education syllabuses. I should like to pay tribute to the Church leaders — the Bishop of London for the Church of England, the Bishop of Leeds for the Roman Catholic Church and Mr. Brown of the Methodists — for their help in constructing this new settlement.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Secretary of State explain whether he has overcome the requirements of the Prime Minister as outlined in that letter?

Mr. Baker: I hope that the hon. Gentleman will study the Black report, which we have debated endlessly. We welcome the broad framework of the report because it establishes a system of assessment and testing at seven, 11, 14 and 16 — pencil and paper testing—and the reporting of the results of that assessment and testing so that parents can judge. What the Prime Minister and others are concerned about—I expressed concern about this matter in Committee—is that the system must not become so complex that it becomes burdensome and cannot be introduced. We must be aware of the costs of such a system. The document is now out for consultation and I am sure that all the many interested parties throughout the country will be commenting on it.

With regard to financial delegation, the significance of this part of the Bill for the future of the education service has been highlighted by a shift in terminology. Increasingly, we hear about the local management of schools. I welcome that; it is better than financial delegation.

The Bill pushes responsibility down the line — to the school, the headteachers and the governors. They will work to get best value out of the resources delegated to them.

Since the Bill was published, the House has had the benefit of an excellent report from Coopers and Lybrand on this subject. That report gives the lie to the allegation that the Bill will sideline the local education authority. As the report says,

"the role of the LEA will be fundamentally altered"

but

"we think"—

that is Coopers and Lybrand—

"that the proposals will produce considerable benefit in that they will enable LEAs to focus more attention on questions of major importance without being distracted by having to pay attention to points of detail."

Exactly. Getting involved in decisions that are best taken by those on the spot is a distraction. What is more, it is an annoyance to heads and governors. They will now be able to get on with the job of managing the schools. The LEAs will be able to move out of detailed involvement into strategic management, and that must be right.

Historians who read our debates on these two subjects in Committee will—I hope this is a comfort to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) — see the severe difficulty in which the Opposition found themselves. The Opposition recognise that our proposals for a national curriculum and local management of schools have been very broadly welcomed, within and beyond the education service. I was speaking to the Secondary Heads Association in Reading last Friday night, and it is clear that the secondary heads and primary heads are looking forward to the prospect of local management of schools. The Opposition, therefore, were reduced to sniping at matters of relative detail. They did not divide the Committee on the clauses in question. Could there be any clearer proof that the Bill points the way forward, that it is the Government's policies which form the agenda, and that it is our philosophy of education which commands the stage?

The other key strand woven into the various chapters of the Education Reform Bill is freedom of choice. The provisions for more open enrolment will extend choice, opening the doors of good schools to more parents. The bizarre spectacle of empty desks at popular schools will become a thing of the past.

The Bill will provide wider choice by introducing two new types of school. The city technology college will provide free education for parents who want to give their children a technologically biased education, in colleges with direct financial backing from industry and commerce. The first college will open this September in Solihull; the next in Nottingham in 1989 and more are in the pipeline. The CTC model will add to and enrich the variety of educational provision available in England and Wales.

Grant-maintained schools push the principle of choice further. The Bill gives parents and governors a new opportunity. They will be able to take over the running of their schools, free of the local education authority.

It was interesting that on more open enrolment, city technology colleges and grant-maintained schools, the Opposition divided the Committee. That was quite right, because here is the great divide between us. The

Government are for choice, freedom, variety, diversity; pushing individual responsibility to its limits. The Opposition are for planning, allocation and decision-making on behalf of parents. We believe that parents know best and we want them to be able to apply that knowledge. Their right to opt out — it will be their choice; I emphasis that there will be no compulsion — will close the chapter of "take it or leave it" which has crept into local authority-provided schools in this country.

The grant-maintained school means the introduction of competition — with no charge to the customer — into a publicly provided service. Competition for custom, for pupils, is the best self-regulating mechanism for higher standards all round. Those who foresee a divide opening up between successful and "sink" schools ignore the dynamic nature of competition. The LEAs will have to respond to competition and to parental pressure. That can only be good for all parents, whether they exercise their choice to opt out or to stay in.

Mr. Ashdown: Parents, in so far as they have expressed their views through the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations and numerous polls, believe that this will not provide more choice but will put them in a position in which the fortunate will have chosen schools and the rest will be trapped.

Mr. Baker: I have just answered that question; I do not believe that that is true. The Liberal party has had some difficulty in addressing this problem. It is in favour of choice, but not very much: in favour of freedom, but not very much. I can go on repeating that for ever. It encapsulates what passes for political philosophy in the mind of the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). He must make up his own mind——

Mr. Ashdown: Sing us another tune.

Mr. Baker: I do not think the hon. Gentleman would like to hear me sing it. He and his party must decide whether they believe in trusting the individual. Traditionally, the Liberals always did. We shall see which line the hon. Gentleman will take when it comes to the leadership contest in his party.

The percipient historian will also look at source material other than our *Official Reports*. Other primary material is revealing about the sea change under way. May I therefore recommend to future historians *The Guardian* of 23 March. There they will find the honest, forward-looking vision of the hon. Member for Blackburn. As we have two of the campaign managers for the other side of the Labour party here tonight — the hon. Members for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) — I wonder whether they will agree with what the hon. Member for Blackburn said in this important article — *[Interruption.]* I urge hon. Gentlemen to be calm; this is frightfully good stuff.

"A nation of consumers enjoying relatively high living standards becomes literally much more choosy, much more interested in choice and variety."

That is the Brian Gould version of socialism.

"The aspirations of choice are now spreading from consumer goods to public service and rightly so."

That is what we are providing — consumer choice through more open enrolment, CTCs and grant-maintained schools. We are witnessing a fundamental shift in attitudes and the knee-jerk opposition to those three things will look increasingly quaint with the years——

Mr. Straw: Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baker: The world has moved on; the hon. Member for Blackburn knows it and his problem is that many of his colleagues do not.

Mr. Straw: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for his commentary on my article. Will he go on and quote the next part, in which I praised the idea of locally delivered, democratically decided local services, which he will destroy?

Mr. Baker: On the contrary, there is a major role for local authorities as a result of our changes. They will have to decide the amount of money raised locally to provide the services. I praise the hon. Gentleman for his far-seeing vision. I am waiting for his hon. Friends the Members for Bradford, South and for Hackney, South and Shoreditch to rise and say that they agree with him right down the line, but they are both silent——

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): As the Secretary of State invites an intervention, I can hardly resist. He seems mesmerised by leadership contests. Is that because his recent showing has rendered him out of the race in his contest and he will be campaign manager for someone else in the Tory party when it takes place?

Mr. Baker: Such thoughts are absent from my mind. I rather enjoy fly-fishing and the fish rose. The hon. Gentleman said nothing about the issue, however; once again, he and his hon. Friend remain silent. The Gangway represents the great gulf between the hon. Member for Blackburn and his hon. Friends sitting below it. I see that the hon. Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) is sitting in the Gangway; he must be the floating voter, and we should like to know which way he will go.

I turn now to the provisions for higher education. The Bill marks a new chapter for higher education. We have set an ambitious national target of one in five of 18 to 21-year-olds going into higher education by the turn of the century. The Bill provides the framework to achieve that.

We are setting the polytechnics free of local authority control. Twenty-nine institutions with 181,000 students are responsible for more than half the growth in student numbers since 1979. All hon. Members will agree that that is a credit to the country. They are 21-years-old this year; they have come of age. I am sure that they, and the other major colleges, will prosper under the new Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council.

The universities, too, will have a new funding council — the Universities Funding Council. I was pleased that the universities and the Government were able to work together to clarify the Bill to make quite clear the proper arms-length relationship between Government and the institutions of higher education. Working together, we have been able to make sure that the Bill reflects the Government's original and consistent objective: a most careful limit on the scope for Government involvement in the affairs of independent institutions.

The freedom of the academy is secure. We shall continue to discuss with the universities their request — there is a paradox in this — that the same Government that they do not wish to interfere in their affairs should offer them some means of protecting the freedom of academics from other academics. I am sure that, with the same goodwill that marked our discussions on the first issue, we shall be able to find a way forward on this one, too.

Mr. Dalyell: No Scot was allowed on the Committee — understandably. However, thanks to my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and a number of others, there was an hour's debate on Wednesday night on the problems of Scottish universities. Did the Secretary of State learn anything from that debate? I have no constituency interest, but Aberdeen and Dundee have a desperate problem. Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any cause for hope?

Mr. Baker: The hon. Gentleman raises the central issue with which I have already dealt. I am often asked to intervene in the cause of universities, but holders of my office have always traditionally held that we do not intervene in the daily running of, or allocation of funds to, universities. The hon. Gentleman cannot have it both ways. We have changed the Bill to ensure that the holder of my office does not intervene and the Universities Funding Council makes these decisions. The hon. Gentleman must decide whether I or the UFC should decide such matters. We believe that it should be the UFC and that Ministers should not intervene, because if they could intervene in such matters they could also intervene in all sorts of other ways to direct funding according to their whim and in favour of particular subjects. The House should not give my office that power.

Dr. Keith Hampson (Leeds, North-West): All Conservative Members welcome what the Secretary of State has said about his powers in higher education and we all hope he will be able to deliver what he has promised on academic freedom. When they have independence, the funding councils must be brought together from each side of the boundary divide. We do not want independence that shoots off on diverging tramlines rather than joining in one coherent organised system.

Mr. Baker: The immediate task is to ensure that the Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council, which is a new body for which we have already appointed the chairman — Sir Ronald Dearing — and chief executive — Mr. William Stubbs — moves into operation and fulfils the important function of dealing with the 80 to 90 funding institutions, some of which are polytechnics and others colleges of higher education. The council will have its work cut out to ensure that it gets a proper control and allocation system going. It is right to have two funding councils. If something different develops in the future, that is something for the future.

One of the most encouraging things — this does not divide the parties — is that we are all committed to the expansion of higher education in our country. In the past seven years there has been a substantial expansion — 180,000 more students. We have set the ambitious target of 50,000 more in the lifetime of this Parliament and one in five 18 to 21-year-olds by the end of the century. That will require a great deal of dedication and effort by the universities, polytechnics and colleges.

We are also keen that the further education colleges — the unsung providers for hundreds of thousands of students of so many courses meeting employers' needs — should benefit from the breath of freedom. They too will have their budgets delegated to them and, with greater representation for business men and women on their governing bodies, I am in no doubt that they will become even more responsive to the needs of their local communities.

I shall now come to ILEA. For too long schools in inner London, particularly secondary schools, have been producing poor results at high cost. I do not want to repeat the earlier debate. For too long we have waited for ILEA to reform itself. That reform is for ever just about to happen but it never comes. The Government have worked from the principle that local people will get a better service from their local council than from the remote and bureaucratic ILEA. The positive response to our original proposals has led us to enshrine in the Bill the principle of devolution of education responsibilities to every borough.

Taken with the other measures in the Bill, I believe that parents in London can be confident that the boroughs will provide an effective education service. All the boroughs should now get on with preparations for 1990.

Mr. Tom Cox (Tooting): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Baker: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will forgive me if I do not give way. He may catch Mr. Speaker's eye later.

The spur of competition between boroughs — from schools which opt out — is the best mechanism for a flourishing education service. It will work better than administrative planning from county hall. That is good news for pupils, parents, teachers and employers of inner London.

As a student of history, I tend to recoil from instant history, but on ILEA I am prepared to hazard a prophecy. My judgment is that ILEA will be missed by Londoners. They will miss it as much as they miss the unlamented and already forgotten GLC.

This is a major piece of legislation and is built to last. It has been subjected to careful scrutiny. The Government have listened carefully to constructive criticism, and the record shows our considered responses to deeply felt concerns about certain aspects of our proposals. I am glad that we have been able to look at the difficult and important issue of pupils with special needs. I am also glad to have been able to reach a settlement with the universities and the Churches — an academic and clerical concordat. In one important respect the Bill remains the Bill we introduced on 20 November last year: we have not abandoned any of the principles on which the Government were elected in June.

The Bill is a charter for better education. It will release and focus the energies of head teachers, their staff and governors. It will increase parental involvement and choice. I commend it to the House.

8.22 pm

Mr. Straw: I want to begin this final debate on at least this part of the Bill by thanking my hon. Friends on the Front Bench who served with me on the Committee. I also pay tribute to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown). No one can doubt his assiduity and his commitment to what he believes in, and I pay tribute to him for the way in which he fought against the Bill.

The Secretary of State spoke about the great Butler Act. For the first time that Act provided for some equality of opportunity in education. It provided for education to be available to all on the basis of need and not on the basis of wealth. The Labour party implemented the 1944 Act and, with the help of many people outside our party, including many people in the Conservative party, we improved upon it in the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s

with the development of comprehensive schools. When she was Secretary of State for Education, the Prime Minister closed more grammar schools and secured the opening of more comprehensives than any Secretary of State before or since. We have to thank her for that.

Comprehensive schools cater for 85 per cent. of children in the maintained state sector. The comprehensive system has been an outstanding success, especially where it has been allowed to work properly. A study by Edinburgh university paid for by the Scottish Education Department made clear that in Scotland in many boroughs and counties controlled by Conservatives or by Labour or with no overall control comprehensive education is alive and working and is far better than the system that went before it.

It is a testament to the success of comprehensivisation that no Tory authority has been able to turn back the clock. Only two have tried, Solihull and Redbridge, but both failed.

It is because the Secretary of State and the Right wing of the Tory party know about the resilience of the idea of comprehensives and know that it has worked that they have not had the guts to attack the idea head on. They do not have the guts to say that what they really want and what they seek through the Bill is the reintroduction of selection. They want to see the classification of children from an early age into some as successes but a great many as failures. They want to see the reinforcement of class of divisions by which the few get a decent education while the rest receive a monocultural training. That is the reality. The Government wish to reintroduce selection by the back door and to recreate educational divisions. Opting out and open admissions have been deliberately designed to disrupt and divide the state provision of education.

Mr. Flannery: Does my hon. Friend agree that the vast majority of Tory voters would struggle against the reintroduction of the 11-plus? Their children do not want it.

Mr. Straw: That is exactly the experience in Redbridge and Solihull, both of which are Tory areas and both of which rejected plans by Right wingers in the Conservative party. The Prime Minister has said that she wants to see a return to Victorian values, and the country is getting that with a vengeance in the Bill. The spirit of Gradgrind lives and is to be found in many pages of the Bill.

The Bill is unlikely ever to improve education. If it was, we would enthusiastically support the whole of it. Instead, it may damage standards and reduce opportunity and choice. The Secretary of State and the Prime Minister preach parent power. We had another example of that in the debate when we heard about power to the people. There is a most extraordinary contradiction between the Secretary of State's rhetoric and the reality.

When we first got the Bill on 20 November we discovered that there were 175 new powers of central control contained in its 147 clauses. Today the Bill has grown by a third. Fifty-one clauses have been added with the result that the powers of central control have more than doubled. The Bill now contains 366 powers of central control, examples of which are contained on virtually every page. Not one clause has been inserted without a new power. The Bill has become a monster out of control. That is not only because of the Secretary of State's dangerous centralising tendencies, but results more from a failure to think the Bill through, to take the time that Rab Butler took to consider his measures, and to consult widely.

If there is one criticism that we and many others make of the Secretary of State it is that he is hyperactive. He never goes into matters in any depth but bolts from one issue to another. We have seen him in Committee studying pristine pages of notes on clauses or the Black report and have noted his marks of surprise when he realised what he was reading.

I have followed with close interest the Secretary of State's career. We discovered earlier the distress that I was caused by the discovery that he is now Mr. Two Per Cent. I was intrigued to find in the reference books that there are 10 blank years between the time in 1958 when he finished his period as an artillery instructor to the Libyan army and 28 March 1968, 20 years ago today, when he entered this House. I have not been able to fill in all the gaps. I have filled in one of them, because he worked for a time as an assistant to the chief executive of the tailors Aquascutum.

The most significent part of the Secretary of State's biographical details was omitted from all the great reference works, because he worked for a time as a consultant to Avon cosmetics. That taught him to smile. I would not have minded if he had worked as a consultant to Brylcreem, because single handedly he has been keeping Brylcreem alive. He wears it not only on his head but on his lips. That is the clue to his whole political approach because he believes that everything, however ugly or unacceptable, can always be disguised by cosmetics. He has two problems. The first is that the cosmetics mask has come off. The more we have examined the Bill, the less we have liked it, just as the more the public have examined it, the less they have liked it. The second is that he has fallen into a major marketing error that he should have learned about when he worked for Avon and Aquascutum. It is that anybody who tries to market two brands at the same time will confuse the public. That is his problem because the Tory party has been trying to flog the Baker brand and the Thatcher brand. Unless there is a clear brand image, it is not possible to convince the consumers about the validity or efficacy of the product. We all know the Secretary of State's problem.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman should tell us about the Labour party.

Mr. Straw: The right hon. Gentleman asks me to tell him about the Labour party. I am dealing with his problems and the Bill. One of the few problems that he shares with Butler is dealing with the Conservative party. I looked in Rab Butler's biography at the reference to the Conservative party conference. He said:

> "We have started the autumn with the Conservative Conference. I attended the whole of yesterday and found myself more out of sympathy with Conservative principles than I have been for some time, although the tendency has been growing. The audience would have been a credit to the Zoo or wild regions of the globe were they populated by mouldy and unattractive fauna. No ray of enlightenment shone on a single face except for the shining pate of Sir Henry Page Croft, who has the merit of looking fairly well washed."

The Secretary of State still has to put up with the zoo of the Conservative party, but the problem has got worse because the inmates of the zoo have got out and taken control of the party and the headquarters. They have left the Secretary of State, almost literally, up a tree.

[Mr. Straw]

There are parts of the Bill — those on the national curriculum and testing — which could be made to work were the Secretary of State seriously to seek agreement from every educational interest. There has been some support for the principle of an agreed national curriculum, but not for the principle of an imposed national syllabus which applies only to some children. There has been some agreement that there should be regular testing of children so that the parents, and the child if old enough, can discover how it is getting on, for diagnostic testing, but not for the kind of competitive testing that sets child against child and class against class — a system that is in the mind of the Prime Minister and may be in the mind of the Secretary of State.

Leaving these aside, the public have a great deal to fear from this Bill, especially from the free market nonsense of the Bill by which children become commodities to be left at the mercy of the market. The Secretary of State referred to the fact that we have spent 200 hours in Committee and on the Floor of the House discussing this Bill, during the course of which 2,004 amendments have been moved — probably another post-war record. By no means all our efforts have been in vain. The Government have had to make 113 concessions, some large and some small, as we have exposed varying holes in the Bill. The time scale that the Secretary of State had in mind has changed. It will be years before testing, the national curriculum and local financial management come into force. One thing which is certain is that it will be many years after the Secretary of State has left his present office, whether that is for higher office or no office at all.

There have been important concessions on special education and on the universities, but much remains in the Bill which is offensive, authoritarian and unworkable. The greatest charge that we make is of wasted opportunities. We proposed, in terms no different from the commitment that the Prime Minister gave in 1972 in her White Paper, that there should be nursery education for every child who needed it. That was rejected by the Government, to their eternal shame. We proposed major reforms of education for 16 to 19-year-olds which would open up access to opportunities, and that was rejected. We proposed a report on education maintenance allowances, and that was rejected. We made proposals for the integration of education and training, and they were rejected. We made proposals to raise the morale and standing of teachers and instead teachers have to put up with continuing abuse from the Secretary of State and a failure to understand the great contribution that the overwhelming majority of them make to the education of our children.

The Bill places in the hands of the Conservative Secretary of State powers over schools, teachers, local authorities, colleges, polytechnics and universities, powers over what is taught and thought and powers over children, students and the very people whom he was supposed to free — the parents. All these powers have been imposed in the name of freedom and choice. The ideology of this Bill offends the one-nation Conservatism of Rab Butler as much as it offends the rest of our people. It is a desperate, wasted opportunity which is likely to fail to improve standards of education, create real choice of opportunity or repair the damage and neglect of the past nine years. We shall oppose it in the Lobbies tonight.

8.34 pm

Mr. Raison: I begin by congratulating my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on the extraordinary skill and geniality with which he has conducted the passage of the Bill. He has run rings round the Opposition, but he has also shown a flexibility that has been both wise and constructive. We all know the examples. The way in which he has responded to the concerns of the churches and the universities are two notable examples. On top of that geniality and skill is the fact that the Bill contains several important advances for education. There is most agreement about a national curriculum, on which there have been major gains. I was one of those who was reluctant to come round to the idea of a national curriculum. It was quite alien to all that we used to talk about, but the anxiety about the quality of our education, which has spread over the years, justified that.

I am sorry that I did not have the chance to persuade my right hon. Friend that history should be one of the top four subjects——

Dr. Hampson: British history.

Mr. Raison: Preferably British history — but I hope that that will be pursued in the other place. What we have on the curriculum and testing is of real value. Testing has to be about finding out what the child, the class, the teachers and the school are capable of. Whether one calls it diagnostic or not, I do not particularly mind. Testing is a question not just of producing league tables but of making education more effective, to the benefit of the children, whom the whole thing is about.

The widening of choice and financial delegation must be right, and I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the transfer of polytechnics. This is not a reproach to the local authorities. They have done the job of parents remarkably well and deserve to be proud of the fact that their children have now grown up and moved on to the adult stages where the universities are to be found. They will continue to make a major contribution to education.

There are still important things to be done in the legislative process, but, more particularly, in the stage which follows that — when the Bill is translated into action. Something must be done about ILEA, which has already been discussed today. It is important to recognise that many of the people working for ILEA work hard in difficult circumstances. While ILEA's policies have gone astray with the lunacies that are there, I cannot forget that in our schools, including secondary schools, there are people who respond to a tough job with a great deal of conscientiousness.

I am sure that, in the period to come, we shall recognise that and everything that we do will be seen as constructive. The point that we need to keep the museums and music classes, which are such a good feature of London, has been adequately made, and I have no doubt about that. It is evident that the process of preparing and implementing the development plan will require great sensitivity. I was encouraged by the response of my hon. Friend the Minister of State when she was talking about the possibility of getting authorities to act together. We have to think about grouped authorities, joint boards, informal mechanisms and co-operation. All those things may need to be filled out more fully in the other place, although my hon. Friend made a good start this afternoon.

Furthermore, there should be a clearly designated Minister for ILEA during this difficult period to come

—somebody who can give leadership and pay the enormous amount of attention that will be required during the period when the development plans are formulated and then translated into action.

There is still something to be done in two particular sectors. The first is universities. We now have a much better situation than when the Bill started. Universities are pleased with the way in which things have gone. However, I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take the last step in guaranteeing academic freedom—a subject that was debated in the House a few days ago. It would not cost anything and it is possible to find a formula for it, so I hope that we shall see that in the other place.

We must dispel the doubts about grant-maintained schools that some of us had when the whole process began. Essentially, we are talking about the fear that the schools which do not opt out, and which get left behind, could become a demoralised rump. Nothing is further from my right hon. Friend's mind, but it will require enormous care and attention in future when decisions are made about opting out to ensure that we think about the interests not only of those schools opting out, but of those schools that do not opt out, as they are equally important.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend and his fellow Ministers on the Bill. What is being done is enormously worth while and I look forward to the completion of this great epic.

8.40 pm

Mr. Ashdown: I hope that the Secretary of State will listen carefully to his right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) on the question of opted-out schools.

There is a paradox about the Bill. Although everyone must support the Government's aims, the means that they have chosen have been regarded by almost every respected voice in education—whether parents, teachers, educationists or academics—as deeply damaging. Although the Government rightly identify the problems to be addressed in education, the solutions that they put forward in the Bill will be more damaging than the problems that they seek to correct.

That is why I and many other people regard the Bill as probably the most dangerous Bill brought forward by any Government for the last 20 or 30 years. The damage that it will do to our education system and to the future of our children will be felt for years to come. Perhaps even more important, it is a potential threat to the nature of pluralism in our democracy.

The Secretary of State tells us that the Bill has been debated for longer than any other Bill in Committee. It has been debated for about 200 hours. That is not because it is a good Bill, but because it is a bad Bill. We have had to bring forward amendment after amendment, and the Government have had to accept many of those and draft many of their own. They have persistently failed to explain their purpose or put forward their arguments in a convincing way. The Bill was constructed on the back of a fag packet during the last general election. It was hastily conceived and ill-thought out when it was brought to the House. It was botched up and patched up in Committee, and we pass it incomplete, in many areas largely undebated and ramshackle, to the House of Lords.

The Bill is built, as no other of which I know, on what I can only describe as Orwellian newspeak. The Secretary of State tells us that he is offering choice, but, in reality, he is offering choice only for the few and the privileged at the expense of those left behind. He tells us that the Bill is about freedom, but it achieves that by putting more power to control, direct and insist on uniformity in the hands of the Secretary of State.

There is something Marxist about the Secretary of State's arguments, because, time and again, he has said, "I must have all the power in my hands so that it can be allowed to wither away." This is determinism. It says, "We will take the power, but it will all wither away and we will hand it out again." That has never happened and it will not happen under this Bill. The power vested in the hands of the Secretary of State will be carefully preserved, used and handed on to his successors. It will fall into the hands of people other than members of the Conservative party.

The hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), in a debate on academic freedom the other day, said that one of the problems was that the Secretary of State did not have tenure and that that did not allow him to be as free as he might like to be. One of the problems is that the Government believe they have tenure and that they will never be removed and, therefore, that the powers will never fall into other people's hands. That is the basis for the arrogance behind the Bill.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I do not subscribe to the idea that anyone should have tenure, least of all Ministers. I find the hon. Gentleman's proposition extraordinary. Is he saying that Karl Marx would favour more open enrolment in schools and prefer the elective system for governors that we are going to have? Is he saying that Karl Marx would favour opting out of schools and the choice of individuals exercised wherever they are in the education system? The hon. Gentleman has not thought through any coherent philosophy for the Liberal party.

Mr. Ashdown *rose*—

Mr. Baker: I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman. He is giving way to me. He must learn his place. He is confused.

It is a travesty to say that we are being centralist. We are dispersing power. The hon. Gentleman does not trust the people who disperse power to him.

Mr. Ashdown: Marx and Lenin would have agreed that one takes 182 new powers to give freedom to the people. That is what the Secretary of State claims. His rhetoric about using those powers to give freedom will be seen to be as hollow and as sham as those made by people in the state-controlled countries of eastern Europe. It is always done in the name of freedom, just as the Secretary of State is doing this in the name of freedom. He knows perfectly well that the basis of that movement has always been, "Give us the power and we will hand it back," but it has never happened and it will not happen now.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke) *rose*—

Mr. Ashdown: The hon. Gentleman must forgive me if I do not give way. The Secretary of State told me that he was making an intervention, but it turned out be a mini speech.

The Bill has been founded on ideology rather than good sense and has been informed throughout by a sense of vindictiveness against teachers, local government, local education authorities, ILEA and all those tribal enemies of the Conservative party. That is what underpins the Bill. Those three items on the hidden agenda that we identified

[Mr. Ashdown]

on Second Reading have shown up more nakedly in Committee than I would ever have imagined possible. The secret aims of the Bill are to diminish the power of local government, to centralise the power over education in the hands of the Secretary of State and to reinforce privilege in our education system.

I have spoken of the damage that the Bill will do to education in the future, but that is not the only reason why I oppose the Bill. I repeat the words of the hon. Member for Blackburn, who said that one of the reasons for opposing the Bill is the immense lost opportunity that it presents. It calls itself an Education Reform Bill. How can it be an Education Reform Bill when it does not even address the question of pre-school education, despite the fact that everybody agrees that advancing towards more pre-school education is essential for our education needs in the future? How can it be an Education Reform Bill when it does not put an extra penny into education, despite the fact that education is so desperately underresourced? How can it be an Education Reform Bill when it does nothing positive about the role of teachers in education, despite the fact that teachers have been demoralised and discredited persistently by the Government? How can it be an Education Reform Bill when it does nothing to increase the participation in higher and further education, despite the fact that Britain has a disgracefully low record in participation in both those areas? How can it be called an Education Reform Bill when it does nothing about adult education, despite the fact that in the future we shall need to see an expanded adult education system in Britain?

We need an Education Reform Bill that will provide more flexibility. This Bill will provide a straitjacket and cut out innovation in the curriculum. We need an Education Reform Bill that will provide more choice within the system. This Bill will provide choice only between institutions in a way that damages families and disrupts the education communities. We need an Education Reform Bill that will bring together education and training in a single, cohesive, co-ordinated system. This Bill builds barriers and separates education and training from each other in a way that will be damaging in the future.

So much could be done by the Bill, but it does none of that. We should be constructing an education system which is flexible for the future. This Bill reconstructs the old inflexibilities and injustices of the past. The Bill provides for central control by the Government. It will plant party politics in the heart of every school and every governing body on the issue of opting out. It will be a charter for activists in the future.

What is most damaging is that we will have a system that is increasingly divided—a divided education system serving an increasingly divided country. As a result of the Bill we shall have schools for the chosen and schools for the trapped. We shall see choice for the privileged and "like it or lump it" for the rest. We shall have freedom for the few, and state conformity for the remainder. This is a bad and dangerous Bill. It is dangerous not just for our education system, but for the health of democracy and for the future of our children.

8.49 pm

Mr. Madel: I believe that this welcome Bill should be seen in parallel with the huge changes in the examination system that will result with the birth of the GCSE in about seven weeks' time.

I believe that there are two important links between the Bill as it now is and the new exam system. Parents will want to perceive that the attainment tests of children at specified ages are helping those children and are relevant to their eventual examinations at GCSE. Second, the Bill and the new examination system have considerable staffing implications not just for the teachers, but for the examining staff, secretarial staff and back-up staff. Without such staff the Bill and the new examination system will not work in harmony.

I welcome what my right hon. Friend has done with regard to flexibility in the curriculum. My right hon. Friend has rightly stressed the need for a modern foreign language. I believe that that should lead to non-legislative reform and development of the teaching of languages. I believe that the way is now clear for the establishment of language centres where the medium of instruction is the foreign language taught in the curriculum. That could be a way of attracting more language teachers into the education service. It could also bring schools together and provide welcome experiment and development regarding an extremely important part of the curriculum.

The Government have rightly laid stress on the training of heads and deputy heads. Much of the responsibility for implementing the Bill will fall on them. As a result of the Bill I hope that regional centres will be set up for training. I hope that those centres will make full use of what industry can offer with regard to management training for heads, especially as there will now be such an overlap between those heads and the managers of industries.

I believe that it would make sense to establish an umbrella body to stimulate management development policies within local education authorities. The co-ordinated provision of such a body should make full use of the many existing business schools. It is also essential for heads that governors are trained. The leaflet from the Department of Education asks:

"What qualifications do school governors need?"

It goes on to say that training is available.

At present schools simply do not have the people with the technical competence to judge what is a good buy with regard to high technology equipment or maintenance agreements. That is something that is dear to my right hon. Friend's heart because he got the country to concentrate on information technology. The increasing use of the education support grants, help from the Open University and the links with industry that I have suggested should lead to a vital improvement in the training of governors without which the Bill will not work properly.

With regard to grant-maintained schools, I believe that the challenge is for the LEA to see that its relationship with its schools is in good order. Whether schools do or do not opt out depends on whether there is peaceful co-existence between county hall and the schools for which it is responsible. It should be remembered that if pupils are expelled from a grant-maintained school the responsibility then passes to the LEA. I do not see why an LEA should pay for the education of a pupil expelled from such a school. I do not believe that the LEA would want to put that pupil into one of its schools. Such a pupil would need

some form of home tuition, which is expensive, and I do not believe that it would be asking too much for it to be directly funded from the Department of Education and Science.

A considerable time will elapse before the full effects of the Bill are felt. In common with many other things that the Government have done or are doing, this is a major upheaval. There is a great reliance within the education system on teachers and we desperately need a full commitment from them to make the Bill work. The Government have been in power for almost 10 years. Certainly they are a reforming Government, sometimes a restless Government. When the Bill is implemented, I am sure that my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Department will consider educational institutions and simply use the apt saying, "If it isn't broken, don't mend it."

8.54 pm

Mr. John Fraser: There are many things in the Bill that disturb me, but I speak against it on Third Reading most passionately, bitterly and feelingly because of the abolition of ILEA.

I cannot help but remark on the opening speech of the Secretary of State who has brought to the golden principles of education the ideas of competition, choice and the market philosophy that are currently endorsed by the Conservative party.

In my borough of Lambeth people theoretically have choice about the type of transport they use. Theoretically they have choice about the type of housing they get and about the type of health service they receive. They are supposed to have choice in other matters as well, but in reality choice is determined by the resources available to them. The effective operation of the market should be about where one applies what one already has, not where one acquires that which one does not already have. For that reason, a system of choice will not work in a borough such as Lambeth.

I believe that the proposals in the Bill are a vandalistic and malicious attack upon a system that has served the less-endowed parts of London well. The attack on ILEA is an attack not on failure but on success. It is an attack upon an authority that would like to give to its pupils, particularly in boroughs such as mine, the same type of expenditure and advantages that the Secretary of State would like to bestow upon his children. ILEA would like to bestow upon the children of inner London the same type of advantages that the Government want to bestow upon privileged children under the assisted places scheme. I believe that what will be constructed in inner London will be a first class and second class system of education.

If the Government want to see how the market operates, how choice and competition operate in the provision of education, they should go to any large American city. They should look at the schools for whites on the periphery of the city, guarded with people with rifles, that are provided for one set of children and they should also look at the slum, sink schools guarded with steel doors. The teachers rush out of those schools at one minute past the end of classes. The Government would then see the enormous contrast between the opportunities available to the privileged and less-privileged in the American cities as a result of the exercise of choice.

Mr. Tony Banks: That will happen over here.

Mr. Fraser: Yes, indeed.

Dr. Hampson *rose*——

Mr. Fraser: I believe that in debates such as this giving way and interventions are a self-indulgence that should not be afforded to other people who want to speak.

The problems will be made worse in London as a result of the imposition of the poll tax and changes in local government finance that are intended to coincide on 1 April 1990. The average contribution of a ratepayer aged over 18 in my borough is currently £270 a year. Under the poll tax, the average contribution will be £547 per person a year, double the existing rate. If we consider the way in which that figure has been calculated — or probably miscalculated as a result of a failure to understand what has been spent under capital rather than under revenue —it is likely that contributions will rise to about £650 per person or more as a result of the abolition of the ILEA.

That means that we will impose a terrible choice on the poorer people in boroughs such as Lambeth, Southwark and Hackney between the impoverishment of parents for the time being through very high rates and the impoverishment of their children in future. That is the awful choice and dilemma which the abolition of ILEA represents and it is a terrible choice between the interests of the parents and the interests of the child.

Of course, such choices will exist in other aspects of the poll tax with the 20 per cent. contribution. A mother will have to choose between sending her child to school without shoes or a coat and paying the 20 per cent. tax to the local authority. This Bill will add to the disadvantages of parents and to the denial of opportunity to the less advantaged in inner London.

Even worse is likely to occur if the Government impose their grant-related expenditure assessments on the children of inner London. We already know that the Government intend to impose a further reduction of expenditure of about 30 per cent. on ILEA. That means having only seven teachers instead of 10 or seven nursery school assistants in place of 10. That will happen if the Government embark on their present course of action. However, if they really want to drive boroughs like Lambeth down to the level of GREAs, that would mean a cut in resources of 44 per cent. in my borough. That would practically halve the staffing levels in my schools and career services.

Boroughs such as Lambeth, Hackney and Southwark are presented on the one hand with a diminution of resources for education caused by the way in which money is to be raised under the poll tax and on the other hand the diminution of resources by orders of Government through poll tax capping or the present capping arrangements for ILEA. That is not much of a choice or an operation of the market for my constituents.

The Bill will leave my constituents in despair. During the passage of the Bill I have attended many meetings in my constituency and in Streatham. I have attended meetings where as many as 500 people were present, yet I rarely saw more than one or two hands raised in support of the Bill. Very often no hands were raised in support. The Government are imposing an enormous financial constraint upon the resources available for children in boroughs like Lambeth.

The Bill may be all right for boroughs like Westminster and Kensington. Some boroughs have as many as 10 adults per child at school compared with six adults per

[Mr. Fraser]

child at school in Lambeth. If we want to expand education in Kensington or Westminster, there are more adults from whom resources can be gained to support the children. There is also a wealthier and more affluent base from which to draw the money and the resources for education can be increased in the more privileged parts of London without any mishap. However, if we want to expand education in Lambeth, Hackney or Southwark, every 1 per cent. added to poll tax expenditure will increase the poll tax contribution by 3 per cent. That means that the children, their parents and the poor will become the hostages of local authorities.

In every local government debate that I have attended in the House my borough and the other boroughs to which I have referred have been vilified for their incompetence. The Department of the Environment wants to take away their housing and to privatise their services. It describes them as overmanned and overspending. Yet, for this Bill, they are regarded as competent to take over education functions. The consequence of those boroughs taking over those functions with the constraints on finance will be that we will preserve a first class education service in inner London for some children and a second class service for others.

Under this Bill, the Government are welding more bars on to the inner city cage to prevent the children whom I represent from escaping to begin to develop themselves. There are two ways in this world in which we hold on to power: through inherited wealth or through education. The chance for the people whom I represent to acquire and hold power is being denied by the Bill.

9.5 pm

Mr. James Pawsey (Rugby and Kenilworth): I hope that the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) will forgive me if I do not pursue his remarks too closely. He referred to welding bars on cages—but I think that it would be more appropriate to talk about the opening of doors of cages and admitting freedom of choice.

I am sure that hon. Members on both sides will agree that this is one of the largest and most important Bills to have been discussed in the House in recent years. It will have far-reaching consequences and its impact will be felt well into the next century. I believe that it will stand favourable comparison with the measure introduced by Rab Butler, the Education Act 1944.

Concern about education is not new and is not a figment of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's imagination. It was Lord Callaghan of Cardiff who started the great education debate about 12 years ago when he was Prime Minister. Justification for the Bill can be found in the recently published statistics, which show that 6 million of our fellow countrymen have difficulty in reading, writing and doing simple arithmetic. That is after 11 years of compulsory schooling.

The Bill will do much to improve the quality and standard of state education. I have been concerned, however, about the lack of reference to religious education and I am pleased that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has accepted the need for change. The reference to religious education in the national curriculum is welcome. It will do much to put the collective mind of the churches at ease.

Secondly, I am concerned about the lack of reference to discipline in schools. Hon. Members will be aware that learning best takes place in a reasonably disciplined environment. It is clear that discipline in some of the nation's schools is suffering to a marked extent. I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement that he is setting up an inquiry. I trust that it will be wide-ranging and will report early. If it is prevented by its terms of reference from discussing corporal punishment, I hope that it will come forward with some viable options.

The Bill increases the power and responsibility of parents and requires them to play a much greater part in the education of their children and in the running of their children's schools. This is a major step forward, for generally parents know best what is right for their children. Parents will do much to ensure that the education of their children has a greater relevance to the world of work. The involvement of parents is essential to the success of the Bill. I hope that my right hon. Friend will take the opportunity that is presented on Third Reading to reinforce that fact. Incidentally, I can commend the leaflets which have been produced by the Department of Education and Science that seek to encourage more members of the public to come forward to act as governors.

I refer briefly to the most controversial measure in the Bill. It is my firm view that relatively few schools will decide to opt out of local authority control, but those that do will exercise a far greater influence than their numbers suggest. They will be used as a benchmark against which other schools in the area might be judged.

The schools that opt for grant-maintained status will be of the utmost importance in certain inner city areas where education provision is subordinate to the teaching of dogma. These are the areas, where education is not preparing children for adult life, these are the areas where grant-maintained schools will come into their own. The problem, however, is that in these areas parents, for various reasons, may be diffident about coming forward in support of the proposal.

In my view, my right hon. Friend should set up directly as part of his Department, or alternatively by means of a trust, a group that can provide the expertise that is necessary to guide parents into the establishment of grant-maintained status schools. It should be available thereafter to ensure that grant-maintained status schools do not fail for want of expertise. It will be necessary for those seeking grant-maintained status to overcome a number of hurdles, for the process starts, not ends, with the secret postal ballot of parents. If the ballot produces a majority in favour, the governors will then be in a position to apply to the Secretary of State for grant-maintained status. If only a relatively small number of parents are involved in the ballot, producing only a small vote in favour, that will be taken carefully into account by the Secretary of State. He will additionally be bound to listen to the majority of parents, to governors, to trustees where appropriate, to the local education authority, to head teachers, to staff, and, not least, to the local community. I have some difficulty in believing that any Secretary of State would approve an application for grant-maintained status if faced with such an overwhelming body of opinion.

Grant-maintained status will, however, provide a fail-safe procedure for parents. If they are so alienated from the local education authority that they wish to opt out, it

is surely better that they do so. That point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel).

Earlier, I said that the Bill increased the power and responsibility of parents. However, education is a partnership, and the other principal partners are the teachers. I have said before in the House, and I say again now, that the overwhelming majority of our teachers are dedicated both to their profession and to the children in their charge. My right hon. Friend will understand that for this radical legislation to succeed we require the good will of the teacher force. I am not certain that we have given that aspect the emphasis that it warrants.

I am aware of the substantial pay increases that teachers have recently received. If, however, they are to regain their former status in society, they will require adequate remuneration, and an appreciation of their work —which is arguably among the most important in our society.

There will be a major transfer of power and responsibility from local education authorities to parents, head teachers and governing bodies, which will require heads and governors to have a better understanding of their powers and duties. That, in turn, must mean that they require more training than is currently the position. Head teachers and their deputies must be better trained than at present, with additional emphasis being given to management skills.

The Bill is both imaginative and dynamic. My right hon. Friend is to be commended on bringing forward proposals that he knew would be controversial. He recognised the problems, and has come up with the answers. I have no doubt that these measures will receive the support in the Lobby tonight that they will receive in the country tomorrow.

9.12 pm

Mr. Peter Hardy (Wentworth): I shall endeavour to be brief. I have not spoken frequently on education, because, as the House will appreciate, hon. Members develop a variety of interests. I feel, however, that I should say a few words, because I have quite a lot of professional qualifications. I was a senior teacher for a long time; I was chairman of governors; I was an examiner when we introduced CSE, and I have remained in close touch with education. But I am also a parent. Those things qualify me to make a short contribution to the debate. However, I did not serve on the Standing Committee, and I should like to pay tribute to the efforts of my right hon. and hon. Friends who secured some amendment of the Bill.

A moment ago, the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) said that the Bill might be an historic construction. If he considers the history of education, he will see that educationally and socially significant landmarks have been provided by education legislation—for instance, the Elementary Education Act 1870, and Butler's 1944 Act. Those Acts were symbolic and significant; they marked and fitted education within the society and context of its time. This Bill—the Baker Act, as it will become—will not mark the optimism of 1944, but will be seen as a turning point in the moral and social decline — and, for most people, the economic decline—with which areas such as mine are faced.

The Secretary of State compared our schools with German schools. But did he compare the level of provision in German schools and British schools? If he did, he would perhaps understand why there are certain deficiencies in secondary education, but it would have been better if he had gone to see success in British schools rather than cart himself around to look at schools abroad. The right hon. Gentleman cannot deny that the improvement in standards in primary schools has been demonstrable.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: The hon. Gentleman claims that the comparison is not fair. We spend approximately— within 0·1 per cent. — the same amount of GNP on education as Germany, so the comparison is fair. The hon. Gentleman knows that a country has only its GNP, and we must stimulate the growth of our GNP. Our education reforms will do much to stimulate that growth.

Mr. Hardy: I do not disagree with the Secretary of State, but over the past 10 years the German Administration has seen its GNP increase by an amount that we could have equalled and, therefore, we could have properly funded British education.

Conservative Members often indulge in a canard about the standards of British education. When I started teaching in a secondary school, about 20 of the 49 boys in my class were completely illiterate or had a reading age below six. If I went to the same school today—it is not in my constituency—I should find scarcely any children below that reading age. There may be parts of some of our larger cities in which difficulties arise, but over the past 20 or 30 years there has been an enormous improvement in the standard of teaching reading. Unfortunately, one will not read of that in the national media. The Secretary of State has been looking for the blackest possible picture to serve the cause of political greed and to apply market forces to the British education scene.

I have been very angry since a recent Question Time when I told the Minister of State that I hoped that, if the national curriculum were developed, it would be better funded, better founded and arranged than the GCSE. The hon. Lady had the audacity to say that the GCSE was one of the finest funded educational developments in British history. I have kept in close touch with the GCSE's development in my constituency, partly because I was an examiner, partly because I have a remaining professional interest and partly because my son is in the first year of GCSE — the year group that the Government have sacrificed in the cause of political dogma. There is not a teacher in a secondary school in Britain who could disagree with me when I say that what additional funding there was came far too late. Enormous anxiety was caused in our schools because they were started on this course without proper preparation. The first year was over in some subjects before a decent book was available and before the syllabus had been properly established. Yet the Minister of State had the gall to tell the House and the country that we were well prepared.

Mr. Gerry Steinberg (City of Durham): Is my hon. Friend aware of the difficulties of children who are now taking their GCSE? I have had to buy for my daughter, who is in the Strangers' Gallery, her French, German and biology books because the Government did not make available enough resources for GCSE in the first year. As my hon. Friend has said, those students are guinea pigs.

Mr. Hardy: My hon. Friend is fortunate. He can afford to buy those books, whereas other parents cannot. My hon. Friend is fortunate also because, apparently, the books were available.

[Mr. Hardy]

In some subjects the syllabus had not even been established when the first year of the course was two thirds of the way through. Teachers and parents will long remember this example of fecklessness, but they will remember the Bill much longer. Unlike the Butler Act, which marked the advance and confidence of Britain in the post-war period, this legislation marks a period of political and social decline, in which the Secretary of State has played his shameful part.

9.18 pm

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg (Hampstead and Highgate): All I should like to say on the speech of the hon. Member for Wentworth (Mr. Hardy) is that the Bill does mark a turn by bringing back the importance of examinations. That is one issue on which employers will judge those who come to them for jobs.

I very much agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) that it is important that one Minister is given responsibility for seeing through everything that arises from the Bill in terms of the Inner London education authority. We saw the difficulties over the abolition of the GLC when responsibility was split between various Ministers. Things were not sufficiently easy for them and there were difficulties.

I wholeheartedly welcome the Bill, in particular the abolition of ILEA, because I am one of the very few people who, from the inception of ILEA, felt that it was wholly wrong. When I gave evidence to the Herbert committee back in 1960 I said that the London boroughs were perfectly capable of running their own education. When the Herbert committee reported, it made it clear that there were different views on the information that was available. The tragedy was that in the other place influence was exercised which created the Inner London education authority which has been a disaster.

I should like to warn my right hon. Friend that there is now the same sort of scare campaign about the abolition of ILEA as there was about the abolition of the GLC. The same lies are being told, and the same fears are being whipped up among parents. Hundreds of letters are being written at the behest of tutors in adult education saying that adult education is at risk as a result of the legislation. That is a complete fabrication. The tragedy is that people have not learnt that the stories put to them by the Labour party are without foundation. Most hon. Members remember the horde of postcards sent to us by pensioners, sadly at their own expense, saying, "Save our bus passes" when there was never any danger of bus passes being removed when the GLC was abolished. I urge my right hon. Friend to be robust in repeatedly producing information that will kill that.

I hope that from the beginning there will be more co-operation between the Inner London education authority and the boroughs that will receive the powers than there was when the GLC was abolished, because if there is not co-operation it will harm only the children.

I was disturbed to receive a letter dated 23 March from the Secondary Heads Association saying:

"Of course there are criticisms of the ILEA. Headteachers would share some of these. There are examples of wasteful use of resources, of too much policy direction from the centre and of over-bureaucratic procedures. Nevertheless there is an immense wealth of experience in the ILEA of running an inner city education service. This contrasts starkly with the complete lack of such experience in the inner London boroughs."

That sounds as if the transfer of the teachers and staff of ILEA to the boroughs will not cover that very important point. That document would lead one to believe that all those people will disappear into limbo and never be seen again. Such deception is worrying parents.

I should like to say a word about the parents ballot. Of course the views of parents are important, but they represent a minute percentage of the residents and ratepayers of the inner London education area. Those views must be taken very much into account. If we had taken into account the phoney public opinion polls conducted at the ratepayers' expense by the Greater London council which told us that 78 per cent. of those questioned wanted the GLC to be retained, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would not be on the Front Bench today and I would not be here either. Those were phoney in exactly the same way.

Mr. Tony Banks: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Sir Geoffrey Finsberg: No. I shall follow the example of the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) who is no longer in the Chamber. I shall take his good advice by not giving way.

I hope that parents will realise that of course their views are important, but it is much more important that we get on with making certain that the education system in inner London will be good because it needs great improvement, as is clearly shown by all the impartial figures.

I did not have the "good fortune" to serve on the Committee that dealt with the Bill. However, I am certain that the Bill that has now emerged from Committee is immeasurably better than the Bill that went in. That is normal. Every Bill that goes into Committee emerges better, whether by the help of the Opposition, the help of one's own supporters or simply by items that come forward. However, in the end, one thing is clear: let nobody in the outside world think that the provision abolishing the Inner London education authority will disappear. The other place will try to remove it at its peril.

9.25 pm

Mr. Sedgemore: I belong to the school of political thought that believes that big issues can be seen only from the perspective of the high peaks of the Prescelly mountains. These words came to me when I was in that area in west Wales:

"GERBIL 1988
Dream to Nightmare
While I gazed on yonder mount I thought
Of former times and life that brought
For all its sorrow, woe and painful toil
Education which Gerbil could not spoil.
Thence slowly by nostalgic dreams I was o'ercome
Those dreams so sweet, so pure my listless mind did numb.
But in a while my heavy heart cried out to me
Oh why, oh why should life all trouble be?
Gerbil, Gerbil, long live Gerbil is the cry.
Kill the wretched Gerbil, others sigh.
I love it, I hate it. It's good, it's bad
Poor Ashdown, mixed-up stupid boy, so sad.
Confusion reigns, declares a scribe for MHT
His mistress wonders what's the point of NCC.
What clot created SEAC? What's it for?
Why waste money just to educate the poor?
Miffed, peeved, distraught Baker mutters privately
Oh God, dear God, what kind of fool is she?
My time wasn't come, I fear. She won't resign
Decripit woman: paid-up philistine.

The Pope decrees amendments he will need
Basil Hume warns Baker to take heed
Of opting out from doctrine and morality
Laid down in writ divine, Vatican supremacy.
Oh Holy See your bidding I will do
Prostrate upon my knees I worship you.
I grovel at your feet, shameless, and ask
For the blessing of God's vote in my task.
Who's that I spy, two thugs along the way—
Tebbit, Heseltine. Never ones to play,
They mug poor Baker, jab him in the crutch
With the Mace, would you believe! It is too much.
Parent power is what I want, shrieks Baker
Though not for ILEA: there I'm a faker.
With Angie by my side of course I twitch
She's worse than Thatcher. Dammit, she's a witch.
Academic freedom yes, but not tenure
Demands Sir Mark, wily bird, who's still not sure
Of votes from Leeds, North West and its High Peak—
Duplicitous and soggy so to speak.
Gloom and doom loom as Peers get ready for the Bill.
Our culture's in decline, the struggle is uphill.
Cry freedom God, a better world to make
For parents, teachers and our children's sake.
Create for them, schools literate, and free
From Gerbil, clause on clause of agony.
Give us a breadth of understanding and of truth
With time and space to hear the voice of educated youth.
Pray, save us God, from hapless tyranny
The executive, Bob Dunn and misery.
Raise our eyes to the skies in hope that we
Through this abyss can yet find victory.
Let's burn the Gerbil at the stake
Unholy witch we've come to hate.
And bury Baker, Thatcher and their Bill—
Son and bitch—in the cairns of yonder hill."

For those reasons, we ought to decline to give the Bill a Third Reading.

9.28 pm

Mr. Tony Baldry (Banbury): After that, I am tempted to recite the "Jabberwocky", but I am not sure that it would add to the sum of knowledge.

There is, I believe, much agreement about what our ambitions in education should be.

"What a wise parent would wish for their children, so the State must wish for all its children."

Thus Jim Callaghan quoted Tawney in his Ruskin college speech, and who can dissent from that ambition?

"The goals of an education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough,"

said Callaghan.

"They are to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive place in society and also to fit them to do a job of work. Not one of the other but both."

We can all agree on that purpose. We can all agree on the goals. I fervently believe that this Bill will better provide the means of achieving that purpose and of achieving those goals.

The Education Reform Bill is the realisation of Rab Butler's Education Act 1944. It achieves a better balance of all those involved in our children's education. The Bill will give parents more influence over their children's education—a principle enshrined in the 1944 Act, which states that pupils are to be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes. Alas, in drafting his Act, Rab Butler failed to take into account sufficiently two important and closely related factors. First, he did not seem to recognise fully the natural instinct within every parent to strive to do his or her best for his or her children and, at the same time, create the right conditions for children to maximise their potential. Secondly, he did not recognise that the type of organisational structure needed to deliver the promise could serve to stifle that natural instinct. For the 1944 Act to work at the time enormous powers had to be vested in local education authorities to support and deliver the promise of secondary education for all.

In common with much of the rest of the welfare state established at or about the same time, the 1944 Act made no provision for consumer influence, little for real choice and none for participation by parents in the running of the education service. Incredibly, it was not until more than 30 years later that the anomalies started to be addressed, with the wide-ranging recommendations of the Taylor committee in 1977, implemented in due course in the Education Act 1980. Gone was the practice whereby school governing bodies were merely an offshoot of the local education authority; for the first time parents and teachers were given a limited right to be represented on governing bodies. In due course came the Education (No. 2) Act 1986, which gave to parents and other governors wider rights, duties and responsibilities.

The Education Reform Bill will simply help enforce the principle clearly set out in the 1944 Act that, so far as practicable, children should be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. The Bill creates a partnership and gives parents the proper role in their children's education envisaged in the 1944 Act but not delivered hitherto.

The role of the local education authority has been, and will continue to be, crucial in the running of schools. However, the time has come to give recognition to the equally important role that parents, parent-governors and, indeed, the whole community now have to play in education.

Just as the Bill provides a proper partnership involving parents, so, too, does it give new opportunities to schools. Henceforth, education will be focused on individual schools rather than centred on county halls. It is no wonder that only this weekend the general secretary designate of the Secondary Heads Association, John Sutton, said that the rightness of the Government's aim of making schools more accountable should be accepted and that heads should seize with both hands the opportunities afforded by the proposals to delegate school management responsibilities from local authorities to individual heads and governors.

Every teacher's union supports the principle of local financial management that the Bill will achieve. All too often the attitude has been as one head teacher described it:

"Those who live in scholastic realms share a simple cosmological view of their financial world. They seem to believe that the source of all finance is mysterious, beyond their control and almost their understanding; as if somewhere in the fiscal heavens there is some celestial creature from whose udder financial nourishment descends. Sometimes the flow falters and they must tweak until it resumes. In recent years interruptions to the precious stream have become more serious, but this has not fundamentally affected the prevailing, comforting belief."

Such attitudes are changing very fast, as all involved in education appreciate that the quality and relevance of education can be markedly improved by delegating decision-making to heads and governors. This Bill will enable the governors and heads of each school to make the most effective use of the resources available to them and give each head flexibility within an agreed budget to manage his own school. I have no doubt that that will lead

[Mr. Tony Baldry]

to better and more effective schools. The other measures in the Bill will also reinforce our ability to have better and more effective schools.

The provision for a national curriculum is a long-overdue reform. At present, too many pupils give up too many subjects at too early an age. For far too long, too many schools have muddled along without any clear focus or objective standards. The national curriculum will give both focus and objective standards, to be delivered locally.

A system of testing and assessment will enable pupils' progress to be recorded and, most important, will enable teachers and parents to identify, from the age of seven, those who need help because they are falling behind. As the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) said late last year,

"There is no doubt that the parents want some objective yardstick against which to measure their children's achievement in education."

As to the opportunities for grant-maintained schools, no opponent has answered adequately the question posed by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), when he said:

"Why should not a new category of public funded mixed ability but independent schools be at worst tolerated and at best encouraged within a mixed pattern of schooling?"

Our children are all our futures. There is a duty on us all to ensure that schools help them to acquire the skills that are necessary to tackle the challenges of the 21st century and to develop inquiring minds and a thirst for further knowledge that will last their lifetime. The Bill seeks to ensure that what every good parent would want to provide for his children, our state schools should be able to provide for all our children.

9.36 pm

Mr. Steinberg: The Bill is as radical as the Education Act 1944. The difference is that it has been born out of the division and dogma of the extreme Right wing of the Tory party. It sets out to differentiate and to segregate our education system. It will create divisions in our society.

My hon. Friends and I have fought for children with special education needs and we have won a few battles. We obtained some concessions from the Government, but not enough. In many respects we have failed children with special education needs, but not only have Opposition Members failed those children because we did not obtain the concessions that we need, but the Government have failed them because they have failed to cater for and protect those children. How have they failed? They have done nothing to protect the child with special education needs in the open admissions battle that will take place. Some schools will be regarded as "good" schools. They will be bursting at the seams and eventually they will look for ways in which to select their children, and children with special education needs will be debarred from those schools.

There will be elitist and grammar type schools, which is the last thing in the world that we want. We need schools that provide for a cross-section of our school population. All schools should be well resourced, with extra specific funds allocated for children with special education needs. That would not only encourage the right mix of children, but ensure that children with special education needs had access to the "best" schools—I say that guardedly.

We must ensure that children with special education needs go to schools with the best environment. Children must have the opportunity to attend schools that are supposedly the best. That includes children with physical disabilities. A child in a wheelchair or a deaf child must have the same opportunities to attend the school of their choice as other children. They must not be turned away because they cannot cope or because the school says that they cannot cope. The Bill does not take those needs into account. It is perhaps more important that a child with special education needs has a choice of school than a child without those needs. The Bill will not protect that choice.

The proposals to enable schools to opt out could have exactly the same damaging consequences on children with special education needs. Everything that we have gained since the 1981 Act could be ruined by the Bill. Careful links between special schools and local education authority schools could be ruined. The same arguments against open admission can be used for grant-maintained schools. Will those schools admit children with special education needs? We shall have to wait and see, but my guess is that they will not. My guess is that they will become elitist schools and the children whom I want to see getting a good education—those with special education needs—will be debarred from them.

I shall be brief because I have been told that I have only two or three minutes to speak, as usual. That has happened all the way through the debates on the Bill. I was always told to say a few words and sit down.

Education standards have not declined as the Secretary of State would have us believe, but integration since 1981 has made tremendous progress. Again I say "but" because the problem lies in the inadequate resources that the Government have given to education. Despite the fine words of the Secretary of State about all the resources that he has given to schools over the years, the fact is that the majority of schools are starved of resources. I speak from experience, because if I had had more resources as a head teacher I could have done more with the children in my care. I spent half my time trying to raise funds rather than getting on with the job and educating children. Other head teachers will tell the same story and give the same opinion.

The Government could have solved the vast majority of our education problems by giving more resources. The Government did not need to introduce this divisive, harmful and damaging Bill, which will not improve our education system but only divide it.

9.40 pm

Mr. Fatchett: One thing is clear from this Third Reading debate—those who were not members of the Committee can now understand why our proceedings upstairs were enlivened by my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). He has improved over time and I genuinely feel that there is a need for another substantial Bill so that he can improve further. I should like to make a suggestion to the Secretary of State and to my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch. When the Secretary of State writes another edition of "I have no gun, but I can spit", my hon. Friend deserves not a mention but some words in that great volume.

Hon. Members who sat through the debates upstairs have been delighted by the degree of consensus about special education needs. We would all wish to pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for City of Durham (Mr.

Steinberg) for the way in which he brought his professional expertise to bear in Committee. More than anyone he was responsible for the small number of amendments that have improved the quality of the Bill and the quality of life, particularly for children affected by the relevant clauses.

On Second Reading we argued strongly that the Bill would centralise and divide our education system. Nothing that has happened subsequently has changed that opinion; indeed, it has reinforced it. What has happened subsequently is interesting. The Government's performance in Committee can be characterised in three ways —inefficiency, the internal division about education that is now widespread in the Conservative party, and the attack on freedom and, in particular, certain aspects of individual freedom.

As to inefficiency, on Second Reading the Secretary of State claimed that he had a blueprint for this country's education system to take it into the 1990s and the next century. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. No such blueprint existed on Second Reading or exists at present.

The Secretary of State proudly announced that he had a national curriculum. Even at this late hour he does not know how that national curriculum is to be made up. He cannot tell us the weight of the component parts of the national curriculum. He cannot tell us about the resource implications for the delivery of the national curriculum. What a position for a Secretary of State to find himself in five months after producing the Bill and five months after persuading the House that he had a national curriculum.

The Secretary of State has brought forward proposals for the abolition of ILEA. At no stage has he provided the House, parents of children in London or the London education system with a detailed analysis of the educational or financial implications of the abolition of ILEA. On both counts — the national curriculum and testing and the abolition of ILEA — the Secretary of State stands condemned for proposals that do not add up at this stage.

It would be unfair to accuse the Secretary of State of rivalling the inefficiency of his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. Those of us who have had the pleasure of reading today's news will know that the Secretary of State for the Environment has been convicted yet again. He is once more a recidivist. Planning permission for county hall has now been overturned in the High Court because the Secretary of State for the Environment got it wrong again. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has a record that is not quite as bad, but I suspect that he will make one or two mistakes as time goes on.

The Bill has also been characterised by internal division in the Tory party. We are told that the Centre for Policy Studies—in other words, the Prime Minister—feels that the curriculum is too prescriptive and restrictive and that all we need is a core curriculum. So the right hon. Gentleman's curriculum certainly does not match the wishes of the Centre for Policy Studies. We were told in Committee and on Report that Conservative Members were worried about the ballot procedues for opting out. Many have said privately and some, more courageously, in public that they want a provision that includes the need for more parental support than a simple majority.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch well predicted the tale of the Secretary of State's woe over the abolition of ILEA. When that appeared, the right hon. Gentleman's stock fell and fell, and he has now plummeted to being Mr. Two Per Cent.

There is a division between the right hon. Gentleman and the Prime Minister on testing too. My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) suggested to me that I was harsh on the right hon. Gentleman, and said that my judgment that the Secretary of State would carry the Cabinet and Prime Minister with him was correct. My hon. Friend pointed out that he had money on the right hon. Gentleman, seeing him as a good long-term bet. My hon. Friend has not picked too many winners over the years, but I hope the Secretary of State will carry those good wishes with him.

However, I must tell my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow that I have one fear about his description of the Secretary of State's performance in terms of a political race. When the right hon. Gentleman gets to the first hurdle in that race he will be immobilised because these days he only jumps when the Prime Minister tells him to——

Dr. Hampson *rose*——

Mr. Fatchett: I cannot give way as I have only three minutes.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: To an hon. Member representing Leeds, at that.

Mr. Fatchett: Not even for that.

Another deeply worrying aspect of the Government's case is that they show contempt for those who oppose or wish to oppose them. That is why they will not listen to ILEA parents and come out with their specious arguments to undermine the legitimacy of the inner-London parents' ballot. They know they will be defeated in that ballot, which is why they are not prepared to take note of what the parents have to say.

The same is true of individual academic freedom. We have heard no greater weasel words from the Secretary of State than when he has tried to pretend that he favours individual academic freedom. If he were committed to that he would have put it on the face of the Bill, but he has turned down many opportunities to do so.

So the Bill is characterised by inefficiency, division and contempt for others. It has been sold by the Government on the grounds that they are greatly concerned about the state education system. What hypocrisy. Over eight years in office the Government have systematically denigrated our teachers, the performance of our children and our education system. Over eight years the Government have failed to invest in education and have penalised local authorities prepared to invest in the education of our children.

The Secretary of State and the Government have much legislative time, yet they have failed to bring forward the important reforms that are necessary for our education system. We need better education for our pre five-year-olds and proper education for post 16-year-olds, and all our schools should be properly resourced so that one of my hon. Friends does not have to send his child to a school with insufficient resources for the GCSE examination. Those things form the real agenda and presented an opportunity, but the Secretary of State and the Government have failed our education system and our children.

Mrs. Rumbold: I pay tribute to my right hon. and hon. Friends who have contributed to the debate on the Floor of the House and in Committee. In this debate my right hon. and hon. Friends have spoken with great conviction. Earlier, in introducing this Third Reading the Opposition gave us more of what my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State charmingly called the flimsy persiflage of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). */Interruption./* That phrase may be difficult for some Opposition Members.

We had another poem from the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore). I pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman because it was a good poem. I hope that he will take up a third career of writing poetry and perhaps he and my right hon. Friend can compete in producing great works to be read by future generations in our schools. I pay tribute to the hon. Member for City of Durham (Mr. Steinberg) who has persistently and rightly spoken about the special education needs of our children. We have noted what he said and he was perfectly correct to draw that matter to our attention. I hope he feels that many of the improvements that he has persuaded the Government to make have been due to his own hard work.

The hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) made a speech that was not quite as good as those that he made in Committee. Much of his speech was ranting and that was perhaps due to his ambition to become the leader of his party. I commend to the hon. Gentleman a speech made in an earlier debate by the hon. Member for Greenwich (Mrs. Barnes). Although I did not agree with all of them, he should read her sensible views. However, they were well thought-out and the hon. Lady made an excellent speech. The hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) is not in the Chamber. I am grateful for his advice that it would be foolish and an indulgence to give way in a debate such as this.

I shall now turn to the contributions made by my right hon. and hon. Friends. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) rightly identified the areas of great advance, especially in the national curriculum. We noted with great interest his pursuance of the point of history which, I am sure he will know, is a subject that is close to the heart of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. For that reason my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury does not have to worry too much. He said that the polytechnics have grown sufficiently to leave the local authorities and become independent. He identified further areas for advance and rightly paid tribute to the dedicated teachers in our schools and colleges.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury spoke about the Horniman and Geffrye museums. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is concerned about the future of those two museums and is having urgent discussions with all concerned about how best to arrange for them to continue effectively. We certainly agree entirely with the analysis by my right hon. Friend the Member for Aylesbury about the future of the universities. Discussions on that will continue. I was especially interested in his views on grant-maintained schools. Those schools will be of great benefit to our new system. I can assure my right hon. Friend that as a consequence of grant-maintained schools becoming part of our schools system there will be no likelihood of the Government wishing to see other schools run by local education authorities being demoralised in any sense.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, South-West (Mr. Madel) also gave us his views, and I thought that his point about training of heads was particularly important. I listened carefully to the way in which he thought that we should take note of the business schools and I noted his views on grant-maintained schools. He is right to perceive that local education authorities should work in peaceful co-existence with these schools.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) made another of his vigorous speeches, and I pay tribute to him for the way in which he has supported my right hon. and hon. Friends and myself in debates in Committee and on the Floor of the House. He is right to identify parents as the key influence on their children in education.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) made good points about the possibility of a campaign being spuriously raised, on the part of people in London, to preserve ILEA. We are well aware of the kind of scare campaign and scare stories that may be raised, and we shall take note of them.

Mr. Tony Banks: Will the hon. Lady give way?

Mrs. Rumbold: No, I shall not give way to the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Norwood described interventions in these debates as self-indulgent, and I shall take that advice.

I thought that my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) described the history of our education very well, and his point that this Bill will add greatly to the partnership between parents and children was well made.

Ever since the first documents were issued, followed by the Education Reform Bill, the cohort of the education establishment and its camp followers have been gnawing away at the Bill and its provisions like rats in a cellar. Acres of print in the education press, or on the education pages of the heavy newspapers, have been written and read, in the main, by exactly the same people. Like the local councillors who scan local newspapers for their letters, which is the curious and lucklustre way that local government has devised for talking to itself, so the education world has chattered away, leaving the rest of us to go on about our daily business, more or less unscathed.

Out of all the debates in this place and elsewhere, the issues of substance, the settlement with the Churches on the place of religious education and the matter of the funding of institutions of higher education have been successfully negotiated between my right hon. Friend and the relevant leaders of Churches and universities. For the rest, there is a sense of muted satisfaction that the Government are addressing the shortcomings of the education system. The national curriculum is seen as a great advance. The introduction of attainment targets and testing are seen as both necessary and rational in achieving improved expectations and achievements in our schools.

The involvement of parents and the local community in the running of schools and the opportunity to increase their influence is welcomed by all except the local power-brokers who are infuriated at the loosening of their stranglehold. I have not spoken to many heads who would not welcome the move towards local autonomy, only to heads who cannot wait for their turn to have local autonomy. The opportunity provided by the Bill for greater freedom through grant-maintained status is met with outright hostility by the education establishment, and small wonder. Such a possibility heralds the end to a monopoly which, on the one hand, has produced much

excellent work and education but has, on the other, produced disgraceful schools that have allowed pupils to pass through their hands with a minimum of impact, to a life of emptiness.

Both further and continuing education have been addressed in a similar way to give impetus to the urgent need to ensure properly co-ordinated educational opportunities for all over the age of 16 who seek them. The realigning of our institutions of education from the maintained sector into independence will be warmly welcomed and is now entirely opportune.

The Education Reform Bill marks an enormous stride forward for the children of today, for their parents and for the children of tomorrow. It sets the scene for much improvement and positive change. If this country wants to move into the challenges of the 21st century, we must educate our children so to do. The reforms will take the country well down the road towards that goal and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 323, Noes 224.

Division No. 235] **[10 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Gill, Christopher
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*

Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barnes, Mrs Rosie *(Greenwich)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beggs, Roy
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
McCusker, Harold
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Community Charges (Scotland)

10.13 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): I beg to move,

That the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 157), dated 4th February 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 5th February, be revoked.

I am sorry that the Secretary of State for Scotland is not with us this evening to take part in this debate, for we have before us an extremely important measure. I fear that we shall be subjected to a rather colourless performance by the Minister of State—*[Interruption.]* I think that I am entitled to describe his characteristics fairly.

The regulations set out the basis of the administration of the poll tax system in Scotland. They define the register and give power to nominate the responsible person in each household and to gather information. Every house in Scotland will be installed with a tax gatherer, an ally for a hated and unwanted system. We protested on Thursday and we protested again earlier today, and we were justified in doing so, against the way in which the regulations are being introduced.

I believe that the Minister will concede that there is widespread anger in Scotland and only little support for the poll tax. The anger of the people would be compounded if they appreciated the cavalier and contemptuous way in which the House is being treated. A matter of extreme importance is being crushed into a debate of one and a half hours. There is no possibility of amending the regulations, and adequate debate is precluded.

Apart from the unpopularity of the issue, we have the comments in the 18th report of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. It is the considered view of the Committee that almost certainly the regulations are defectively drafted, and there are significant doubts whether one of the schedules is intra vires. This is not a pedantic point that has been thought up by barrack room lawyers that are to be found in the midst of every Opposition party. This is a view that has been accepted unanimously by a senior Committee with a Conservative majority. The Committee was properly advised by men of skill in this place.

I believe that I am entitled to protest at the way in which these issues have been brushed aside as matters of no consequence. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated instance. This is the third occasion in a short time in which the Scottish Office has decided cavalierly to ignore the advice that has been offered to it by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. I recall the housing support grant and the highly controversial education order that affected the boundaries of responsibility between local and central government. Thirdly, with the introduction of the administration for the poll tax, we are again watching advice being trampled upon by a Government who do not care. The issue was raised during business questions the other day. The Leader of the House swept it aside as being merely minor and technical. When pressed again he substituted "trivial" for "technical".

I do not believe that it is the over-nice conscience of somebody who once received a legal training to say that I do not consider this issue to be minor, technical or trivial. It is a sad comment on the bunker mentality that prevails in the Scottish Office that those concerned are not prepared to redraft the regulations. If the provisions within the fourth schedule are used, others will examine their form closely to determine whether something can be done to amend them elsewhere.

The Opposition are not on their own in being upset by the way in which this business is being conducted. We received detailed and helpful briefs from the Scottish Consumer Council, the Scottish Council for Single Homeless and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. All these organisations have expressed anxiety and have pointed to the faults, flaws and difficulties that they anticipate. It is impossible properly to ventilate these issues in a short debate of only one and a half hours. The role of the Council on Tribunals, the differences in the appeal procedures between England and Scotland and the problems that attach to the range of information that is being gathered are all matters worthy of debate. It is unfortunate that we are not allowed in any real sense to canvas the issues that have been raised with us.

I believe that the complications and complexities of the system are their own worst enemy. I do not believe that it is in any real, genuine sense workable, or likely to be a credit to the Government or those who drafted the legislation. I have no doubt that, on occasions, we overstate our case in opposition, and that, on occasion, we suggest that the complexities of the system are worthy of Gormenghast or of Kafka. But, even if we leave aside any form of exaggeration, the reality is alarming enough. In these complexities is a threat to privacy, and a real danger that individual liberties will be undermined.

There has been some argument in the House—it was rehearsed in debate on the English legislation—about why we in Scotland are asked that every individual over 18 should produce his or her date of birth. I have not yet received any satisfactory explanation. In England, in the event of confusion over names, other systems will be used involving such terms as "senior" and "junior" to overcome the problem, and I feel that we are entitled to some explanation.

I should like to put to the Minister a specific point about the right of appeal arising under section 17(9) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, which provides for a right of appeal against designation as a responsible person. When will that arise? Will the Minister confirm that it will not arise on the issue of the inquiry form in schedule 3? There has been some confusion, but no doubt the Minister will be able to tell us the answer. Presumably, the right of appeal will arise at the point at which there is a formal designation, and not merely an inquiry form asking for information to be sent out.

Let me deal next with the complexity of the language in the form. Anyone who has taken the trouble to read its many pages will see how unsatisfactory it is. It has been heavily criticised by the Scottish Consumer Council. It seems reasonable to ask whether the notes, simply because they are in the regulations, are sacrosanct, or whether they can be varied. They strike me as a cautionary tale designed almost to prevent rather than facilitate communication. I hope that, even now, the Minister will consider the excellent advice of the Scottish Consumer Council that the whole thing should be taken away and he should start again.

[Mr. Donald Dewar]

In another place, Lord Glenarthur said that the objective—the end product—was clear and comprehensible language. If that is the test that the Government have set themselves, they have lamentably failed to achieve it. I can do no better than to quote the Scottish Council for Single Homeless, which has observed that the forms are

"unnecessarily cumbersome, confusing, very badly designed and written in legal jargon."

I do not think for a moment that anyone would dispute that. The system will be a disaster for the citizens who find the forms on their doorstep and must try to understand what is meant, and what their role is supposed to be.

As the Minister may know if he has had the courtesy to read the briefing material that has come in, the Scottish Council for Single Homeless tried this out on a number of people in shared accommodation. I do not know whether this is a recommendation, but they were all university graduates. They came up with some very acerbic comments about the incomprehensibility of the language — which was described, I think fairly, as "goobledegook" in another of our briefings. I believe that the whole thing is nonsense.

It becomes clear when one reads through the administrative arrangements that we have now stripped away finally, as the organisation starts to gather speed, any pretence that the electoral register is not involved in the poll tax system. It is becoming more clear daily that there will be close collaboration with and connection between the poll tax register and the electoral roll.

We know, and I am sure that the Minister is aware, that in Strathclyde — by far the largest local authority in Scotland in terms of scale and size of operation — the inquiry form will be distributed by hand but it will not be blank. The working documents prepared in Strathclyde make it abundantly clear that the form will be completed simply by lifting all the names available from the electoral register, putting them into the inquiry form for poll tax purposes and asking the responsible person to confirm or adapt the information on it. The starting point of the system — we now know this to be true — will be the electoral roll. That is the basis on which the whole crazy superstructure will be built.

I am not saying that in constitutional theory this is a tax on the right to vote, but it is self-evident that we are building into the system a disincentive to register to vote of a kind that makes the poll tax in the most simple and direct way an enemy of the democratic process. Sadly, but inevitably, there will be people who will fall to the temptation to try to avoid the poll tax by removing their names from the electoral register. None of us can look on this with any complacency, but it is built into the regulations.

The machinery will be expensive and inefficient and will create enormous problems and great trouble. Armies are being mobilised to try to get the system creaking into action. I am told that in Strathclyde, for example, home helps are offered 40p for every completed form that they can capture and bring home. It is, I suppose, an interesting reintroduction of the principle of bounty hunting, which most of us thought had died out long ago.

The almighty struggle which will be needed to make the system work at all is wrong and misconceived. The end product is that Scotland will be lumbered with a tax that no one wants and that no one believes is just. It will be a laughing stock and a mockery. More seriously, it will be an offence, because it will produce a system which has no relation to ability to pay and which will bring about a massive shift against groups and communities which are already disadvantaged in the Prime Minister's world of popular capitalism. The system is sustained only by the prejudice of Ministers and the cowed loyalty of Conservative Back Benchers who know not what they do but trudge through the Lobbies at the crack of a whip. There is nothing here.

I have no doubt that there will be hon. Members in the Lobby for the Government who will be rebels on other occasions south of the border but will not even know what they are voting for on this occasion. There is nothing in the regulations or in the exchanges to date that reassures us about civil liberties, privacy and the safeguards that should be built into a system of this kind. We shall not have an opportunity to have those adequate assurances or to debate this measure adequately.

We shall oppose the regulations in the Division Lobby. We shall continue to campaign in other ways, taking the fight against this noxious tax to the community of Scotland which will suffer under the Government's imposition. On that, I give the Minister an undertaking and a promise.

10.29 pm

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): I found the speech of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) interesting in many respects. If I remember accurately what he had to say, he was complaining about the forms to which the regulations refer and saying that people in Scotland would find them difficult to follow and to complete.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): The hon. Gentleman would.

Mr. Walker: I have never found forms difficult to complete. *[Interruption.]*

As ever, the hon. Member for Garscadden speaks with two voices. He also complained about the fact that the Government have put out a simple booklet to explain what the community charge is about, how it will work and how individuals will be required to complete the forms. The hon. Gentleman cannot have it both ways. The Government are quite properly going through the process of explaining to the people of Scotlsand what paying 14p in every £1 of local government expenditure means. That is what the community charge covers for those who pay it in full, and many will receive rebates of up to 80 per cent., yet the hon. Gentleman complains. Indeed, no one, except Opposition Members who never can understand or complete forms, could describe 14p as draconian.

The hon. Member for Garscadden said that the community charge is unpopular, and he drew attention to the fact that the Select Committee had picked faults in it. Of course, that is what Select Committees do and there are precedents for that. Does the hon. Gentleman really believe that those, such as students, who wish to register appeals should be denied that opportunity? The defective area refers to those asking for an exemption or a reduction. The regulations refer to those people.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) raised the case of those who are exempt. Do the hon. Gentleman and the

Minister accept that people will not be exempt if they are widows with occupational pensions, pensioners with occupational pensions and a host of other people? Indeed, 99 per cent. of the population will not be exempt. In my constituency, those who are not exempt will have to pay £401 from 1 April, and those who are exempt will have to pay £98, or 25 per cent. of the poll tax, because they will have to pay the community water charge in full. Those are the people that the Government are penalising.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman's intervention is interesting because there is no such thing as a poll tax. It does not exist. People will not be paying anything towards a poll tax. Opposition Members cannot fill in, understand or read the forms because they do not know what is on the forms. If the hon. Gentleman's figures are accurate and if he was accurately reflecting what is to happen, those people certainly will not vote Labour in future when they realise how expensive Labour is.

Before the hon. Gentleman intervened I was saying that the supplementary inquiry form is intended to make it easy for people to make claims. It is intended for the individuals who believe that they will get some reduction. The hon. Member for Garscadden is taking the view of the Select Committee and objecting to that, yet it seems to me that we should be approving, not disapproving, this measure. After all, if the hon. Member for Garscadden is a democrat — I believe that he is — and accepts that the House determines what happens in Scotland at this time because a Conservative Government are in office, he will accept that the Government are going to make sure that the community charge comes into operation and will work.

Mr. Dewar *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman is shaking his head. Is he now joining his hon. Friends who are suggesting some way of stopping it illegally?

Mr. Dewar: If something is ultra vires, is the hon. Gentleman suggesting that the Government should totally ignore it and go ahead without any proper basis of authority in the primary legislation? That is what the Select Committee is saying.

Mr. Walker: The hon. Gentleman is a lawyer and I have listened to him many times in Committee debating fine points of law. Lawyers frequently disagree. If the hon. Member for Garscadden believes that individuals, on his recommendation, will accept that it is ultra vires, it will be determined, as he said, somewhere else. I imagine that he means that it will be determined in a court in Scotland. The hon. Gentleman knows that lawyers make a fine living out of difficult areas of the law. I am not a lawyer, but I admire the marvellous incomes that they can receive for determining such things.

The Government's lawyers are convinced that what the hon. Gentleman and the Select Committee have said is wrong. There is nothing unusual about that. Having sat through many Committees and listened to many lawyers on different sides with differing views, I am certain of one thing: if there are six lawyers on a Committee, there will be six different views. That has been my experience. Fortunately, juries do not consist of lawyers. That is the one great safeguard that we all have.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Will my hon. Friend accept from a lawyer that, when the people of Scotland think about the point that was made by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) about people in Edinburgh paying £401 for the community charge, they will probably realise that the rate support grant for Scottish local authorities is much higher than in England. Yet, in my authority in west Lancashire, the community charge will be only £215. How will Opposition Members square that when the people of Scotland realise what is going on?

Mr. Walker: I thank my hon. Friend for that intervention. That gets to the nub of the matter. I wish to stick to the regulations.

One reason why Opposition Members are so opposed to the legislation is that they know that for the first time the Scottish electorate will be interested in what is going to happen in terms of public expenditure at local level. It is true to say that, in the past, because so few people actually paid rates, the majority were happy to vote for increased expenditure. Of course, one can understand that if one does not have to pay, one will vote for increased expenditure.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): Does the hon. Gentleman realise that in my constituency there are droves of people queueing up to sign the petition calling on the Government to stop the poll tax now? Will the hon. Gentleman take into consideration the fact that throughout Scotland many people are clamouring for the poll tax to be stopped, irrespective of whether they will gain? They see that the poorer sections of our community will suffer dramatically, and they are pleading with the Government to stop the poll tax.

Mr. Walker: If people want to queue up to stop the poll tax, let them get on with it by all means. There is no such thing as a poll tax; it does not exist. If people seek to stop something that does not exist, it is because they have been misled by the gobbledegook put out by Opposition Members. If people are signing a petition to stop the poll tax, they must be living in another country, because there is no poll tax in Scotland. The hon. Member for Garscadden talks legal definition and clarity and seeks to explain to the people of Scotland why he thinks the legislation is faulty and flawed. Any argument that contains a reference to stopping the poll tax is so flawed it is not true, because it is based on no reality.

If the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) had said that people were queueing up to stop the community charge, there might be some sense in that. He does not like the community charge, and he might get people to queue up to support his view. I trust that he will accept, though, that I never apologise for my support of the community charge because I believe that it is just and fair. I happily stump around my constituency making observations and comments in its favour, and I do not find my constituents queuing up to sign documents opposing it.

When one of my constituents asks about the poll tax, I give the same answer that I gave the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde: it does not exist. I point out to my constituents that they have been misled — as the people of Dundee have been misled over Ford — by propaganda put out by the Labour party. The regulations have been misrepresented, and the Scots will realise, as the Dundonians realise, that they have been led up the garden path. We set up the Ford enterprise; the Opposition screwed it up.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. I must ask the hon. Gentleman to refer to the regulations.

Mr. Walker: The Order Paper refers to the setting up of the community charge register, Madam Deputy Speaker——

Madam Deputy Speaker: It does not refer to the screwing up of Dundee. The hon. Gentleman should confine himself to the regulations.

Mr. Walker: If anything that I have said conveys the impression that the regulations will not screw up Dundee——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I think the hon. Gentleman has gone far enough. This has been a good-humoured debate so far. I should be grateful if the hon. Gentleman would preserve that spirit of good humour and refer to the regulations.

Mr. Walker: You will recall, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the hon. Member for Garscadden, who opened the debate, dealt with questions of language and complexity. If my language, or complexity, has in any way misled anyone — perhaps I am running true to form — I apologise.

Mr. Tim Devlin (Stockton, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that, if the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham) gave a copy of the petition to the community charge registration officer, it would greatly assist that officer in his task?

Mr. Walker: That may well be the case.

The hon. Member for Garscadden suggested that people would wish to give up their right to vote to avoid paying the community charge. I think that that is a fair interpretation of his remarks. If so, that would be very sad for democracy, because we want all the people to get out and vote. One of the great problems with local democracy has been the poor turnout at local authority elections, but one of the great advantages of the community charge will be that every person aged 18 and over will now have to take a direct and real interest in local government. No one knows how those people will vote, but when they see their money being spent they will certainly want to exercise their democratic right.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. According to "Erskine May", do you have the power at any time, when you know that dozens of other hon. Members wish to speak in a debate lasting one and a half hours, to interrupt an hon. Member who is drivelling on, not addressing himself to the motion, and repeating himself tediously, in the way that the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is doing? Do you have any power to stop that abuse of the House?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Under Standing Orders, I have power to do that, but at the moment the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is not repeating himself tediously. However, I remind the House that many hon. Members wish to speak in the debate, and I hope that all hon. Members will make short speeches.

Mr. Walker: I do not intend to speak at length. I had not intended to do so, but Labour Members intervened and I tried to answer.

I am sure that this is common ground among all hon. Members. We all hope that people will not give up their right to vote in local elections to avoid registering. We hope that people will recognise that voting is an essential part of local democracy. We believe that the community charge will result in greater interest and participation in local democracy. That can only be healthy for it. If greater numbers turn out to vote—no one knows how they will vote—and if they elect councillors who want to spend or who do not want to spend more money, depending on their point of view, that can only be good and healthy for the local community.

I should have thought that everyone would welcome any measure that made people more directly interested in local government. The community charge certainly will. I hope that every 18-year-old will go out and vote.

10.46 pm

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunferline, West): Let me reply directly to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). The architect of this piece of legislation is the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), now the Under-Secretary of State. In 1985 he wrote a pamphlet entitled, "The Case for a Poll Tax". *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman called it a poll tax and the ingredients of the Act are on all fours with what he said in 1985. He gave it the title and we took it up. It is a poll tax, and it is a bloody poll tax.

What are we doing in relation to the regulations tonight?

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Wasting time.

Mr. Douglas: We are not wasting time. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman has not read it, but let us look at the simplistic document issued by the Government, and what it says about the inquiry form, which will go to every household in Scotland. It states:

"The inquiry form is quite simple. Most people will only be asked:".

The booklet then lists the questions, including

"The name of anyone who may be exempt from the community charge. See page 14 for exemptions."

Page 14—[HON. MEMBERS: "Can you read?"] Yes, I can read. The hon. Member for Tayside, North might be able to fill in forms, but Conservative Members should look at what people are being asked to disclose. The booklet states:

"Who will be exempt from the community charge?

The main exemptions will be for:

—long stay hospital patients

—people living in nursing homes, residential care homes, and hostels providing a substantial level of care.

—severely mentally handicapped people"

Would the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) disclose a member of his family to anyone knocking at his door as being severely mentally handicapped? That is what people are being asked to put in the public domain. There is not even a proper definition of how people can register as severely mentally handicapped. The list continues:

"—prisoners in custody".

People are being asked to put that in the public domain. If that is not an infringement of individual liberty, I do not know what is. Conservative Members have been brainwashed by the Secretary of State for the Environment and by his simplistic statements of how smoothly the poll

tax will operate. However, we have seen some rebellion. The former Leader of the House, who moved the guillotine motion on the poll tax Bill, is now rebelling.

In his pamphlet, the hon. Member for Stirling suggested that Scotland should be the guinea pig. If we are the guinea pig, God help democracy in this country. I have distinct reasons, which I shall not go into, for my repugnance to this measure. If my constituents ask me for guidance about how to fill the forms in I shall tell them to put them in the wastepaper basket.

10.50 pm

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Following my hon. Friend's last point, it is a fact that these forms will end up in 1 million dustbins just as certainly as the poll tax will end up in the dustbin of history.

I have no intention of following the gomeril-like filibuster of the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker). The people of Scotland know that the hon. Gentleman's speech is typical of the quality of argument being put forward in support of this heinous legislation. It is despised and rejected by the people of Scotland, as it will come to be despised and rejected by the people of England and Wales, to an extent that is unprecedented with any previous piece of legislation.

I say to the Ministers, the Vichy regime on the Front Bench: go forth and sing the praises of the poll tax. When the poll tax was introduced at the behest of the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) in his little pamphlet in 1985 it commanded 39 per cent. support in Scotland. Since then the Government have issued pamphlets and booklets and have used the entire propaganda machine, but after three years the net consequence is that the poll tax, according to two authoritative polls that have been carried out in the past few weeks, now commands 15 per cent. support in Scotland. The Government have achieved the extraordinary political statistic that 15 per cent. of Scottish Tories want a campaign of non-payment against the poll tax.

I say, quite definitively, that my advice to people receiving the poll tax forms is, when they are asked to provide their date of birth on the forms they should not do so. Every Scot with an ounce of smeddum, when asked to provide their date of birth on the form, will not give it; they will send the forms back without it.

In Committee we had the authority of the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, who said that the date of birth is not needed to administer the poll tax. I believe that the date of birth is needed. If we want to know why we need look no further than the Library and the report commissioned by the Scottish Office from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, which states quite clearly that for the unworkable to be made semi-workable every individual will have to have a community charge personal identifier — which should not be confused with a state ID number — which will follow the person around the country. The question about date of birth is on the form so that that tag can be provided. Nobody in Scotland should fill in their date of birth, because in the English and Welsh legislation it has been clearly stated that there is no need for it.

Mr. Hind: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wilson: I do not have the slightest interest in what the hon. Gentleman has to say and I have no intention of giving way. We have heard enough this evening of the quality of debate offered by Conservative Members, who snigger and sneer like overgrown schoolboys and neither know nor care about what they have imposed on people throughout the country with the poll tax. Some of the Conservative clowns had the temerity to laugh when my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) talked about the mentally handicapped.

One of the wickednesses of the legislation is that the Government, in their great magnanimity, have agreed to exempt the severely mentally handicapped — a category of people that apparently exists for no other purpose in society — from the poll tax. To display their civic backbone, the merely mentally handicapped must pay up like everyone else.

I wonder whether Conservative Members know what is involved in being defined as severely mentally handicapped for the purposes of the legislation? If they examine the legislation that they are nodding through, they will find that mentally handicapped people are to be taken to a general practitioner to be certified as severely mentally handicapped. There will be no reprieve for the physically handicapped, no matter how severely handicapped they are. Does the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) approve of the fact that they will not be exempted?

Mr. Forth: I see no distinction between those who claim benefit from the state and must establish the basis for that claim and what is proposed in the regulations. Why the hon. Gentleman is getting so exercised about this part of the argument when, presumably for a long time, he has accepted that people who come to claim state benefits from the taxpayer must reasonably establish their claim, is beyond me.

Mr. Wilson: As usual, when the hon. Gentleman attempts to be rational he digs himself deeper into a trough. The definition of severely mentally handicapped for the purposes of the poll tax is not the same as any definition for social security purposes. Furthermore, the caring relative of a person in this category will have imposed on him or her the indignity of taking that person along to a general practitioner to have him certified as severely mentally handicapped. That is the only way in which a person can be removed from the register.

Mr. Devlin *rose*——

Mr. Wilson: We heard enough last week in Committee from the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin), who maintained that the physically and mentally handicapped should certainly pay the poll tax because they use local government services.

Tonight, the lie that there is no connection between the electoral register and the poll tax register stands exposed. The information from the electoral register will be put on the poll tax registration forms even before they go out. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is a hypocrite to wring his hands and say that it is desirable that everyone should vote. Every Conservative Member knows that one of the by-products of the legislation that the Government relish is that many poor people, and footloose young people, will be deterred from registering to vote because they know or hope that that is one way of staying off the electoral register——

Mr. Forth: The hon. Gentleman is now giving the lie to the real position, which is that many people are being

[Mr. Forth]

misled into de-registering for voting because his hon. Friends tell them—wrongly—that there is an association between voting and the payment of the community charge. Opposition Members must take the blame for that.

Mr. Wilson: When Conservative Members are given a fig leaf behind which to hide, they gratefully accept it. The hon. Gentleman's remarks were the antithesis of the truth, which comes as no surprise. I know of no Opposition Member who has told anyone not to register for the vote in order to avoid the poll tax. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]

Mr. Devlin: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wilson: No.

Conservative Members reveal their ignorance when they point at my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West. I do not agree with some of the things that my hon. Friend has said about how to react to the poll tax, but he has never told people not to register to vote. People who know anything about it—a category that excludes almost every Conservative Member who will nod these regulations through—know that people will not escape the poll tax by not registering to vote.

The one defence against the poll tax and all the other legislation perpetrated by the Government is to retain the right to vote. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy report tells anyone who cares to read it that in order to compile a poll tax register, access to every list of names in this society, in both private and public hands, will be needed to keep the register going. Anyone who thinks he can stay off the poll tax register by staying off the electoral register is severely underestimating the cunning and determination of the Government to impinge upon individual civil liberties.

Mr. Hind: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Wilson: I can think of few people that I would be less likely to give way to than the hon. Gentleman.

The statistics of the poll tax legislation are clear. Support for the poll tax in Scotland stands at 15 per cent., and opposition to it in England and Wales already stands at 70 per cent. The poll tax is the rock on which the Government will founder if they push it through. I am certain that there is a straightforward progression. The more people know about the poll tax, the more they turn again against it. The Government will blunder through the regulations and people will receive those incomprehensible forms. There is no doubt that a large number of the forms will be sent back—as they should be sent back. They insult the intelligence of the people of Scotland and the democracy for which people have voted.

In time, the process will be repeated in England and Wales. Conservative Members who intend to vote for these regulations should have the decency to read them and to look at the overall pattern of what they are supporting. I wonder how many Conservative Members took the trouble to go to the Library to read about the rebate system proposed by the poll tax legislation. How many of them know how this will hit the poorest people in our society? How many of them care? The answer is precious few. In their greedy little eyes this is another piece of legislation that will deliberately and shamelessly transfer wealth from those who have least to those who have most. That is not an accident; it is the purpose of the poll tax legislation. Any Conservative Member with an ounce of guts would vote against the regulations.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I did not want to interrupt my hon. Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) during his excellent defence of the rights of severely mentally handicapped people. During the course of his argument he effectively asked how one qualifies under the exemption clause as severely mentally handicapped. A Tory Member replied quite clearly and said, "By representing Cunninghame, North." I do not know the hon. Gentleman's name, but it is the character who sat with a leer on his face in the back seat next to the Door. It would be in order for him to withdraw his remark.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Will the hon. Gentleman come to his point of order? We have very little time left.

Mr. Canavan: I am asking you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw what he said, because it is an insult to my hon. Friend, to the severely mentally handicapped, and to——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I assure the hon. Gentleman that if I had heard the remark I would have been the first to rise to my feet to insist on a withdrawal. I did not hear it. *[Interruption.]* Order. Let us get on with the debate. I call Mr. Marshall.

11.47 pm

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): It is sometimes suggested that those of us who represent English constituencies should not speak in Scottish debates. May I tell the House that I am a former Aberdeen town councillor? It is pleasant to see in the House the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond) who was also an Aberdeen town councillor at that time. I am also a former parliamentary candidate for Dundee, East. It is with regret that I have noted what has happened in Dundee under the aegis of the Labour party, both recently and over a number of years.

I listened with some interest to the speeches of the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson). In those two speeches there was a suggestion that some people were not registering to vote because they did not want to pay the community charge. Those who do not register to vote because they are frightened about the community charge are cheats on society, because they want to have the benefit of local government services without paying directly for the costs of those services.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Is the hon. Gentleman alleging that the right to vote is determined by the necessity to register for the poll tax?

Mr. Marshall: No, I am not. The hon. Gentleman and his friends are alleging that some people are not registering to vote because they do not want to pay the community charge. Those who refuse to register for that reason are nothing but nasty little cheats. Opposition Members may laugh, but these individuals are cheats on society. They are seeking to get the benefit of local government services without paying directly for the costs of them. That is quite unfair.

Opposition Members have told us that nobody wants this tax. That is the cynical view that leads a cynic to say:

"To tax and to please, no more than to love and to be wise, is not given to men."

That is not true. Everyone knows that the community charge is a fairer system of raising local government taxation than the current system of rates. For example, the vast bulk of single-parent families will pay less in community charge than they pay in rates.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Marshall: That is a fact, and the hon. Gentleman should know it. The vast majority of single pensioners will pay less under the community charge than they do under the rates system.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: Rubbish.

Mr. Marshall: The hon. Gentleman shouts, "Rubbish." Unfortunately, that is a summation of the hon. Gentleman's view of this and most other subjects.

The only people who do not want the community charge are high-spending Labour councillors. The Labour party does not want the community charge because it knows that it will catch them out. The community charge payers will compare the community charges across Scotland, and will find——

Mr. Hind: Is not the important principle about these forms one that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) pointed out — that if Labour Members advise their constituents to break the law by throwing away the forms, they must bear in mind that the only way that democracy can work is by obeying the law? Opposition Members, and the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West, must bear in mind that if they were to advocate disobeying the law, we could also advise disobedience of Socialist laws, and then there would be

Mr. Marshall: My hon. Friend is right. Selective obedience of the law is a recipe for anarchy.

Mr. Douglas: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Marshall: I shall come to the hon. Gentleman's speech in a moment.

When the Labour Government introduced the selective employment tax, Conservative Members said that it was a bad tax, and one that would hit Scotland and generate unemployment there. We told the taxpayers of Scotland to obey the law. Otherwise, we would have had a recipe for anarchy and chaos in this country.

Some hon. Members do not like the community charge because it will find them out and it will find out Labour councillors. The community charge will be at its highest in Labour councils. I have no doubt that when the community charge is in being——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is straying far from the regulations. I wish that he would come back to them and wind up his comments.

Mr. Marshall: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was going as wide as some other speakers who have taken part in the debate and I am sorry that I have followed their transgressions.

I wish to make one further comment with regard to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). The hon. Gentleman suggested that he would advise his constituents to throw into the wastepaper basket the forms concerning the community charge. That is a disgraceful piece of advice. How many of us would advise a constituent, given a form by the Inland Revenue, to tear it up?

Mr. Douglas: I stand by that advice, because the form asks my constituents to disclose elements of their private lives about which no Government or hon. Members should ask. That information should not be put into the public domain in this form. The income tax form is highly confidential and the information given in it is circumscribed by a great deal of custom law and statute law. That is not the case with regard to the community charge. We are asked to put into the public domain highly sensitive material. The difference between the income tax law and this piece of legislation is that, in this case, one individual in a household is asked to disclose information for everyone else in the household. That is not the case in income tax law. Indeed, the Chancellor took the——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman's intervention is very long.

Mr. Marshall: I was interested to note that the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West went on to talk about income tax law and said that the head of the household was not asked to divulge information about the rest of the household. That is still the case. It is only as a result of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor's Budget that there will be separate taxation of man and wife. I should like to thank the hon. Gentleman for giving me the chance to point out that a Conservative Chancellor has produced that change.

I want to point out to the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West what the consequence would be if his advice were carried out. What would happen in his borough if 10 per cent. of community charge payers tore up their forms and threw them into the wastepaper basket? The consequence would be very simple. The hon. Gentleman's borough council would be able to raise less money than it would otherwise be able to raise.

Mrs. Maria Fyfe (Glasgow, Maryhill): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. Would you not agree that it is outrageous that Conservative Members are voting on this legislation when they do not even know anything about the way in which Scottish local authorities are organised and have not tried to inform themselves about it? They are engaging in deliberate time-wasting and buffoonery, and the people of Scotland will note with bitter amusement that this was the best the Government could do to defend this legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member for Hendon, South has spoken at length. I am watching the clock.

Mr. Marshall: I am coming to the end of my speech. I have had one or two interruptions, which I did not ask for, but to which I was courteous enough to reply.

If the community charge payers of Dunfermline follow the advice of their Member of Parliament, their council will provide a lower level of service than it would otherwise provide.

If the community charge payers in Scotland listen to the advice of those in the Labour party who say, "Do not pay the community charge," the result will be redundancies in local government. I advise the Labour party to look at

[Mr. Marshall]

what happened in Liverpool where, as a result of eventual financial sanity, there were redundancies in local government. That will also happen in Scotland if people do not pay the community charge.

I ask the House to support the Government.

11.15 pm

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): Unlike the hon. Member for Hendon, South (Mr. Marshall) I should like to address my comments to the registration regulations.

I believe that the regulations present a major threat to civil liberties because they allow the registration officer and local authority poll tax canvassers to become snoopers. They will pry into people's private lives to keep the register correct and up to date. They will try to keep track of those entering and leaving the district to find out who is living where, when and for how long.

Date of birth has already been mentioned and I hope that the Minister will assure the House that it will not be included in that part of the register that is open to public scrutiny. I do not understand why that information has to be on the register and I hope that it will not be in the public domain; otherwise, unscrupulous people will be able to identify the very elderly or young, single women living alone. The Minister should make clear exactly what information will be placed in the public domain, what is private and what information is eligible to be sold.

The registration officers will run into enormous problems when issuing inquiry forms to so-called responsible persons. In the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, there is no obligation on the registration officer to designate a responsible person. In many shared flats and houses, such a responsibility may impose a burden on an individual who may not be in a position to fulfil the obligations. How will such a person be designated when husbands and wives are joint owners of houses?

I hate to think what will happen in student flats and houses. Often students are arbitrarily thrown together in university accommodation — they are not necessarily friends. I am aware of the trouble that can arise when they argue about paying the gas and electricity bills. They end up not talking to each other, so heaven knows what will happen when they have to pay the poll tax. The concept of responsible persons goes against the spirit of the Bill, which is about everyone being responsible for him or herself.

The restriction on social work and employment files is not enough. The gathering of information restrictions should also cover that information that local authorities hold on, for example, child care or mental health files. The regulations should specify that local authorities should not furnish any personal information about an individual without their permission. The implication of regulation of 11(a) is that, as soon as an individual approaches a social work department, their name and address will be passedon to the registration officer.

I am glad that the Government have recognised that certain political refugees and others at risk from violence — also, presumably, MI5 "safe houses" — may make representations to be removed from the public register. Surely there should be a question on the registration form to alert the registration officer to the need to keep the name secret to avoid bureaucratic bungling and so on. If the registration officer holds a list, of people who are removed from the public list, will all the registration officers be required to be positively vetted? I hope that the Minister will answer that question.

I know that you want us to be brief, Madam Deputy Speaker so I will bring my remarks to an end. The regulations show a complete lack of concern for the rights of individuals, for the poor and for the most vulnerable in our society. It is a centralising document which paves the way to the 1984 state. The least able to pay will be most affected by the costs of the poll tax and they will be threatened by its implementation. The poll tax attacks the poor and the weak. It also attacks the Church in Scotland and the crofting community.

In the final analysis the regulations once again point the finger at an unfair, regressive tax because that tax is not based on the ability to pay. It is a poll tax and in Scotland it is known as a Tory tax. The only good thing about it is that in the end the Conservative Government will reap what they sow.

11.20 pm

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): I was Chairman of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments which produced the 18th report. I should explain that only a very small proportion of the 2,000 statutory instruments that we examine every year are reported. We are advised by the Counsel to Mr. Speaker, so the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments receives entirely independent and objective advice.

As the Committee was established to safeguard and warn the House when abuses are being committed by a Minister, there is, equally, great responsibility on a Secretary of State not to use the powers by putting through legislation that is beyond the powers which the primary legislation has given him. We claim in the 18th report— there was a Conservative majority of both Houses on the Committee — that there is a strong case that the regulations that we are discussing tonight are beyond the powers that this House gave to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

I want to refer to another relatively minor matter because several hon. Members have raised it tonight. Reference has been made to the forms that are to be issued as if that was a trivial matter. Under schedule 4, the regulations sub-delegate powers to the registration officer and grant him or her virtually unfettered powers to ask any questions that he or she wants. The Scottish Office refers to section 12(2)(b) and states that the questions will be qualified by that section. However, the 18th report of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments refutes that. Therefore, in a very important area, there is clear sub-delegation to a civil servant effectively to make the law. I do not believe that the House approved that idea when it approved the original legislation.

My next and most important point in this respect is that the regulations suggest that the registration officer can ask for documents. That is not a minor or trivial matter. Reference has been made to dates of birth. Will the registration officer ask for birth certificates? From the regulations, it appears that he has the right to do that. However, as the 18th report states, there is no evidence in the primary legislation and no sign in the regulations that the registration officer has any power to ask for those documents. If he receives the documents under the terms of the primary legislation, the documents are transferred

to this ownership because the primary legislation refers to giving information. In addition to the other burdens that this snoopers' charter places on the citizen, the citizen may find himself burdened with the cost of replacing birth certificates, deeds, leases and so on.

These are not trivial matters. The regulations go to the root of the poll tax. It is said that they provide a civil penalty, but they virtually impose criminal sanctions. The Secretary of State has a responsibility to make the regulations clear beyond peradventure, and he has failed to discharge it. It is not good enough for the right hon. and learned Gentleman to talk about going to court. Why should tenants' organisations and ordinary citizens be forced to go down that expensive road when we in Parliament have a duty and an obligation—especially the Secretary of State—to make legislation as clear as it is humanly possible to achieve? The Secretary of State has failed on this occasion, and the Committee drew attention to his failure. The right hon. and learned Gentleman has failed the House and he has failed the people.

11.26 pm

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): I shall advance five reasons why the people of Scotland are entitled to send back any form that they receive from the registration officer under the regulations.

First, regulation 12 makes it clear that the registration officer will hold on magnetic tape a wide range of information on members of the public such as we have not known in Britain hitherto. In addition to our ID tag numbers, the information will include the type of charge that is payable, which will identify who is in the property, joint and several liability, students who are in residence, and those who are physically handicapped. Under regulation 16, this information is for sale. Someone with enough money could buy a complete picture of any household in Scotland. For that reason I believe that the people of Scotland are entitled to send back the form to stop snoopers and those who wish to buy information.

Secondly, under regulation 15, although the register is open for public viewing, some concession has been made towards those who operate refuges for battered women, but only if they are managed by a voluntary organisation. What is the position of premises that are managed by a council or an association? The women will be exposed to anyone who wants to examine the register. I believe that they will be entitled to return the form.

Thirdly, schedule 2 sets out the procedure where the register is to be amended. One of the circumstances when an amendment is necessary is when a person dies. Under section 15 of the Act, it will be necessary for the registration officer to send a form to a dead person. That is inhumane and insensitive, but that is what the regulations provide. Those who have been recently bereaved will be receiving a form from the registrar. The Government should pay some attention to that.

Schedule 3 sets out the regulations that provide for the forms that will fall through the letter boxes of houses in Scotland during the next week or so. They are incomprehensible. For many, the dense type will be unreadable. Those reasons are sufficient in themselves to entitle everyone who receives a form to return it. If an individual does not understand what is required of him or her, surely the Minister will accept that he is entitled to return the form and ask for an explanation.

The definition of a "responsible person" is in section 17(6) of the Act. The subsection states that if

"the premises are not occupied by the owner or by a tenant, the owner"

or any tenant who has a lease of the premises

"of 12 months or more"

is the "responsible person". The subsection provides that any other person may be designated to be the "responsible person". If that is done, the designated person must be notified of the designation and that person has the right of appeal. There is right of appeal to the sheriff.

How is an ordinary member of the public supposed to understand that? How many people in the United Kingdom, let alone Scotland, have a handy companion volume of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act and the accompanying regulations so that they can interpret that which is required of them?

I hope that when the Minister replies he will agree with me—I hope that he will listen just for once—that if someone does not understand the form he will be entitled to return it without question. Does he agree with me that the regulations are drawn in such a disgraceful manner that members of the public are entitled to return the forms without further question?

Schedule 4 is quite draconian. It purports to allow a registration officer to send out a form to anyone in Scotland and ask whatever he wants. That is a gross infringement of civil liberties, and quite unacceptable. It represents the fifth reason why those who receive such a form should be entitled to send it back, and I believe that they would have the support of the vast majority of people in Scotland.

This evening's debate, truncated as it is, represents the tragedy of Scotland. The only voices in favour of the regulations have been those of people who are completely uninterested in what goes on there. They will be interested in the next 12 months: they will be interested when the regulations apply to them

The regulations impose powers unheard of in this country—powers that, if they had been imposed during the occupation of the continent during the war years, would have been opposed. People in Scotland must be quite clear about this: if they disagree with the poll tax, or do not understand what is required of them, they must send the forms back without question. If they do so, they will have universal support.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Scottish National party is the only Scottish political party that has not been allowed to make a contribution to tonight's debate, but it certainly wishes to make its contribution. It is disgraceful that long-winded interventions by hon. Members from English constituencies have prevented Scottish Members from making their contributions. May we seek the protection of the Chair to prevent this from happening on future occasions?

Madam Deputy Speaker I understand the hon. Gentleman's point. Unfortunately, the debate has been a short one. The length of speeches and interventions is not in the hands of the Chair. I regret that it has not been possible tonight to call a number of hon. Members who I know wished to comment.

11.31 pm

The Minister of State, Scottish Office (Mr. Ian Lang): The hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)

[Mr. Ian Lang]

and his hon. Friends have tried hard to imply how deeply unpopular is the community charge in Scotland and how much concern there is about it. When my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State met the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities last Friday, the issue did not arise once in over half an hour of questioning. That, I think, is a measure of the concern in COSLA. I prefer the approach of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who, in a realistic and perceptive speech, recognised the merits of the community charge and the greater accountability that it will bring.

The hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham), in a telling intervention, asked what was the point of all the petitions that he and his hon. Friends have been submitting. As my hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Devlin) pointed out, they could be a useful source of names and addresses for the community charge registration officer.

The hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Mr. Darling) and others have talked about the Labour party's secret weapon of gumming up the works of the community charge registration officer by returning forms to him with real or bogus queries. The concept of responsible persons is not so very complex or difficult. It may help the Opposition if I say a word about the identification of responsible persons, which has been the subject of much ill-informed and mischievous comment.

In the vast majority of cases, it will be entirely clear who is the responsible person. He or she is the owner-occupier, or tenant-occupier, of the premises—usually the present rateable occupier or, as it used to be, the head of the household.

Mr. Graham: Is the Minister saying that from now on the names and addresses on petitions will be used for purposes of gathering the poll tax?

Mr. Lang: That is broadly what I suggested.

In the vast majority of cases — over 80 per cent., according to some community charge registration officers —it will be quite clear who is the responsible person; it will not be a matter for decision. Owner-occupiers and tenant-occupiers are clearly identified in the Act as responsible persons, and there is no need for any appeal mechanism. In the limited number of cases in which the responsible person is not automatically identified, the provision exists for agreeing with the community charge registration officer, or, if necessary, the provision for designation by him.

Mr. Dewar: The Minister used a strange phrase. He said that in many cases there should be no right of appeal. There is a right of appeal. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will answer the specific question which I asked him: when does that occur? Does it occur after the issue of the form as it appears in schedule 3, or at some later stage?

Mr. Lang: I think that the hon. Gentleman misheard me. I said that there is no need for any appeal mechanism. In many cases—*[Interruption.]*—it is automatic. There is provision for an appeal, but there is no need for it in that situation. On the hon. Gentleman's specific question as to when the time scale for appeal under section 17(9) against designation becomes effective, the answer is, at designation.

Mr. Dewar: It does not help to say, "at designation." I shall rephrase the question: does the arrival in someone's house of the form which is set out in schedule 3 amount to designation, and does the right of appeal—if there is a wish to exercise it—arise at that point?

Mr. Lang: The right of appeal arises within a period of 28 days from the time when the designation is made by the community charge registration officer, when the form is issued by him, either by post or by hand.

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) asked about information on exemptions being in the public domain. The hon. Gentleman's comments about prisoners and the severely mentally handicapped were equally applicable to the electoral register. The concept is similar to the compilation of the census and the completion of income tax forms. Information about exempted people will not appear either in the full register or in the parts of the register available to the public.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Lang: I must press on. I am sorry, but there are a great many points to answer.

Hon. Members: Give way.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister has said that he will not give way.

Mr. Lang: The community charge register will record each individual's date of birth so that there can be no doubt about people's identity when there are several names for one address. For the internal purposes of a local authority, the system may generate reference numbers——

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister has made it clear that he is not giving way.

Mr. Lang: For the internal purposes of a local authority, the system may generate reference numbers for each individual, but they will not be numbers that a person is required to memorise or to quote when he moves from one authority's area to another; nor will identity cards be issued. I am happy to reassure the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) that the dates of birth will not be on the public part of the register. Only the names and addresses and the community charge multiplier, except for women's refuges, will be on the public part. We are considering whether any further restrictions should be placed on the public information.

Hon. Members have referred to the place of the electoral register in respect of the community charge register. In contrast to some prophecies of doom, the actual drop in the number of names on the electoral register has been very small—less than 1 per cent. on the 1987 register. A number of factors could account for that, including scaremongering by the Labour party about the community charge system. As yet, it is too early to say what part of the reduction might be attributed to any of those factors.

The electoral register is a public document, available to anyone for any purpose. It will, of course, be available to the community charge registration officer when he makes up the community charge register, but it will not be a primary source of information. The 1988 register will be out of date anyway by the time the community charge register is made up.

Mr. Dewar *rose*——

Mr. Lang: I shall not give way. I have only five minutes left.

The hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) said that no Opposition Member had told people that the community charge register would affect their right to vote. I have a leaflet issued by the "Stop It" poll tax campaign, of which I understand the hon. Gentleman is chairman, which says:

"The only way to avoid paying is to give up your right to vote!"

Mr. Wilson: I would certainly be interested to look at that leaflet. *[Interruption.]* The Minister, deliberately or accidentally, has misled the House. The words at the top of that leaflet and, I suspect, the address at the bottom of it have nothing to do with the "Stop It" campaign. An important point was lost in his flow of gobbledegook— *[Interruption.]* As I understand it, the Minister said that dates of birth were to be used in the compilation of a number. Will he explain why that is the case when the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment said quite specifically that no such system is needed for the legislation for England and Wales? Who is misleading the House?

Mr. Lang: It is really rather touching to see how keen Scottish Labour Members are that Scottish legislation should be brought into line with English legislation. It so happens that the two Acts differ in that respect.

I shall be happy to show the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North the document from which he is so anxious to depart. It bears the logo of the "Stop It" poll tax campaign.

I have another document which states:

"There is a country where the right to vote was won after years of long and bitter struggle. The present Government wants to change that right."

That is totally and blatantly untrue. That document is published by the Labour party. I invite the hon. Gentleman to stand up and disown the document.

Mr. Dewar: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. If he looks at the documents produced by the Labour party in Scotland, he will find that they are entirely accurate on all those points.

Is the Minister genuinely holding to his point about there being no reliance on the electoral roll? I have a guidance note for staff, issued by the Strathclyde regional council, which, when referring to the inquiry form that is to be sent out under schedule 3, says:

"In the first issue in the spring and early summer of 1988 the names of householders and persons believed to be resident at the premises will be extracted from the electoral register and pre-printed on the forms."

It is quite clear that the electoral register will be used for that purpose.

Mr. Lang: I knew that I should not have given way to the hon. Gentleman. I gave him the opportunity to disown this document, which says:

"The present Government wants to change that right"— referring to the right to vote. The hon. Gentleman has not taken the opportunity to withdraw that.

The way in which the Opposition parties are flirting with lawlessness over the introduction of the community charge represents the height of irresponsibility.

Mr. Allen Adams (Paisley, North) *rose*——

It being one and a half hours after the motion was entered upon, MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to the order [25 March].*

The House divided: Ayes 211, Noes 301.

Division No. 236] **[11.43 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Fyfe, Maria
Galbraith, Sam
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Johnston, Sir Russell
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*

Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mowlam, Marjorie
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Clare
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thompson, Jack *(Wansbeck)*
Turner, Dennis
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Adam Ingram and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, Mr
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evans, David *(Welwyn Hatf'd)*
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hamilton, Hon Archie *(Epsom)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Tony
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Maude, Hon Francis
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Moynihan, Hon Colin
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patnick, Irvine
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*

Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Sir Dudley *(Warwick)*
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

Question accordingly negatived.

Mr. Wilson: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. During the Division, the Minister of State was good enough to show me the leaflet that he mentioned towards the end of his speech. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will now want to inform the House that the leaflet is clearly marked as being published by the *Morning Star* youth campaign. I am sure that he will regard it as a point of honour, as well as a point of order, to make it clear that he sought to mislead the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No breach of order of the House has been committed and we cannot go back on the debate. We must now move on.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I accept your ruling, but if it is not a matter for the Chair, I think that the House will agree that it is a matter for the conventions, practice and honour of the House that it becomes a problem and a task for the Minister. If it is not your duty, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is certainly the hon. Gentleman's duty and responsibility. Will you give him a moment to make the necessary apology?

Madam Deputy Speaker: We cannot go back on the debate, unless the Minister wants to make a personal statement.

Mr. Lang: The House will recall that at Scottish Question Time last week, I quoted from the leaflet. I said that it bore the logos of the "Stop It" campaign and the *Morning Star*. The hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) had an opportunity to check the matter and repudiate the leaflet if he wished. Tonight he seeks to take the view that his organisation's name has been taken in vain. If he wishes to repudiate the *Morning Star* and attribute all the rubbish on the leaflet to it, I shall be happy to hear that from him.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. There is no way that I shall reopen the debate. We now have a petition.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. May I appeal to my colleagues not to expect the Minister to rise above the level to which he is accustomed? We are asking far too much of the Minister and should not——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. These points of order are now becoming an abuse of the House. The point has properly been made. Mr. Peter Shore. Petition.

Mr. Buchan: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Is it a fresh point of order?

Mr. Buchan: I believe that it is. We have had a statement, properly, from the Minister. Some of us believe that that statement is quite untrue in intention——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. That is not a matter to be debated now. No breach of——

Mr. Buchan *rose*——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will resume his seat.

No breach of order of the House has been committed. I have allowed points of order, which are bogus. We cannot resume a debate that has finished.

PETITION

Health Services (Tower Hamlets)

11·59 pm

Mr. Peter Shore (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I beg leave to present a petition on behalf of the staff, students and clients of Tower Hamlets and surrounding health districts. The petition draws attention to the increasing difficulty in providing adequate and timely health care to the users of the London hospital and the other health services in Tower Hamlets.

The petitioners pray that this honourable House supports the maintenance and provision for patient care in England and Wales, at least at the level which existed in early 1981, bearing in mind the need to provide adequate central support for health care in under-privileged districts such as Tower Hamlets and to provide career structures and options adequate to attract essential nursing and paramedical staff and ensue that they remain in the service without detriment to other aspects of patient care services until such time as any current review on National Health Service funding has been completed and until any new proposals for National Health Service provision has been evaluated, shown to be practical, cost-effective and acceptable to the electorate.

Among the 843 signatories are 66 National Health Service consultants, 103 junior doctors and general practitioners, 105 medical and dental students, 84 trained nurses, 15 midwives, 56 student nurses, 39 social workers, 73 patients, 10 porters, six telephonists and 164 other hospital staff.

I fully support this petition and hope that the House will respond to its demands.

To lie upon the Table.

Council House Sales (Sutton)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

12.1 am

Sir Neil Macfarlane (Sutton and Cheam): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment for attending to answer this debate. You, Madam Deputy Speaker, will be aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman), with the full approval of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary, wishes to catch your eye at the end of my remarks.

The right to buy has been one of the most significant social advances that we have seen for generations, and millions of people have availed themselves of this enormous benefit. Indeed, many more still wish to do so. I am concerned that perhaps bureaucratic procedures may be thwarting many of my constituents in Sutton, Cheam and Worcester Park from achieving their undisputed right —a chance to purchase their property.

I have introduced this subject after monitoring closely the growing number of people who have either been to see me at my fortnightly advice bureau or who have written to me at the House over a period of the better part of two years. It would be helpful if my hon. Friend the Minister could encourage dialogue between her officials and the officials of the London borough of Sutton, through the chief executive, to try to identify the perception of both sets of officials of some of the problems. I cannot make any allegations because I do not know all the facts. What I do know is that, undoubtedly, there is mounting frustration among my constituents. I hope that the debate will enable us over the next few months to ascertain exactly what those facts are because they are very urgent and very important.

I shall quote one letter from my constituents, Mr. and Mrs. Willis, to whom I spoke yesterday. They wrote to me on 3 November 1987 and said:

"Further to correspondence in July and August this year, I thought I would let you know that we are now into November and still unable to get our price for our maisonette from the London Borough of Sutton.

I know someone who is also experiencing the same treatment, has in fact brought this matter to the attention of Margaret Thatcher."

Of course, that is a considerable step to take. The letter continues:

"They are now blaming the hurricane and damage in the Borough for holding up our price. However many more excuses are we to put up with before we get an answer?

I realise you are getting the same outcome to the question as we are but perhaps you can check with Mrs. Thatcher about what is happening to our so called 'Right to Buy.'"

Obviously, I wrote, as any hon. Member would have, to the local authority on 5 November, and I shall quote some parts of its reply of 3 December, which I shall pass on to the Minister. The legislative changes which may, in some ways, have added to the burdens of local officials are always uppermost in the minds of many people and need clarification.

On 3 December, the director of housing in Sutton wrote to me as follows:

"Mr. and Mrs. Willis' right to buy was confirmed on 28 August 1986 and the appropriate work regarding an estimated service charge undertaken in accordance with the practices at that time. Unfortunately before it was possible to provide a priced offer in accordance with the Housing Act

1985, Section 125, the Housing & Planning Act 1986 became effective which introduced new legislation relating to service charges.

The legislation requires that all offers to sell leasehold properties made after 7 January 1987 shall contain a quotation relating to service charges to be levied for the five years following the sale, the major elements of which will then be binding upon the Council. Consequently, in the event of an under-estimate it will not be possible to recover a full contribution from a leaseholder with the shortfall being met by the Housing Revenue Account, ultimately to fall upon those people who remain tenants. Conversely, any over-estimate would not only tend to depress the value of the property but could also dissuade a purchaser from proceeding . . . Unfortunately, the technical manpower existing within the Housing Division could not be released from other duties and accordingly the appointment of a Leasehold Surveyor was sought. It was not possible immediately to attract an applicant of a suitable calibre and the post was not filled until 10 August 1987. At that time the Leasehold Surveyor started work on the surveys but was, of course, faced with a substantial back-log."

This seems to show that there has been difficulty in understanding the legislation. Sutton council appears to downgrade the sale of houses as a matter of general policy and overall philosophy. The case of Mr. and Mrs. Willis reflects the problem facing many others. I spoke to Mrs. Willis yesterday. She has still not had a price quoted.

Mr. K. R. Brand came to see me on 14 March. By June, he will have been kept waiting for nearly two years. A price has not been agreed, and he makes the point that it would surely be fair to take into account the number of years that a prospective purchaser has had to wait, when the council has been dilatory, as part of the five-year period during which a new purchaser is prohibited from selling on the property.

Mr. Parnell applied on 3 March 1987. He has had no valuation and no survey. He is 53 and makes the point that every month of delay is a disadvantage at that age.

There are dozens and dozens of similar cases on my constituency files, and I am sure it is the same on the other side of the borough. Many constituents have written to me registering their frustration. On 10 June 1987 I wrote to the chief executive, referring to the delays. He replied on 27 July:

"Any delay in the sales of Council houses to tenants is regretted, but is due to staff shortages in the Valuation and Legal Department. There is sufficient of a shortage of legal staff in the South East area that the Council is having difficulty in both recruiting and retaining staff, qualified and unqualified. We are seeking solutions to the problem and I am optimistic that recruitment will improve.

Although there have been some delays on sales of Council houses, there have been substantial delays in connection with the sale of Council flats, due to the Council's inability to obtain a surveyor to do the necessary structural survey. Recently, the Council decided to employ a private firm to do the necessary work and I anticipate that the backlog of sales of flats and maisonettes will be cleared over the next 3-5 months."

That letter was written in July 1987. It appears from those statistics that the situation is getting worse. Allowing for the problems facing the council over the sale of leasehold properties, there are still delays for those without that complication. I am told that Sutton has bid for increased staffing for the year 1988-89, with 98 full-time and 17 part-time staff being recruited. I am told that that has a price tag of about £1·3 million. Time and again the impression given to my constituents is that no amount of recruitment has helped them with their right to buy, thus enabling them to become part of the property-owning democracy.

I think that even more staff will be taken on by the council to assist in the empire-building that is perhaps going on in some of the committees in the borough. Many residents have said to me that Sutton has adopted a slow-it-down approach to the right to buy. Only time will tell whether that is the case, but I and many others wonder whether the abortive policy to abolish grammar schools absorbed and exhausted the energy resources and the time of the officials in the 18 months between 1986 and 1987. Of course, abolition of the grammar schools remains a reality for my constituents while the council is in office. It may well be that potential purchasers were held up while the attention of the council was diverted to other priorities. We must look at that possibility.

I do not say that Sutton is the worst council in the country about the right to buy, because at the moment we do not know the facts. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will commence a dialogue with the council. Let us have a look at how the Sutton officials see the working of the legislation and at whether Sutton can use the private sector to speed the system, because surveying, valuation and conveyancing are critical. I am anxious to help my constituents and I am certain that my hon. Friend is anxious to implement Government policy as widely as possible.

On 7 March I wrote to the chief executive of the council about the delays and he was good enough to reply on 25 March in a letter that arrived this afternoon. I shall make certain that my hon. Friend and her officials see that letter because it is a lengthy and important document. There are a great many observations on the difficulties surrounding leasehold properties. I am certain that the chief executive will be happy for me to pass on the letter as a means of getting things moving for many of my people who are angry and frustrated.

I hope that as a result of this debate we can set in train a detailed analysis by the Department of the Environment and the London borough of Sutton to try to determine precisely why these delays have been growing over the past 18 months. At the moment they show little sign of diminishing and perhaps we can try to find some system whereby we can speed the plough. I am told that several hundred people in both parliamentary constituencies in the borough have been frustrated and that their anger is mounting as each day adds a new dimension of anxiety and frustration to their lives.

12.13 am

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): I am grateful to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, for calling me in this important Adjournment debate. I support the excellent speech by my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam (Sir N. Macfarlane). He is right to express concern on behalf of his constituents and I feel justified in taking a few minutes to do the same on behalf of my constituents.

As my hon. Friend said, the policy of council house and flat sales has been one of the great success stories of the Government under the Housing Act 1980. I recall that it was working very satisfactorily for some years in Sutton while the Conservatives were in control of that local authority. Since May 1986, when the alliance managed to gain control of the council, progress seems to have slowed, and that is not satisfactory for my constituents.

Council officials say that there has been a problem in calculating the service charges that would have to be paid

[Mr. Nigel Forman]

by tenants when they become owners. Equally, it is said that there are difficulties in recruiting enough trained surveyors to expedite valuation and other related work. However, many of my constituents, who have been frustrated, and had their patience sorely tried, suspect that the local authority may have been deliberately dragging its feet because of some kind of nod and wink from its new political masters in the alliance party. This serious charge needs to be refuted convincingly. The best way for the council to do that would be to demonstrate in practical terms to my constituents and those of my hon. Friend that it is able to speed things up, and to begin that process soon.

I can give the House three brief examples. Two of my constituents who came to see me recently had been waiting since July 1987 to buy their flat, and so far, they had not even had the survey done. Another couple, who are not in the first flush of their youth, came to see me about their right to buy, for which they had applied in April of last year. They were still waiting in July of last year, but I understand from a recent phone call to my office that they will at last be able to discuss a firm offer this week, in March this year. Another constituent and her handicapped son have been waiting since February. That sounds better, but in their case, the story from the council officials was that the officials must await the consent of the Secretary of State under the terms of the Housing Act 1985 and the Housing and Planning Act 1986 before they can meet my constituents' wishes.

The point made by my hon. Friend, which I endorse, is that if these are genuine technical reasons for delays, the officials in the Department of the Environment and in the London borough of Sutton should get together urgently and in a constructive spirit, to sort out ways to overcome these difficulties. On the other hand, if, as I suspect and fear, there are some political reasons for this situation and the foot-dragging, that is inexcusable, and the practice must be brought to an end as soon as possible.

My hon. Friend has already made it clear that the desire for home ownership, whether of a house, a flat or a maisonette, is a laudable one, which has been greatly assisted by the legislation introduced by the Government. Such legislation is the law of the land, with the full force of Parliament and the House. Parliament's will should be respected in this as in all matters, and I urge my hon. Friend the Minister, tonight and subsequently, to use all her authority in the Department to see that Parliament's will is carried out.

12.17 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mrs. Marion Roe): I am grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for Sutton and Cheam (Sir N. Macfarlane) and for Carshalton and Wallington (Mr. Forman) for introducing this debate on so important a topic.

The right of tenants of local authorities and other public sector bodies to buy the homes they live in has, of course, long been a vital element of our housing policy. This has been reaffirmed three times at the polls. There are now very few of any political persuasion who disagree with us.

Since 1979, when we were voted into office, no fewer than 1·1 million council, new town and housing association houses and flats have been sold in Great Britain. Nearly three quarters of these have been sold under the right-to-buy legislation which we introduced. Right-to-buy sales run at around 100,000 a year—when one comes to think of it, that is a lot of houses—half as many again as all the houses in my hon. Friend's borough. In some years, even more have been sold.

Of course, the discounts that are payable have helped. Without them many people could not afford to buy their homes. These start at 32 per cent. for a house and increase by 1 per cent. a year to a maximum of 60 per cent. where the buyer has been a public sector tenant for 30 years or longer. For flats, the discount starts at 44 per cent. and increases by 2 per cent. a year to a maximum of 70 per cent. for buyers who have been public sector tenants for 15 years or longer. These are very generous discounts. They are justified by their results and on account of the rent that the tenants will have paid over the years and that will have been set against the loan charges for building the house or flat.

Most people, indeed the vast majority, would opt for home ownership if given the chance. Two thirds of homes in England are now owner-occupied—double the figure in the 1950s—which puts us almost at the top of the league among comparable countries.

Almost as important is the relative freedom of owner-occupiers to sell their home when they want to, move away and buy another one. That is important because it increases personal choice — which is a good enough reason in itself—and also because it is a more efficient way of matching supply with demand than any allocation policy ever can be.

Despite the enormous success of the right to buy in widening home ownership, there are some who would like to become home owners, but who are not interested in buying their current home—perhaps because they have a growing family in a flat and would prefer to be in a house —but need a little help to be able to buy on the open market. That flat could, in areas with acute homelessness problems, mean that another family can be kept out of bed-and-breakfast accommodation. My right hon. Friend has therefore announced that we are to bring forward powers to enable local authorities, with the Secretary of State's consent, to offer incentive payments to tenants who are willing to give up their tenancy to buy in the private sector, so freeing vacancies for those whose circumstances are such that they need rented accommodation.

Sale of council housing stock also benefits councils in two ways. It relieves them of the burden of management and maintenance, which can be very expensive. That saves money and allows housing departments to concentrate on those tasks where their skill and knowledge are at a premium. It also unlocks capital resources that enable councils to provide for those for whom purchase is not a realistic option; and it enables them to deal with the arrears of maintenance and refurbishment of their existing housing stock. We all know what a tremendous job this is. Receipts from sales since 1979 already total more than £4·5 billion. That augments the amounts that councils borrow to finance their capital programmes and allows them to undertake work that would not otherwise be possible.

I therefore take a very serious view when I am told that some authorities are not as quick as they might be in processing right-to-buy applications from tenants. That right is given to them by Parliament and delay is tantamount to denying it. There are a few authorities—only 11 of them—whose performance is monitored by

the Department in monthly progress reports. There are others with which I have had meetings to find out the cause of the delay and to try to overcome it. More recently, we have written to all the non-monitored London boroughs, including Sutton, for information on the state of their dealing with right-to-buy applications. As a last resort, my right hon. Friend can intervene and take over sales, but that power would naturally be used only as a last resort.

The law sets time limits for certain parts of the sale procedure. The landlord must normally respond to a tenant's claim to exercise the right to buy within four weeks, confirming or denying that the tenant is entitled to buy. If the tenant does have the right to buy, the next step is for the landlord to serve notice giving the purchase price, and estimates of any service charges payable. This further notice must be served within eight weeks if the sale is freehold and 12 weeks if it is a leasehold sale. If the property is a flat rather than a House, the sale will, of course, be on a long lease. When the landlord has served notice of the purchase price, the tenant may decide against buying. If, however, the tenant decides to go ahead it is necessary to sort out the legal details. There is no statutory timetable for that process, but when all the details have been settled the landlord is under a duty to complete the sale.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam suggested that, in cases where the landlord has held up a sale under the right to buy, there ought to be a corresponding reduction in the period during which the purchaser is liable to repay discount. As the House will know, a tenant who exercises the right to buy must undertake to pay back discount if the house or flat is disposed of within three years. My hon. Friend's proposal, as I understand it, is, that if the landlord had held up the application for, say, six months, the tenant would be free to sell two and a half years after buying the property without paying back any discount.

That is an interesting idea, which I would like to think about further. We already propose a different change in the law to enable tenants to take more effective action if their application gets stuck. Amendments to the Housing Bill are being prepared for that purpose. The tenant will first have to serve notice on the landlord calling on it to proceed with the next stage in the process within a certain time. The tenant must allow at least a month. The landlord may, of course, deny that it is holding up progress, or it may simply take whatever action is needed. Otherwise, however, the tenant may serve a further notice.

The effect of this will be that the landlord has to treat the rent paid by the tenant from the date as an advance payment toward the purchase price of the house. Once the landlord has taken the next step in the process, the rent paid from that time on will go back to being treated in the usual way; but if there is further delay the tenant may repeat the process. The effect will be that, when the sale is eventually completed, the sale price will be reduced by an amount equal to the rent paid during any period when the application was held up. The tenant will thus be compensated by having that rent converted, in effect, into mortgage repayments.

I understand that some authorities face more problems than others. In some areas, especially in London, it is not easy to recruit staff of the right qualification and calibre —especially people such as lawyers, surveyors and valuers whose skills are in great demand. Sometimes it is possible to buy those services from the private sector and I urge Sutton council to give that very serious consideration. That may not be the only answer, however, and I would also urge the council to ensure that it is making the most effective use of existing resources and giving this important work the high priority it deserves.

Specialist advice is needed particularly for estimates of service charges, which can be a major worry for tenants buying flats. Although those requirements add to the council's work in processing applications, it is right that purchasers should have those safeguards. Making the position clear at the outset also reduces the risk of disputes in the future.

Authorities could be tempted to set charges high to avoid any risk of loss that would have to be borne by the housing revenue account, and also to reduce the amount of detailed professional work. That could mean that charges are so high as to put off anyone buying—which is the last thing we want. As we know from experience of the private sector, service charges for flats can be high anyway. There is a statutory requirement to assume, in valuing the flat, that the estimated service charges will be paid in full. High estimates will thus reduce the price.

Sutton's performance is not monitored and it is not one of the authorities I asked to come and see me. I am therefore all the more concerned to hear that the delays are so serious, both in the length of time and in the number of people affected. Obviously hon. Members will know more of what goes on in their constituencies than we in the Department can hope to know.

Sir Neil MacFarlane: The Minister will be aware that many years ago we used to publish a list of those authorities that were poor performers in the processing of planning applications. I believe that my hon. Friend now has responsibility for that. Does she believe that the time is now ripe for a similar performance status to be applied to this problem?

Mrs. Roe: I shall certainly bear that in mind. As my hon. Friend has said, we rate the performance of authorities with regard to planning applications. I am concerned by what my hon. Friends have said, and I would be happy if they could give me more information.

The council's problem, we understand, is one of staff needed to calculate service charges. As my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam has said, a substantial backlog had built up by the time a new leasehold surveyor had been appointed and started work. We share the council's hopes that that work will soon be brought up to date. We do not know what other types of staff have been recruited by the council but naturally I should regret their being put on to other work while the arrears in right-to-buy work persist. My officials are ready to meet the council to discuss problems if that would be helpful.

I am grateful to my hon. Friends for initiating this interesting and useful debate. I shall consider seriously the points that they have raised and I look forward to receiving the documentation to which my hon. Friend the Member for Sutton and Cheam referred.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Twelve o'clock.

House of Commons

Tuesday 29 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

BRITISH RAILWAYS ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
Considered; to be read the Third time.

Oral Answers to Questions

EMPLOYMENT

Schools-Employers (Compacts)

1. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has had from groups of local employers and schools who wish to develop compacts; and if he will make a statement.

The Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Norman Fowler): The Government are making available £3 million a year for each of the next four years to encourage the development of 12 employer-school compacts within inner city areas in England. It is also proposed to support a further two compacts in Scotland and one in Wales. The Manpower Services Commission has received a number of inquiries from interested employers and schools.

Mrs. Hicks: Does my right hon. Friend agree that even more progress could be made on reducing unemployment on the one hand, and skill shortages on the other, if we were to develop compacts in my area? We are constantly faced with the conflicting problems of skill shortages and unemployment. Does my right hon. Friend agree that developing compacts as they are now envisaged would foster in our young people, before they leave school, a greater awareness, understanding and direct experience of industry, thereby, we hope, increasing the number of pupils who might consider taking up employment in industry after leaving school?

Mr. Fowler: I agree with what my hon. Friend has said. The whole concept of compacts is that employers should guarantee a job with training to young people, particularly those from inner city schools, who meet agreed standards of achievement and motivation. Obviously, we should like to develop the idea in the west midlands, among other areas. I know, of course, of my hon. Friend's interest in Wolverhampton.

Mr. Sheerman: The Secretary of State will know that the Opposition are very much in favour of the compact idea. Indeed, ILEA pioneered the idea in central London with great success, and many people — including the Government — are now modelling their plans on that success.

There are dangers, however. Targeting is very important. Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that targeting the youngsters who need the help provided by the compact — those less likely to obtain qualifications — is what the game is all about? Is he confident that employers will deliver on the compact, when they have signally failed to deliver on the general contribution to training over the past 10 years? The right hon. Gentleman knows — because he is carrying out a full investigation into training — that the voluntary principle has not worked.

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Gentleman must be fair about, for example, the London compact. It is certainly true that ILEA has been very much involved with that, but so has the London enterprise agency, which involves companies in the private sector.

That, I think, is the reply to the hon. Gentleman's question: companies have become involved with the London compact. The aim — I agree with the hon. Gentleman — is to give a good education and an opportunity in employment, particularly in difficult areas such as the inner cities. We have 12 pilot schemes, and I hope that we shall learn from them.

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: There can be little doubt of the benefit of industrial and commercial links with education, but does my right hon. Friend agree with our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science that the presence of city technology colleges in some of our cities will act as a stimulus and a catalyst for even more compact schemes throughout the country?

Mr. Fowler: I agree with my hon. Friend, and I believe that the closer together that we bring industry and schools, the better it will be for both sides.

Labour Statistics

2. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the most recent percentage unemployment figure in the EEC.

7. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current net rate of unemployment in the United Kingdom and the EEC, respectively; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: According to estimates compiled by the statistical office of the European Communities on a harmonised basis, the unemployment rate in the United Kingdom in January was 9·4 per cent. compared with 10·4 per cent. in the European Community as a whole. Over the past year our unemployment rate has fallen faster than in any other industrial country and is now lower than many of our European competitors, including France, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Dr. Thomas: Is not the optimism of the Secretary of State and his colleagues short-term? Has he had an opportunity to study the report published last week by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which looks specifically at the longer-term position and warns against the decline in the British economy and other European economies — *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may not like long-term analysis, but they have to face it. The report warns of the importance of pursuing expansionary fiscal policies to prevent European stagnation in the longer term.

Mr. Fowler: I do not think that any economic analyst would agree with the hon. Gentleman that there is the

slightest sign of decline in the British economy. Also, the Budget will considerably help employment. On the matter of trends, I have to point out that what has taken place in this country has not occurred over only two or three months. Unemployment has come down for 19 months in a row. One of the parts of the United Kingdom in which unemployment has come down most is Wales.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: Does my right hon. Friend agree that apart from Britain's splendid example, where we are pursuing excellent Thatcherite policies, there is a serious problem in the continent of Europe and the rest of the Common Market, particularly by comparison with EFTA? Does that not suggest that we should be reviewing the excessive expenditure, high protectionism and excessive bureaucracy of the European Economic Community compared with EFTA and other parts of the world?

Mr. Fowler: The latest EFTA figures show that unemployment has gone up slightly over the past month. I do not want to make too much of that. *[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) rightly says, it is below the Common Market average. What pleases me is that unemployment is going down in this country at a faster rate than in any other industrialised country. We should take all the opportunities offered by 1992 and the open market, which I think fits in with at least part of what my hon. Friend is urging.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: Do not the Europeans, to some extent, show us the way? Does the Secretary of State know that four firms have nearly disappeared in my constituency over the past two months and have been saved only by the good work of Enterprise West Cumbria? In part, the reason has been the failure of the British clearing bank system. Why can we not have the same level of support from our banks in the regions as is available in other parts of the European Community?

Mr. Fowler: Unemployment is coming down in all regions of the country. Some of the biggest falls have been in regions such as the west midlands, the north and the north-west where the problem has been greatest. If the hon. Gentleman is considering disincentives to employment, I hope that he will point out to his Front Bench the disincentive of what happened at Dundee and how that has destroyed jobs for literally hundreds of people there.

Mr. Forth: Is my right hon. Friend aware that unemployment in the United States is now about 5 per cent.? Does he draw any conclusions from that fact—such as that the European Community is overregulated and suffers from excessive bureaucracy and hardening of the economic arteries? Will my right hon. Friend persuade his colleagues in Europe to draw the obvious lessons from the United States?

Mr. Fowler: That figure shows some of the things that my hon. Friend has mentioned. Certainly we need to knock down the remaining barriers to trade. In addition, it shows how much further there is still to go and the opportunity that we have. There is no doubt that over the past two years our record inside the Common Market has been the best of all member countries.

Mr. Burns: Does my right hon. Friend agree that this country has one of the highest percentages of the population in work at 66 per cent.? Does he also agree that a far higher percentage of people are in work in this country than in the European Economic Community, which has an average of 57 per cent.? Does he also agree that the record fall in unemployment rates in the past two years is due to the Government's economic policies and initiatives by the Department of Employment?

Mr. Fowler: All those facts are correct. I would only add that I do not believe that we should be remotely complacent about our position. We want unemployment to fall even further. I believe that unemployment will continue to fall under the Government's economic policies.

Rev. Martin Smyth: While I welcome the fact that there has been a fall in the unemployment rate, has the Secretary of State consulted his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and perhaps even the Irish Government, about the possibility of introducing the fair employment legislation for Northern Ireland into Great Britain especially in view of the statements from the Commission for Racial Equality, which has said that there has been no appreciable improvement in the past 20 years in the prospects of the black community?

Mr. Fowler: I would not accept that analysis of the position. I believe that there has been a substantial improvement. Of course, I am continually in contact with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Meacher: Before the Secretary of State is dazed by his own complacency on this matter, will he acknowledge that on the counting basis used by all previous Governments, including Tory Governments, the number of unemployed today is still 3,329,000, nearly three times the level that the Government inherited? Is he aware that more than half the alleged cut in the past 18 months is due to the increased numbers of people on Government schemes plus the tighter availability-for-work rules? Is he also aware that the Government's recently published labour force survey shows that for every seven persons knocked off the unemployment registers, only one new job was created? Is it not clear that the Government's unemployment figures are scarcely worth the paper that they are written on?

Mr. Fowler: No, I do not accept a word of what the hon. Gentleman has said. Certainly the Government are not complacent. On the common basis of the European Community's statistical office, the figures show clearly that the unemployment rate in this country is below the European Common Market average. There is no question about that. [HON. MEMBERS: "The right hon. Gentleman's figures."] No, that is according to the EC's figures.

I am bound to say to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) that, after Dundee, we will not take lectures from the Opposition on reducing unemployment. The unions which the hon. Member for Oldham, West so discreditably supported at the weekend have destroyed jobs, not created them. That is the responsibility of the hon. Member and his friends.

3. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were out of work in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency at the most recent count; and what the figure was two years ago.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee): On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency was 2,700. The corresponding figure for February 1986 was 3,700.

Mr. Knox: Obviously there has been a significant reduction in unemployment in my constituency over the past two years. Does my hon. Friend agree that the unemployment rate in my constituency is still too high? When does he expect that the figure will be down to the 1973 level?

Mr. Lee: Of course I agree with my hon. Friend that the figures are too high. As he knows, we are not in the business of making specific forecasts, but we are slowly and steadily winning the unemployment battle. I place on record the contribution made by tourism to employment in my hon. Friend's constituency. Alton Towers will employ 1,400 people this year.

Training Schemes

4. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people in the London borough of Southwark are on Government training schemes; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Department of Employment (Mr. John Cope): Some 530 young people are currently taking part in YTS schemes based in Southwark. They are benefiting from a structured training programme which will enhance their future job prospects.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister realise that there is still a great skills mismatch between the training offered and the jobs available? Is he aware that in the docklands, where there is a great boom, most of the jobs—studies show that the figure is three quarters—go to labour recruited from outside the area rather than to people trained and recruited inside the area? Are he and his colleagues making progress, perhaps in the European Community where we were told discussions were taking place, to ensure that local youngsters can be trained locally and then employed locally, particularly in boom areas in Britain?

Mr. Cope: My answer referred to schemes based in Southwark, for which we have the figures. Obviously, some young people living in Southwark take part in schemes based elsewhere or in national schemes which have places in Southwark, and, for that matter, some young people in Southwark-based schemes no doubt come from outside the borough. The London labour market is not in sealed parcels, but we are doing our best to ensure that local people get local jobs.

Strikes

5. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many working days were lost through strikes in November 1987; and what was the comparable figure for November 1978.

Mr. Fowler: In November 1978 almost 2 million working days were lost through strikes. In November 1987 the figure was 103,000—the lowest November figure for 29 years.

Mr. Martin: Is not the fact that the November 1987 figure was one of the lowest for many years a tribute to the wisdom of the Government's industrial relations policies, which are recognised by some unions, though not by the Transport and General Workers Union, whose job-destroying attitudes apparently continue unabated?

Mr. Fowler: There is certainly no question but that the TGWU has found a new way of destroying jobs, which will be widely condemned throughout the country. I have no doubt that the Government's reform of industrial relations law has led to some of the improvements that we have seen in those figures.

Mr. Madden: How many days were lost in strike action in Dundee in the early part of this decade when, as a direct result of Government action, 3,000 Dundee jute workers were redundant——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question relates to strikes in November 1987.

Mr. Madden: I am asking the Secretary of State how many strikes took place in 1979 and 1980 when 3,000 jute workers in Dundee were made redundant as a direct result of Government action. Does the Secretary of State believe that there will be more strikes, or fewer strikes, if employers blackmail Britain into selecting particular unions and force employees to join those unions?

Mr. Fowler: That is a particularly pathetic defence of the TGWU's position. The figure that I can give is that the TGWU has probably lost Dundee more than 1,000 jobs.

Mr. Bill Walker: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the lesson of November is that the Government's legislation has worked and has shown clearly how effective it is? Surely another lesson that has come out of Dundee is that more legislation will probably be required to deal with such situations. Ford was prepared to come to Dundee, but required one-union agreement, and perhaps we should bring in legislation to make that possible in future.

Mr. Fowler: I hope, first and foremost, that the unions concerned come to their senses and take the sensible action that is necessary before we need to consider further legislation.

Mr. Meacher: If the Government are so concerned— *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Meacher: If the Government are so concerned about the number of working days lost through strikes, why are they so indifferent to the far greater number of working days lost through industrial injury? Is the Minister not ashamed of the fact that the fatal and serious accident rate has increased since 1979 by 36 per cent. in manufacturing? Are not the Government directly responsible because they have cut the factory inspectorate by 20 per cent. and the annual number of prosecutions by 17 per cent.? *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members should not point across the Chamber. I am listening to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher).

Mr. Fowler: The hon. Gentleman's supplementary question has nothing whatever to do with the original question, but clearly we are concerned about industrial injuries and all our policies will be pursued to seek to reduce them. The hon. Gentleman should recognise that

the number of working days lost in each of the past two years is the lowest for 10 years and the number of stoppages in each of the past three years is the lowest since 1940. That is the Government's achievement and it contrasts strongly with the industrial anarchy that the hon. Gentleman left behind him.

River Holidays

6. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is being done to promote river holidays in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Lee: Inland waterway holidays are marketed by the industry itself as well as the tourist boards and the British Tourist Authority overseas. I recently met the chairman of the British Waterways Board, and the chairman of the English tourist board and British Tourist Authority for a useful exchange of views on how the tourism potential of inland waterways could best be achieved.

Mr. Brazier: That is welcome news indeed. Will my hon. Friend comment on what proportion of the British Waterways Board's income is derived from leisure? On the subject of water holidays, I commend to him that excellent book, "Three Men in a Boat" as an insight to the coming elections in the Labour party.

Mr. Lee: In regard to the latter part of my hon. Friend's question about "Three Men in a Boat", I am surprised that the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) has not put his oar into that particular boat. No doubt there is still time. In answer to the first part of my hon. Friend's question, the British Waterways Board receives about 43 per cent. of its earned income, excluding grant-aid, from leisure and tourism, amounting to about £2·75 million.

Mr. Corbett: As inland waterways include canals, what help is available to promote canals in and around the city of Birmingham, given that it has more canals than Venice?

Mr. Lee: Section 4 grants are available for the development of tourism projects associated with canals. Indeed, a number of section 4 grants recently have been given to similar projects; for example, the National Waterways museum in Gloucester and the Waveney river centre on the Norfolk Broads. Grants are available.

Mr. Harry Greenway: Will my hon. Friend persuade the board to restore horse-drawn canal boats, which were very scenic in my constituency on the Grand Union canal in past years and are an excellent holiday for families and friends?

Mr. Lee: My hon. Friend never misses an opportunity to bring the horse, his favourite animal, into his questions. I am sure that the point that he made will be considered by the British Waterways Board.

Mr. O'Brien: Will the Minister advise the House what discussions took place about mooring fees during his meeting with the chairman of the British Waterways Board? Is he aware that the increase in mooring fees has been so great that many people who use the rivers and canals are having second thoughts because they cannot afford the increase? Will the Minister prevail upon the chairman of the British Waterways Board to look at the situation and ensure that increases are not above the level of inflation?

Mr. Lee: I shall certainly draw the attention of the chairman of the British Waterways Board to the hon. Gentleman's point about mooring fees. I understand that the level of charges essentially is for the commercial judgment and decision of the board.

"Training for Employment"

8. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the implications for Derbyshire of the White Paper on "Training for Employment".

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. Patrick Nicholls): In Derbyshire, as elsewhere, the employment training programme will provide a wide range of high-quality training opportunities for unemployed people, to meet their individual needs and those of the local labour market.

Mr. Oppenheim: Will the 3,132 people in Derbyshire currently involved in the community programme and their agents be involved in the new adult training scheme? What guarantee can my hon. Friend provide about the quality of those training programmes?

Mr. Nicholls: There will be a minimum of 170,000 community programme-type places in the new programme. My hon. Friend is entirely right to highlight the question of quality. The task of the Manpower Services Commission was to draw up a scheme which would provide quality training. It is satisfied that it has been able to do that and my right hon. Friend has accepted its recommendations in full.

Mr. Duffy: Is the Minister aware that there is a lack of credibility in the White Paper's implications for South Yorkshire? There is a genuine fear among employers and trade unions that the programme cannot possibly provide the number of jobs and the required skills to assist an economy that badly needs revitalisation. The Minister will have to convince South Yorkshire that his claim——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question is about Derbyshire.

Mr. Nicholls: In so far as Derbyshire and Amber Valley share similar problems, I am sure the hon. Gentleman will agree that there is a responsibility on all of us to try to allay genuine fears. If there are people in areas that are of concern to him who have these fears, I hope he will point out that the Manpower Services Commission's recommendations were unanimous and were accepted in full. I hope he will also point out that there are people on the Manpower Services Commission who represent not only local authority interests, but trade unions commissioners as well.

Regional Aid

9. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if the advice of his Department is sought before a regional development grant is arranged for a company contemplating moving itself and its work force to another area.

Mr. Lee: The regional development grant scheme is essentially automatic. If a project meets the published criteria, the project will normally be approved and grant paid by the operating department without reference to the Department of Employment.

Sir John Farr: I thank my hon. Friend for his reply, but will he bear in mind that these very substantial grants can

lead to a considerable distortion of trade? Will he make sure that in future his Department is kept aware when grants of considerable size—say, up to £1 million—are made available to firms to move to a neighbouring town, because they can completely distort the local employment picture?

Mr. Lee: I take my hon. Friend's point, but I think he is referring to the regional development grant, which has been automatic. Applications for this grant cannot be made after Thursday of this week, but regional selective assistance will continue.

Mr. Gareth Wardell: The Minister has just said that the last date to apply for this grant is Thursday of this week. In the light of that will he, first, monitor the nature of automatic grants that are made available in Europe to ensure that firms coming here for the first time to extend their plants or to set up on the green field sites are not put at a disadvantage? Secondly, will he publish the criteria for regional selective assistance so that firms fully know what they are entitled to now that the regional development grant is to be phased out?

Mr. Lee: Both the hon. Gentleman's questions are matters for my ministerial colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry, not for me.

Mr. Holt: My hon. Friend will recall that a couple of years ago the Government quite arbitrarily changed the rules that enabled grants to be paid to employees moving from one area to another. As the Ministry of Defence has 600 vacancies for administrative and clerical assistants and is having to engage large numbers of agency staff, what liaison is there between my hon. Friend's Department and the Ministry of Defence to try to alleviate that shortage by helping people to move from parts of the country where there is high unemployment to the London area?

Mr. Lee: We are in contact with other Government Departments about such matters, and our employment service and the MSC keep a very close eye on opportunities for jobs and job creation.

Insolvency

10. **Mr. Rooker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons have benefited from the insolvency provisions of the Employment Protection Act in the midland region during the current financial year.

Mr. Nicholls: The total for the first 11 months of this financial year was 11,876.

Mr. Rooker: Can the Minister explain how the former employees of Midland Professional Cleaning Services could benefit from these provisions, bearing in mind that the company ceased trading, having been paid by the supermarket for which it was cleaning? It is not in liquidation and it has never filed returns to Companies House. Even though these two dozen people are still cleaning the same supermarket, they have lost about six weeks' wages—taken by the company—which they do not stand a chance of getting back simply because the company is not in liquidation. How can they be covered and seek the protection and the benefit of these insolvency provisions?

Mr. Nicholls: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his courtesy in giving me notice that he was going to ask that supplementary question. I know that he has been extremely active in contacting my Department to see whether anything can be done to help his constituents. The problem is that under this legislation, passed by the last Labour Government in 1976, my Department is in a position to help only where companies have become insolvent. I have made it my business to look at this question, and, as I understand it, the hon. Gentleman is entirely right.

This company is not insolvent, and therefore under the present state of the legislation nothing can be done. All I would say to the hon. Gentleman is that, apart from the legal remedies which his constituents have, if, for some reason, the company ever were to go into a state of insolvency I hope that at that stage he will contact me again, because I have a great deal of sympathy with the plight of his constituents.

Rural Areas

11. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his Department's plans to encourage growth in employment in rural areas.

Mr. Cope: Our Department is playing its part with other interested Departments to help rural economies expand and diversify. Our key aim is to encourage enterprise by providing the necessary advice and support.

Mr. Taylor: I am sure the Minister will agree, and I am certain that the rest of the House will agree, that, to judge from the paucity of his reply, there is a distressing contrast between the Government's emphasis on urban deprivation and that relating to rural deprivation in areas such as my own. Nevertheless, given that the Minister has said that he is working with his colleagues, will he seek the extension of the assisted areas map, particularly to the United Downs area in Cornwall, given the job losses currently happening in the tin industry there?

Mr. Cope: I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. The figures indicate that unemployment in rural development areas is below the national average. I will certainly look into his last point.

Mr. Warren: Will my hon. Friend look at the situation in the East Sussex and Kent rural development area, where unemployment is higher than the national average, and where there is a strong feeling that window dressing is more important than new projects? Will he liaise with other Government Departments on this subject, which is causing considerable concern to my constituents?

Mr. Cope: Yes, I will certainly look into it if my hon. Friend will send me particulars of the matter that concerns him.

Steel Industry

12. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement about the trend in the numbers of employees in the steel industry.

Mr. Nicholls: According to the most recently published figures, the number of employees in employment in the iron and steel industries fell by an estimated 2,500 in the year to January 1988.

Mr. Hughes: Does the Minister appreciate that, with privatisation on the agenda, there is now considerable

concern among steel workers because they have noticed that with the phoenix companies already created there has been a tendency to downgrade conditions of employment? Will he recognise that there will be considerable concern among steel workers throughout the industry if there is any attempt to dilute the contributory pension scheme, which has been established over a number of years?

Mr. Nicholls: I can appreciate the concern which the hon. Gentleman's constituents will feel when privatisation comes along, because although there are great opportunities, it represents a new departure, and clearly his constituents will want to be assured that there will be no dilution in the way that he suggests.

Perhaps I could make the point to the hon. Gentleman that there has been a transformation in the United Kingdom steel industry in recent years, and that is something that must bode well for his constituents. It is also worth emphasising that BSC gave an assurance as long ago as last December that, subject to market conditions, there would continue to be a commercial requirement for steel making and continuous casting capacity at the five integrated BSC plants for at least the next seven years. While I do not in any sense underplay the feelings of the hon. Gentleman's constituents, I hope that when they look at the industry in total they will be substantially reassured.

Mr. Sackville: Does my hon. Friend agree that many more jobs among steel-using industries stand to be lost by the operation of cartels among European steel producers and political interference than could possibly be saved in the steel industry by any such practices?

Mr. Nicholls: While that may not be directly a matter for me, I can understand the concern that my hon. Friend expresses in that question. Sometimes there is a feeling, certainly on this side of the House, that the high standards that we impose on ourselves are not always entirely matched by the performance of others.

Employment Trends

13. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on employment trends for the remainder of 1988.

Mr. Cope: Following the long-established practice of previous Governments, we do not make forecasts of future employment levels. However, there is every prospect of a continuing rise in employment during 1988.

Mr. Leigh: With unemployment having fallen for 19 successive months, which now represents the greater threat to future job growth: the Neanderthal mentality of Dundee trade-union man, or the greedy mentality of Dagenham trade-union man?

Mr. Cope: It is difficult to place these factors in order of importance, but both are certainly important. The events in Dundee have without doubt damaged prospects. Wage increases are also well ahead of inflation, and this can damage competitiveness, and jobs and job creation as well. I hope that wage negotiators will have regard to that.

Mr. James Lamond: Looking back at the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs that the Government have destroyed up and down the country, including in Dundee, it ill becomes them to criticise the trade union movement for refusing to accept the Government's suggestion that it should go on bended knee to the United States, like a Third world country, asking the Americans to come here to pay slave labour wages and destroy the trade union movement. If the Minister expects that from the British trade union movement, he has a fight on his hands.

Mr. Cope: There is no point in our approaching Ford until the unions concerned have made their position clear.

Mr. Ashby: Has my hon. Friend considered that employment trends in 1988 and thereafter could improve considerably if great care were taken with future legislation to ensure that it does not inhibit manufacturing industry or the future of new manufacturing industries? What is done in the Department about representations to other Departments to see that their legislation does not inhibit industry?

Mr. Cope: The primary responsibility for this rests with the DTI and the deregulation unit, which examines all proposals. We do our bit, too, particularly for small businesses.

Mr. Strang: Does the Minister accept that, in spite of the recent fall in unemployment, the current number of unemployed claimants is between two and three times what it was when the Conservative party came to power? Does he recognise that, without a major Government initiative in this area, there is no hope of getting unemployment down by the next general election even to its level in 1979?

Mr. Cope: The hon. Gentleman should also recognise that employment has been up in every quarter for four and a half years.

Mr. Favell: Have not recent events shown that traditional trade unions are still interested in traditional working practices, rather than in creating the sort of climate that creates employment?

Mr. Cope: Yes, Sir.

Manufacturing Industry

14. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many jobs have been lost in manufacturing industry since June 1979; and if he will list the sectors of manufacturing industry which have incurred the highest number of job losses.

Mr. Nicholls: Between June 1979 and January 1988 the number of employees in employment in manufacturing industry in Great Britain is estimated to have fallen by 2,077,000. Over this period, the largest falls occurred in the mechanical engineering, motor vehicle, metal manufacturing, electrical engineering and metal goods industries. However, recent figures suggest that the trend in manufacturing employment may now be levelling out.

Mr. Skinner: Is the Minister aware that that list of more than 2 million casualties, of which Ron Todd has not been responsible for a single one—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]—shows the hypocrisy of the Government when they talk about the loss of jobs in the last eight years? The Prime Minister has caused more devastation in manufacturing industry than Adolf Hitler caused between 1939 and 1945. It is no wonder that West Germany and Japan are laughing at Britain where they have a $120 billion surplus

on their trade and are walking away to the top of the industrial trade league, while we are losing jobs all around Great Britain.

Mr. Nicholls: The immoderate, ignorant and intemperate nature of that question shows that if we ever have a "wally of the week" award, the hon. Gentleman will be in a class of his own.

Mr. William Powell: Is my hon. Friend aware that my constituents do not well receive criticisms from Opposition Members about job losses when they recall that the last Labour Government closed the steelworks in Corby? However, my constituents welcome the enormous assistance that the Government have given them, which has enabled Corby to make such a striking recovery from that disaster.

Mr. Nicholls: I am sure that my hon. Friend is right. He might want to compliment the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) on having had the courage to address the issue of Dundee, even if he has not managed to reach the inevitable conclusions about it.

YTS

15. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of YTS leavers become unemployed; and how many have become long-term unemployed.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission carries out regular follow-up surveys of all YTS leavers. These surveys show that, of those who left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987, 22 per cent. were unemployed when surveyed. These surveys do not provide data on the duration of unemployment.

Mr. Steinberg: Is the Minister aware that in the northern region 31 per cent. are destined for the dole and those who do get work get jobs without proper training? Does the Minister agree that every youngster needs proper, quality training so that he can get a proper, quality job?

Mr. Cope: Yes. That is why we have the drive for equality in YTS and why we insist, for example, on approved training organisation status for all providers as from this week.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including the Prime Minister of Fiji and the Mayor of Shanghai. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

Mr. Howarth: In view of the widespread concern about the poll tax in the country, and indeed on her own Back Benches, will the Prime Minister give serious consideration to withdrawing this deeply offensive legislation?

The Prime Minister: No. The community charge is a much fairer way of local people paying towards local authority expenditure than the present rating system. The community charge in England will meet only one quarter of local authority expenditure. About half is met by the taxpayer and a quarter by industry. In Scotland the community charge meets only one seventh of local authority expenditure.

Mr. Arbuthnot: Does my right hon. Friend welcome the decision yesterday by the Royal College of Nurses to reaffirm its no-strike policy, on the basis that strikes damage patients? Does she agree that that contrasts starkly with the behaviour of some teachers in London. When they go on strike it damages only their own pupils.

The Prime Minister: Yes, It was a most encouraging result. Of course, that was the reason why the Royal College of Nurses was given a pay review body. The Royal College has never gone on strike, and I am glad that our faith in it was abundantly rewarded by the view that it took.

Mr. Steel: Will the Prime Minister make clear her personal opposition, and that of the Government, to British rugby players organising a visit to South Africa?

The Prime Minister: As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, we stand by the Gleneagles agreement, under which we attempt to discourage teams from going to South Africa. I understand that the English Rugby Union is trying to dissuade people from going to South Africa. I am not aware that either the Scots or the Welsh have declared their view.

Sir Peter Emery: Will my right hon. Friend make it completely clear, in order to scotch rumour and media hype, that there is absolutely no difference of policy between herself and the Chancellor of the Exchequer?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is correct. Both the Chancellor and I put downward pressure on inflation as the topmost priority. Both the Chancellor and I think that exchange rate stability can be very useful for industry.

Q2. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Prime Minister is she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Davies: In her endeavour to re-establish the bonds of family life, has the Prime Minister ever given any consideration to the value of a wife? Is she aware that the Forestry Commission is trying to double the rent of the tied cottages of its New Forest keepers and is offering in compensation £2 per week for each keeper's wife? Given that the Forestry Commission pays the same keepers 45p a week for a ferret and £2·30 a week for a dog, should she not intervene?

The Prime Minister: I think the hon. Gentleman will be aware that the Budget set out considerably to help wives by the changes made by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the taxation of wives. We on this side value them extremely highly.

Mr. Carrington: Will my right hon. Friend find time in her busy day to read the scandalous letter sent by the Hammersmith branch of NALGO to Sinn Fein accusing the Government of state terrorism in Northern Ireland? Will she urge the national executive of NALGO to take disciplinary action against those members involved, and will she affirm——

Mr. Speaker: Order. There must be Government responsibility.

Mr. Carrington: Will my right hon. Friend join me in condemning the actions of that NALGO branch?

Mr. Speaker: Order. There must be Government responsibility.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that Citizens Advice Bureaux case studies on the effects of her social security cuts show that a single pensioner home owner will lose £2 a week, a pensioner couple claiming income support can lose up to £18 a week, a pensioner on dialysis will lose £17 a week, and a doubly incontinent person claiming attendance allowance will lose £14 a week? Is that the way to treat sick and elderly people in the Britain of 1988?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of which press release by the Citizens Advice Bureaux the right hon. Gentleman is talking about. Is it one that has come out recently? There was a recent Citizens Advice Bureaux press release that was based on a belief that there was a difference between the time when supplementary benefit was changed to income support and the increase in pension benefit came into effect. In fact, that is not so.

Mr. Kinnock: Why will the Prime Minister not answer any specific question on the social security changes? Why is she dodging around talking about press releases when she knows very well that what I refer to are specific case studies of real people who, despite their huge needs, will lose £14, £17 and £18 a week as a consequence of next week's changes? Is she ashamed of those changes?

The Prime Minister: I assumed that the right hon. Gentleman was talking about a Citizens Advice Bureaux press release which came out yesterday and which was based on a misunderstanding. Among other things, may I tell the right hon. Gentleman that the overwhelming majority of people will benefit, gain, from the improved social security benefits that will come out on 11 April? Some people on housing benefit will not gain because of the different arrangements about capital. It is absolutely futile for him to suggest that the Conservative party and the Government do not look after the needs of people on social security. It is absolutely futile, because not only are we already spending £44 billion on social security, but there is to be an increase of £2 billion next year. His questions are utterly futile and he cannot refute the facts.

Mr. Kinnock: That is all very well, but many sick and elderly people still stand to lose £14, £17 and £18 a week. Let me ask the Prime Minister the question again. Does she think that that is the way to treat anyone in this country?

The Prime Minister: The overwhelming majority of people will gain—and were designed to gain—from the increases in pensions, in disablement benefit and in sickness benefit. A few people will not gain. Apart from those on housing benefit, those who do not gain will be protected during the transition, in that their cash values will be protected. The overwhelming majority of us on this side of the House think it right that people who have capital of £6,000 should not be eligible for housing benefit, particularly as it is often paid by those who have none.

Mr. Kinnock *rose*—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. Mr. Kinnock.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. I called the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister does not even understand her own policies. According to her Government's figures, 60 per cent. of claimants will lose because of the structural changes. There are no transitional arrangements for new payments. Will she now tell the people of Britain whether she thinks that people on dialysis, old-age pensioners and single home owners should be losing money at all? She can talk about gainers. Should anybody on those incomes be losing anything at all?

The Prime Minister: An extra £2 billion is to be spent on social security next year, giving a total of £46 billion. The right hon. Gentleman referred to dialysis. Far more people are now receiving dialysis than ever were in his time.

When the right hon. Gentleman said that 60 per cent. of people were losing, I think that he was referring to the Citizens Advice Bureaux press release this morning, which was seriously misleading, because it got the date of the benefits uprating wrong. Almost everyone in this country is doing far better than he or she was in 1979.

Mr. Robert B. Jones: Is my right hon. Friend aware that in north-west Hertfordshire district health authority there have been two health cuts: a cut of 47 per cent. in the waiting lists under this Government, and a cut of £100,000 available for patient care as a result of a 17 per cent. rate increase applied by the Socialist-controlled Hertfordshire county council?

The Prime Minister: Yes, the overwhelming majority of people who are treated under the National Health Service have very good cause to be grateful, and are very grateful. Cuts in the Health Service came under the Labour party when it was in power.

Q3. **Mr. Archer:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Archer: When the right hon. Lady finds time to read the report by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, will she also read the report by the Policy Studies Institute, and by Oxford university, showing the impact of the Government's social security cuts on the sick, the disabled, the elderly and the unemployed? How will she then deal with the situation? Will she ask her right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to provide funding for the sick, the disabled, the elderly and the unemployed, or will she instruct the appropriate Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security to arrange for them to take out second mortgages, or will she withdraw funding from the Citizens Advice Bureaux, the Policy Studies Institute and Oxford university?

The Prime Minister: Or will, perhaps, the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his party move a motion to cancel all the increases, or do they in their heart of hearts believe that they are far better with the overwhelming majority? The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows that they are far better. Otherwise, I challenge him to move a motion to cancel the increases.

Q4. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Shaw: Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigation into trade union restrictive practices is most welcome? Furthermore, does she agree that those practices, whether at Dundee or elsewhere, disadvantage British industry, increase costs, damage the interests of the British consumer and are damaging to the country's interests overall?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. All restrictive practices stifle competition and put up costs. We should do everything that we can to rid ourselves of them. That is why this matter has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Cook: Does the Prime Minister recall her carefully considered reply on 18 July 1985 to her hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), when she justified the 30 per cent. plus increase in top people's salaries by the need to provide rewards regarded by the public as fair but not generous in relation to the responsibilities carried? Bearing in mind last week's statement by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Thames (Mr. Lamont) that the reduction in the standard rate of tax is irreversible, will the right hon. Lady tell the House whether she intends to bear such adjustments in mind when she next reviews top salaries?

The Prime Minister: The report from the Top Salaries Review Body will come in with those of other review bodies, and we shall make our decisions on them, as we have done previously. I have not noticed that hon. Members have been anxious to take lower salaries.

Rover Group (Privatisation)

3.31 pm

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kenneth Clarke): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement.

I informed the House on 1 March that British Aerospace had declared a serious interest in acquiring the Government shareholding in Rover Group and that negotiations were being put in hand. British Aerospace asked that the negotiations should be on an exclusive basis. We agreed to this, provided that the further studies that it wished to carry out on Rover Group, and the negotiations between British Aerospace and the Government, were concluded by the end of April.

I promised to return and report the outcome of these discussions to the House at the earliest opportunity. I can do this today because British Aerospace has completed its investigations satisfactorily and earlier than anticipated. The negotiations have therefore been concluded and agreement reached. The rules of the stock exchange require in these circumstances that an announcement is made without delay. Today we have entered into a conditional contract with British Aerospace for the sale of the Government's shareholding in Rover Group.

Before entering into the contract with British Aerospace, we considered a number of confidential expressions of interest, but none amounted to a specific offer.

The board of Rover Group believes that this is the best possible outcome for the group. British Aerospace is strongly committed to the further development and growth of Rover Group, working with the existing Rover Group management who have made so much progress in improving the performance of the businesses. Honda told us that it welcomed the continuity of Rover Group's management team which would be assured by British Aerospace's ownership of the company. I therefore hope that the important operational partnership between Rover Group and Honda can continue to develop satisfactorily.

Without constraining British Aerospace's day-to-day management of the business, we have agreed important conditions on the agreement. British Aerospace has undertaken not to relinquish control of Austin Rover and Land Rover within five years. This undertaking is supported by legal arrangements designed to ensure that it is not to its financial advantage to do so.

I shall now turn to the main financial terms of the agreement. During negotiations it has been impressed on us by the board of British Aerospace that Rover Group operates in a highly competitive industry and that, notwithstanding the recovery in 1987, its current and prospective levels of profitability are insufficient to meet the interest burden on debt built up through many years of accumulated losses. The Government have been equally concerned that the merger of these two major British manufacturing groups should move forward only on a firm financial footing.

Since 1975, when the Government became the majority owner of British Leyland, the banks have been content to advance large sums on the strength of the Government's involvement. In order that the company is in a fit state to return to the private sector it is appropriate that we should deal with this accumulated indebtedness, which no company without similar backing could be expected to maintain. Of course, we would have had to undertake this exercise whatever route had been adopted for Rover Group's privatisation. The Government have therefore agreed that the Government will make a cash injection of £800 million into Rover Group for this purpose.

Following agreement on these steps to strengthen the Rover Group balance sheet, we have been able to conclude an agreement to sell the Government shareholding in Rover Group for £150 million.

We have also agreed with British Aerospace and Rover Group arrangements whereby £1·1 billion of Rover Group's trading tax losses will effectively be eliminated, leaving only £500 — *[interruption.]* — £500 million of these losses will remain to be claimed against Rover Group profits in the future. British Aerospace has also agreed that other currently available tax reliefs within Rover Group will be applicable only within that group.

I turn now to the elimination of the Varley-Marshall-Joseph parliamentary assurances relating to Rover Group's bank debts, trade creditors and other obligations. These currently total approximately £1·6 billion. While Rover Group has been in public ownership, the Government have given assurances that the obligations of the group will be met. No new obligations incurred by the Rover Group after the date of completion will benefit from the assurances. Obligations incurred between now and the completion date will cease to benefit from the assurances on completion.

The negotiations with British Aerospace have concerned only the Government's shareholding in Rover Group. British Aerospace has said that, following completion of its acquisition of the Government's shares, it will make separate proposals to Rover Group's minority shareholders in due course to acquire their shares. British Aerospace has made it clear that these proposals will be fair and reasonable and will be made after consultation with the Rover Group board and its advisers.

The agreement is, of course, subject to the approval of the British Aerospace shareholders and the completion of the normal European Community procedures. We also expect to receive the advice of the Director General of Fair Trading.

I should like to explain what progress there has been on the European Community implications of these plans. On 14 March we notified the European Commission that we proposed to deal with the necessary restructuring of Rover Group's finances. My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State met Commissioner Sutherland on 23 March to explain the Government's objectives and proposals. He had a further meeting with Commissioner Sutherland yesterday. The Commission met this morning and decided to open the formal state aid procedure. I am confident that the Commission will expedite its investigation.

The agreement brings to a successful conclusion the privatisation initiative that began in earnest with the flotation of Jaguar in 1984. Since he took office in May 1986, Mr. Graham Day has presided over a remarkable period of change. The House should pay tribute to his achievements. He returned the group to an operating profit last year. He has already returned 18 Rover Group businesses to private ownership. These include the trucks and bus activities, Unipart, Istel, and Jaguar Rover Australia, which are all trading profitably under their new

owners. The final step that I have announced today will fulfil our commitment to privatise Rover Group within the life of this Parliament.

In the hands of British Aerospace, Rover Group would have the best available chance of developing its independent role in the vehicle industry. We cannot afford to underestimate the contribution to the economy of the largest United Kingdom passenger vehicle producer with a turnover of £3 billion, exports of £1 billion, direct employment of 43,000, and indirect employment of two or three times that number in the component supply sector, as well as over 50,000 jobs in Rover Group's distribution networks. This will strengthen Rover Group's ability to compete at home and abroad and thus benefit all those who work with and for it, as well as the economy as a whole. I commend the agreement to the House.

Mr. Bryan Gould (Dagenham): Has not the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster got his seasons confused? Is not Christmas, rather than Easter, normally the season for giving? Is not this astonishing statement another sad instalment in the sorry saga of the Government's long attempts to write off Britain's largest indigenous car manufacturer at any price? Is it not an act of political irresponsibility and industrial sabotage, totally lacking in industrial logic or commercial sense?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman confirm that he is paying British Aerospace £650 million—enough to raise child benefit by £1 per week—to persuade it to walk away with net assets worth £770 million? How can that crazy logic be justified, even in terms of this Government's ridiculous economic calculations?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman also confirm that, with his characteristic lack of regard for the taxpayer's interests, he is writing off £1·1 billion of debt that is owed to the taxpayer, allowing Rover and its future owners to retain enough tax losses to ensure that they pay no tax whatsoever on any profits that they may make in the next few years?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman comment on reports that tomorrow British Aerospace will reveal that it is short of cash itself? Is it not clear that BAe views Rover as a sort of cash cow to help it over a liquidity problem, and that instead of putting money into volume car manufacture it intends to take it out—hardly the right basis for an industry that desperately needs a long-term commitment to investment if it is to survive? What assurances can he offer the House that the investment that is desperately needed will be made by a cash-starved BAe?

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman recognise that Rover's collaboration with Honda is crucial to its future? Does not the cancellation of the Legend project make it clear that Honda is already disenchanted, and will it not become even more disenchanted as the greedy logic and confetti money basis of the deal becomes increasingly clear?

What assurances does the right hon. and learned Gentleman have that the EEC will complete its investigations in time or in favour of this ridiculous deal?

Finally, what assurances can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give the House about the future of this vital British industry? Is not his statement a further sign that all that the Government wish to do is to wash their hands of this important industry as quickly as possible, with no regard whatsoever for the future of the work force or for Britain's industrial future in this vital area?

Mr. Clarke: I did not follow all the hon. Gentleman's financial logic—if that is a fair description of the way in which he put his questions. If he is acquiring a somewhat belated concern for the interests of the taxpayer, he might reflect on the experience of the taxpayer since 1976, when the company was taken into public ownership, because during that time the taxpayer has had to pay £2·9 billion to cover the losses that have been made by the company. If the hon. Gentleman tries to convert that into other things that might have been bought by the taxpayer with that money, he will find that he reaches some spectacular conclusions.

When the hon. Gentleman comes to analyse the bargain that the Government have struck with British Aerospace, he should reflect, first, on the full terms, which I gave the House in some detail. At the moment the taxpayer is facing an obligation under the Varley-Marshall-Joseph assurances that amounts in total to £1·6 billion. On the basis that I have given, that prospective liability will be extinguished in the next few months and no now liabilities will accrue under that head.

When it comes to extinguishing the tax losses that have been accrued by Rover in the past, like several of his hon. Friends when I read it out, the hon. Gentleman totally misunderstood the implication of that. Extinguishing those tax losses means that they cannot be offset against future profits. It is to the benefit of the Exchequer to extinguish over £1 billion of accumulated tax losses, and it is worth about £400 million prospectively to the British economy. The remaining £500 million of tax losses available to British Aerospace is of use to it only against future Rover Group profits, and Rover Group has been earning those on its trading profit and loss account during the past 12 months.

The hon. Gentleman says that British Aerospace regards Rover as a "cash cow". I assume that that is his description of British Aerospace's commercial judgment that the company is a good long-term investment from which it expects to earn profits in the future. I trust that it will do so if its management is successful in developing the business.

The hon. Gentleman has no reason whatsoever for casting doubt on Honda's reaction to the deal. We have sounded out Honda, which is content that its important commitment to and involvement with the Rover Group should continue. The hon. Gentleman is irresponsible in casting doubt on that.

I advise the hon. Gentleman to go away and study the deal. It is an extremely good day for the taxpayer that we can see the end of the Varley-Marshall-Joseph assurances and extinguish all those tax losses. It is a very good day for the Rover Group and all who work in it that a company such as British Aerospace has judged that it wishes to bid for that company and that it sees a long-term future for the business.

When the hon. Gentleman talks about sabotage, he has a brass neck. During the past fortnight the activities of the trade union and labour movement have sabotaged 1,000 new vehicle jobs in Dundee. When he is faced with a deal such as this, a little modesty on his part would be rather suitable.

Mr. Kenneth Warren (Hastings and Rye): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on the deal. Is he not doing what BAe and Rover should do? Should they not get together in the same way as General Motors,

[Mr. Kenneth Warren]

Ford and Boeing in the United States, to strengthen the production and manufacturing technology available to a combined group to compete in the world today?

I am delighted that BAe is acquiring the management talents of Graham Day, but may I have an assurance that no pay-off is involved relating to BAe's problems in financing the Airbus?

Mr. Clarke: The judgment made by the management of BAe is in line with that made by other successful companies in other parts of the world. There is nothing unique about an arrangement between an aerospace company and a vehicle manufacturer.

I can assure my hon. Friend that there is no hidden deal behind the full details that I have given the House today. In particular, our arrangements with BAe on its aerospace business remain as they have been: a close pattern of partnership.

Mr. Robert Sheldon (Ashton-under-Lyne): Is it not unfortunate that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is not a Member of the House of Commons, which has pre-eminently the right to discuss economic and financial matters, and to which the Secretary of State might then be personally accountable?

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the Public Accounts Committee may well wish to examine the justification for the sale, and will certainly want to distinguish between the Government's right to produce policy objectives and the right of the taxpayer to be sure that his money is protected?

Mr. Clarke: This is a collective decision by the Cabinet and the Government. The Government are, of course, answerable to the House for their decisions, and are certainly accountable to the House for the way in which they look after public money and the taxpayer's interests. They have absolutely nothing to fear from an examination of the arrangements by the Public Accounts Committee. If the Committee wishes to take evidence, we shall welcome the opportunity to explain further.

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): May I turn from the politics of the Opposition to the jobs of my constituents, and the constituents of many other west midlands Members?

I welcome the early timing of the announcement to relieve uncertainty. May I ask, however, whether out of the "dowry", if I may describe it thus—in view of the expression

"committed to the further development of Rover Group"—

any commitment was sought for the replacement of the Metro car, which accounts for two fifths of the Rover Group's sales and is the only Rover car in the country that is in the top-selling bracket?

Mr. Clarke: I can assure my hon. Friend that BAe has told us that it looks on its acquisition of the Rover Group as a long-term investment and is committed to the maintenance and development in the longer term of the group's present business. It would clearly be wrong for the Government to impose constraints and commitments on the management of the group when it must make its own decisions on capital investment and on its future.

I am in no doubt that BAe has acquired the business to develop and maintain it. Obviously, it will address itself —together with the Rover Group management which is joining it—to the future well-being of the business and the shape of the product range.

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): Does the Minister agree with his noble Friend Lord Bruce-Gardyne, who has described these as "golden giveaway terms"? Does he agree that the Government are paying BAe to take the Rover Group off their hands just as it is becoming profitable, and will he at least guarantee that the Government's golden share of 15 per cent. in BAe will be maintained?

It is now clear to the electorate that, whatever else may be the case, investments in the economy are not safe in the Government's hands.

Mr. Clarke: If those comments by Lord Bruce-Gardyne are accurately quoted, I flatly disagree with them. I advise the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) and my noble Friend to study the terms more closely and to consider the full extent of the contingency liabilities and obligations that the taxpayer now faces in owning the Rover Group. As a consequence of the deal, we will extinguish all those assurances and all the excessive tax losses, and will return the company—on a sound basis—to the private sector, where it has a better prospect of thriving in the future. The arrangements for the golden share in British Aerospace remain unaffected and stay as they have always been announced.

Mr. Dave Nellist (Coventry, South-East): I thank Leslie Crowther for that statement, which is the industrial equivalent of the 5p cemetery. What will the Minister say to give any confidence to the workers of Rover, given that BAe has just announced its intention to reduce its costs by one fifth in the next two years and by a further one third in the following two years? Since Rover and BAe are both heavily dependent on export markets, and are therefore vulnerable to the falling dollar, what guarantees is the Minister giving today for the jobs of Rover workers against the background of that economic cutback? With an increased tendency towards sweating in Ford, Jaguar and Land Rover, is it not a fact that car workers' trade unions will have to strenghthen their organisations to fight the battles ahead?

Mr. Clarke: British Aerospace is in a highly competitive market in both its civil aviation and military business. Therefore, I have no doubt that all those with the interests of BAe at heart will welcome the commitment of the management to bring down, and keep down, its costs and remain competitive, which I am sure it will endeavour to do. The guarantee of jobs that the hon. Gentleman seeks cannot be given, except in the context of looking for jobs to be assured by continued success in the market place. It does not matter who owns the company, whether it is a public sector or private sector owner, of whatever sort. The well-being of the company and those who work for it depends on its continued success in the market place and the continued improvement in performance that we have seen under Graham Day's leadership in the past 12 months.

The idea that the organisations representing car workers need to be strengthened does not instantly come to my mind. What is needed is for the organisations representing those workers to come up to date with the 1980s and realise that the attitudes that they have

displayed recently in the face of an attractive Ford investment proposal in Scotland will set the car industry in this country moving backwards, rather than forwards.

Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept that this is a welcome end to a disastrous story that was started by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) when he put together two companies that should never have been together? Is it not a vindication of the Government's policy of a step-by-step privatisation of the original British Leyland group, culminating in this arrangement with BAe? In fact, the paying of £800 million is a good deal when it gets the taxpayer off the hook for a £1·6 billion guarantee. The taxpayer should be rejoicing, and we should be wishing the firm every success in the future.

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his comments. It is a remarkably successful outcome to the Government's attempts to prepare the Rover Group as a whole for a return to the private sector. I agree that we should look back with relief to the ending of a period during which almost £3 billion has been expended by the taxpayer on covering losses in that group, when we all know how £3 billion of taxpayers' money could have been put to other purposes had the group not been performing as it was.

On the matter of the £800 million, the fact is that the bank indebtedness of the company was allowed to accrue only because the Government were standing behind it. No other company trading in the same way as the Rover Group could have built up that bank indebtedness. It is simply not reasonable to expect it to be taken on by any new purchaser. That would have applied however we had eventually moved to privatisation of the group. Therefore, we have extinguished that bank indebtedness but, at the same time, as my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls) points out, we are getting rid of all sorts of other liabilities for the taxpayer which cannot be brought to an end except by successful privatisation of the sort that I have announced.

Mr. Michael Heseltine (Henley): Will my right hon. and learned Friend recognise that BAe buying Rover is a remarkable achievement for a privatised company — British Aerospace — encouraging first Royal Ordnance plc and now Rover into the private sector? Will he recognise that in writing out a contingent liability we are saving potential damage to the taxpayer? In recognising that the fortunes of the company are bound to be significantly improved in the private sector, we are now certain that the company can continue to expand as it has done so dramatically since it was first privatised.

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my right hon. Friend. As a result of the changed industrial climate and the Government's economic policies, we have seen a powerful manufacturing group emerge composed of what were fairly unsuccessful nationalised industries only a few years ago. Every responsible hon. Member must wish that this great group will go on to be a very powerful manufacturing force in the British economy.

Mr. Terry Davis (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): As BAe needed Government help to fund its contribution to Airbus development a year ago, how will BAe find the money to finance new model development at Rover Group in future? What assurances, estimates or forecasts has BAe given the Government about jobs at Rover Group in view of the tremendous job losses that have taken place at BAe since it was privatised?

Mr. Clarke: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is, by implication, criticising the provision of launch aid for the Airbus project. Launch aid is in no way a subsidy. It is aid to develop a product which has a particularly long lead time before it can produce any returns. It also enables BAe to engage in the Airbus project, which is still at a fairly early stage of development in the civil aviation market. However, launch aid is not a subsidy, because there are agreements attached to launch aid whereby it will be repaid on terms that will show a return agreed in advance with the Government. There is no way in which a comparison can be drawn between that aspect of financing civil aviation and the capital needs of a vehicle business. Of course, the company will have to look to its resources and ability to raise money on the assets to finance its future model development. That is inevitable in that business as in any other.

The loss of jobs in BAe is the inevitable result of the competitive pressures on the company. However, the security of jobs in any business depends in the end on the ability of the business to remain competitive and its ability to produce products that it can sell successfully in the market place. No nationalisation process can get round that.

Mr. Jonathan Sayeed (Bristol, East): Within the agreement between BAe and the Rover Group, has there been an agreement on management contracts for the most able members of the Rover board? Was any other organisation prepared to put up more money than BAe for the Rover Group?

Mr. Clarke: I cannot, of course, give details of the contracts of individual managers with the new company, any more than I could give details off the cuff of existing management contracts. I know that BAe regarded the existing management of Rover Group as one of its assets, and it intends to continue to work with the existing management. This will cause the minimum of disruption to those engaged in the company. We did not receive any offers from anyone else. We received some expressions of interest, but they have proceeded no further. We have reached a satisfactory conclusion to our negotiations with BAe.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Oxford, East): This appears to be a very generous settlement for BAe. It is getting Rover Group on the cheap. In return for this generosity, what specific assurances has the right hon. and learned Gentleman secured for the future investment in model development and the continuity of Rover's presence in the volume market? What form will the legal agreement over relinquishment take? What has happened to the £80 million from the pension fund which the workers contributed to the Rover Group balance sheet? In view of the importance of this matter for jobs and industrial success in my constituency and elsewhere, should we not have a full debate on this issue as soon as possible?

Mr. Clarke: I have not the first idea what price the Opposition think they would have negotiated in such a deal had they embarked upon one. I suspect from some questions from other Opposition Members that they have

[Mr. Clarke]

not yet fully absorbed the details of the very successful bargain that has been struck between BAe and the Government in reaching this arrangement.

We have not imposed requirements on the purchasers of the company about model development or the volume that it should seek in the market, because we believe that it is contrary to the interests of the company and everyone working in it to attempt to put those political constraints on the management's ability to manage the business in the best interests of the company and those who depend on it.

The pension fund in the Rover Group accumulated a surplus. Together with a large number of other companies, the group is taking a tax holiday on contributions with regard to the company and increasing the benefits to the members. The employers and the employees have both contributed to the pension fund. I understand that both are now benefiting from the fund's good performance and there have been improvements to the benefits, for which credit should be given.

As I told the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) a moment ago, the Government would welcome the opportunity to explain the position to the Public Accounts Committee, if the Committee regarded the matter as important enough to look at, and we would certainly welcome a debate on the Floor of the House. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is ready to arrange a day for such a debate, through the usual channels.

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I welcome the conclusion of the negotiations. My right hon. and learned Friend will be aware that Austin Rover is the tip of a manufacturing iceberg, because thousands of component suppliers throughout the midlands, and indeed the country, feed into the two main assembly plants. They have geared production for an output of 500,000 cars per year. Is my right hon. and learned Friend satisfied that the new management of BAe has the financial backing and commitment to ensure that such volume manufacturing will continue and, with it, the prosperity of large chunks of our manufacturing businesses?

Mr. Clarke: Throughout the negotiations, we have been conscious of the interests, to which my hon. Friend rightly draws attention, of the component suppliers and the distributors, and the tens of thousands of jobs that are indirectly dependent upon the Rover Group's business. I think that they will welcome the outcome of these negotiations because we have achieved the conclusion of the privatisation process without disrupting business or creating any excessive uncertainties. My hon. Friend will remember that when various other bidders were rumoured to be in the field two years ago and there was uncertainty, the company lost £250 million-worth of sales, 2 per cent. of its market share, which it has never recovered, and there was considerable alarm among dealers and component manufacturers. This has been a smooth process which has had their interests very much in mind.

The continued volume of production and success of the business depends entirely on the success of the management and work force in maintaining and improving their position in the market place. We believe that the privatised company will be much better placed to compete in that market place than it would be if it continued in public sector ownership.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman kindly answer the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) about whether he or the Government have received any estimates or forecasts of the effect of this deal on the employees of the Rover Group, and perhaps its suppliers? Does he agree that, just as BAe must put the matter to ballot of its shareholders, it is only fair that the Government should put it to a ballot of their shareholders—the electorate?

Mr. Clarke: I made it clear a moment ago that we have not entered into detailed commitments about the future shape of the business, except that BAe has made it clear that it has bought the company as a long-term investment and is committed to its continued development. The total number of employees engaged in any particular occupation will depend, as I keep saying, upon its success in the market place. I am in no position to make forecasts about that for anything more than the immediate future. The acquisition in itself has no effect upon employment prospects in the group, except to give a little added security to those who work there because of the potential benefit of the company being free to trade as a private sector company.

I have no intention of embarking on a referendum on this subject. The judgment of the people might be a little more reliable than that of the Labour party, but I fear that the period of uncertainty during the referendum would do a huge amount of damage to the business and all those dependent on it.

Sir Giles Shaw (Pudsey): Will my right hon. and learned Friend accept my congratulations on the speed as well as the success of the negotiations that he has led? Perhaps those congratulations should also go to that hard-working team of officials who serve him so well. Will he lift his uncharacteristic shyness on two aspects? Will he comment further on, first, the Honda association and the joint projects undergone by Honda — not just the management commitment, but the project list — and, secondly, on the competitive business within the European Community? My right hon. and learned Friend referred to the opening of the European processes. Does he have some confidence that they will be closed favourably at the appropriate time?

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who had responsibility for this business at more difficult times. As he was so successful in assisting the company through those difficult times, I am sure that he is as delighted as I am to see the project come to such a successful conclusion with this privatisation

We have ascertained that Honda is perfectly content for the acquisition to go ahead. Indeed, it appears to welcome it. It would have been somewhat worried if a car manufacturer had shown an interest in the group, but we have had no offer from any car manufacturer. Honda has shown its willingness to continue to collaborate model by model with the Rover Group, which has been important to the group in the past.

Processes within the EC will inevitably take a little time. All the other member states have to be given the opportunity to comment on the state aid element of what we propose. We have the Commission's agreement to expedite that process as quickly as possible, and I hope that it will be concluded within the next few months.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): Is it not true that, while BAe is paying £150 million, the tax loss concession is worth £175 million to it, so it ends up with £25 million in hand? Has not the right hon. and learned Gentleman handed an inquiry to the Public Accounts Committee on a plate? Is it not true that the only people who who have benefited from this matter in the past few days, and indeed, today, are those who are speculating in BAe's shares who have pre-empted this decision and who will inevitably make a substantial gain?

Mr. Clarke: The hon. Gentleman is a member of the Public Accounts Committee and no doubt he will have an opportunity to put forward those arguments again. I remind him that the taxpayer is guaranteeing £1·6 billion-worth of bank and trade creditors who have been dealing with the company on that basis until now. Those liabilities will be extinguished over the next few months. For the moment, because of its losses, the group has accumulated £1·6 billion-worth of tax losses, which could be offset against any future profitability of the group, at great expense to the Exchequer. We have extinguished over £1 billion-worth of those tax losses, and that in itself saves the Exchequer a contingent liability of about £400 million. When the hon. Gentleman looks at the deal more closely he will see that it is a bargain for the taxpayer, that proper accountability can be mantained for the public interest and that it is good news for BAe and those involved in the Rover Group.

Mr. Michael Stern (Bristol, North-West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give a clear assurance to the House that any future application for launch aid by BAe will in no way be affected by its link with the Rover Group, whether or not the Rover Group is running at a profit at the time and whatever means of financing the Rover Group is being conducted by BAe?

Mr. Clarke: I am not anticipating any early application for more launch aid from BAe, because we have only recently concluded the launch aid arrangement for the A330 and A340. If any future launch aid applications are made, we shall look at them on exactly the same basis as we have looked upon past applications in the light of our statutory obligations and our judgment whether they are justified in order to get a project under way in the interests of the national economy. I can assure my hon. Friend that the agreement that I have announced today in no way affects our dealings with BAe on the other parts of its business.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): Will the Minister explain the logic of the sequence that when private companies go bust they are taken into public ownership to protect jobs, with taxpayers' money they are turned into profit, and then, when they are in profit, they are handed back to private enterprise? All the industries that have been nationalised in the past 20 years have been badly run in the private sector. What guarantees has the Minister that this enterprise will be better run in the private sector than it presently is in the public sector?

Mr. Clarke: I do not want to give too long an answer to explain the sequence of events. I am sure that hon. Members will recall the background. The economic and industrial climate in the country was quite disastrous to the success of any major manufacturing industry. There was raging inflation, large public sector deficits and a steady loss of competition in international markets. Car companies were overmanned and inefficient, with over-powerful and out-of-control local trade union leadership encouraged by the Government of the day to continue to obstruct any moves towards real competitiveness and higher efficiency. The Government then nationalised the company to protect it against reality and to subsidise continued over-manning and inefficiency. Nearly £3 billion-worth of taxpayers' money was lost in covering the losses.

Then a Government came in who were determined to improve the climate of British industry, to back up the management that wished to turn the company around, and to support Graham Day and his team in their efforts to produce the first trading profits. We are now putting the company back where it belongs, in the private sector, in an economic environment that is very attractive to the whole of British manufacturing industry.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that two fundamental points are being missed? First, the Rover Group has been purchased by a British company, which is important. Secondly, looking at the balance sheet of the Rover Group, and bearing in mind that my right hon. and learned Friend certainly is not in a seller's market, he and his Department have achieved a very good deal indeed for the taxpayer. Will he confirm that when he approaches the Commission, he will argue that Renault recently had £1·2 billion-worth of debt written off by the French Government, with the approval of the Commission? When he argues under articles 92 and 93 of the treaty of Rome, will he use the same arguments to gain approval for the deal as the French Government used?

Mr. Clarke: I share my hon. Friend's pleasure at the fact that the company that made an offer to the Government for the Rover Group is a British company and one of our major manufacturing companies. That is welcome indeed. I agree that the deal that we have struck in selling the Government's shareholding is reasonable and fair and perfectly advantageous to the taxpayer and to the companies involved.

When we go to the European Commission we shall point out that the state aid that we shall be providing will be part of the process to return the company to the private sector, where we expect it to thrive in a competitive environment. Therefore, I trust that the Commission will look favourably upon the suggestion as a logical step in getting rid of a history of subsidy and loss and enabling the company to enter a privatised setting, which ought to be consistent with the whole policy of the Community towards the European market.

Mr. James Lamond (Oldham, Central and Royton): What is so special about British Aerospace, which is declaring redundancies in my constituency, that it has managed to get the Government to suspend their normal policy of allowing free play of the market in competition and getting a splendid bargain because it happens to be the first in the queue to ask for it? Bearing in mind that it took a long time for the Government to decide to give launch aid, even as a loan, it is surprising that the decision was reached so quickly. May we look forward to the day, as the owners of Rover, that the company will ask for launch aid for new models? Will the taxpayers have such a bargain when that is taken into consideration?

Mr. Clarke: British Aerospace has reached this successful conclusion because it was the first company since the election to put the proposition to us that it wished to acquire a company which everyone knew we proposed to privatise. We gave it exclusive negotiating rights for a period because we feared the disruptive effects on the business if everyone began making bids for it and created a great air of uncertainty for the company, its component suppliers and distributors. I am sorry if the hon. Gentleman finds the speed of the negotiations disconcerting. It is true that for a change this piece of business has been conducted with reasonable secrecy, expedition and good sense on all sides. That is the way in which good government should be conducted.

Mr. David Gilroy Bevan (Birmingham, Yardley): I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for the excellence of the arrangements, and particularly for the fact that a formula has been found to keep the company British. I would have thought that that would find complete accord with my colleagues across the Floor. Will the understanding and the obligation given that the company will remain in the present hands for the next five years also apply to all subsidiary parts of the company, including Land Rover? This would allow for the further protection of the employment of my constituents.

Mr. Clarke: My hon. Friend represents Yardley in Birmingham and I am sure that his opinion coincides with that of the vast majority of the people who live in Birmingham whose well-being depends to a large extent upon the industry. We will have to wait to see, but my expectation is that this arrangement will be welcomed by the work force and by all those who work in the area and are dependent on the Rover Group for business. Most will share my hon. Friend's view of the purchaser and welcome the fact that British Aerospace has been the successful purchaser. We have entered into an agreement whereby British Aerospace will not be able to sell the whole business or any substantial part of it during the five-year term. I am certain that it will not be able to sell off Land Rover separately during the five-year agreement.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Will the Minister help us by clarifying paragraph 3 of his statement:

"Before entering into a contract with British Aerospace we considered a number of confidential expressions of interest, but none amounted to a specific offer"?

How could there be a specific offer from anyone if no one had the information on which to base the offer, which was exclusive to British Aerospace? Was there any interest from Ford, and did Ford express any annoyance at the way in which it was treated over Austin Rover?

Mr. Clarke: I cannot disclose commercially confidential approaches to us. I certainly cannot start disclosing the nature of the representations made to us by different companies or identify the companies involved. As I have said, we had various expressions of interest, but none of those amounted to an offer. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman has given an explanation of why, perhaps, there was no offer. I have explained to the House why we felt that it was right to agree to the request of British Aerospace and Rover Group that there should be a period of exclusive negotiation with British Aerospace. The alternative would have caused considerable uncertainty to all in, and possibly disruption to, the business. Therefore, we pursued exclusive negotiations, which have come to a successful conclusion. No one could complain about that.

Mr. Dalyell: What about Ford?

Mr. Clarke: I am not prepared to disclose the nature of our exchanges with individual companies or to identify those companies. Such approaches are commercially confidential.

Mr. Ian Mills (Meriden): Does my right hon. and learned Friend find as surprising as I do the degree of hypocrisy and synthetic attitude of many Opposition Members, including the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), in particular about foreign ownership? Will he confirm that this must be the best offer for the 45,000 people working at Austin Rover? Does he agree that the need for a secure future for the 51,000 people working in the distribution network, and the hundreds of thousands who work in the components industry, is often forgotten? Finally, does he remember the great opposition from Opposition Members to Land Rover going to General Motors and Austin Rover going to Ford, and does he agree that the solution for a good British company bringing in technical skills must be the best possible solution?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. I am sure that had there been privatisation with another company there would have been wild indignation from the Opposition if another car manufacturer had expressed an interest, or an overseas company had expressed an interest. They are pressed to find objections to British Aerospace, which is a rather popular and successful company. As far as I can see, their main criticism has been about the terms that we struck. They are trying to convince the House and the public that the Labour party would have struck a more successful privatisation deal with some unknown purchaser—an unlikely concept.

With regard to my hon. Friend's last serious point, it is particularly good news for all those who work in the components industry. There will be more jobs in the industries that provide the components for the Rover Group, such as Unipart, than there are in the Rover Group itself. The smooth transition from one ownership to another, with no threat of disruption to the business, will be welcomed by all those interested in the components industry.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I must have regard to the fact that there is to be another statement after this one and that there is a very heavy day in front of us. I shall allow questions to continue for another five minutes and then we must move on. I say now, rather than at the end of this statement, that I shall consider calling those hon. Members who are not called now when this matter is debated on another occasion. I ask for brief questions, please.

Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract and Castleford): The Minister has told us that Rover's debts are £1·6 billion. What are the company's assets, and how do they compare?

Mr. Clarke: In December, the net asset value was £334 million, but I must ask the hon. Gentleman to await the report and accounts of the company and the balance sheet that will eventually be put to British Aerospace shareholders for a further and an up-to-date figure.

Mr. Richard Page (Hertfordshire, South-West): When my right hon. and learned Friend considers the remarks

of the Opposition, will he remember that they reached the zenith of their financial control with the operation of the National Enterprise Board? Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that other large motor manufacturing companies have billions of pounds worth of invesment lined up to produce new models and new developments? Does he therefore accept that the terms that he has announced today are barely enough, if enough, to ensure that Rover escapes permanently from the public sector?

Mr. Clarke: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's comments about the Opposition's record when they were in government. It bears no comparison with our own. I agree also with his final judgment that their attacks upon us show complete schizophrenia. One moment they object to the fact that we are injecting cash to eliminate £800 million of bank debts that would never have been accumulated if the company had not been in the public sector, and the next moment they suggest that the new group will not be strong enough to raise the capital to invest in new models. Had we handed this company to anybody without doing something about the scandalous level of debt that it has been allowed to accumulate when it was under public sector control, it would have been in considerable difficulties. That is why it is a perfectly sensible bargain to get those debts out of the way before the company is returned to the private sector.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): Will the Minister not be so dismissive about the interests of the workers in the company, particularly in relation to the pension fund? Is he aware that today car industry workers are far more alert and aware of the consequences of the pension fund? Recent industrial action in the car industry was not about wages and conditions; it was about pensions. The Minister has been far too dismissive this afternoon of the fact that it is his responsibility to ensure that the interests of the workers in the pension fund are fairly dealt with. There is evidence that the "increases" in no way reflect the amount of the increase in the pension funds.

Mr. Clarke: I am extremely concerned —as concerned as the hon. Gentleman—about jobs in the car industry and about the well-being of the work force. My opinion is that the position of the work force in this company will be made better, not worse, by transferring the company to the private sector, where it will have a better chance of thriving in the market place. One reason why we are acting as we are is that we believe that privatisation is in the interests of commercial organisations and of all those whose livelihood depends upon them.

The last time that we had an exchange on the pension fund I made inquiries to find out what the dispute was about over the Rover Group's pension fund. It seems to arise from a misunderstanding of a perfectly ordinary process, whereby a pension fund has accumulated a surplus that has been earned on the investment of both employer and employees. The employer and the employees are benefiting from that surplus by way of a holiday on contributions for the employer and improved pension benefits for the members of the fund. That does not justify a strike in the car industry or in any other industry, and I trust that the hon. Gentleman will not lend his support to groundless strikes in this or in any other industry.

Mr. Tim Smith (Beaconsfield): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that he has secured a very good deal for the British taxpayer, in the sense that he has found a willing buyer for the Rover Group? Does he recall the uncertainty that prevailed just two years ago and the damage that was done to the business of the company at that time? Will he contrast that with the excellent way in which he has concluded this deal, which guarantees British ownership?

Mr. Clarke: I am grateful for my hon. Friend's judgment of the bargain that we have struck, and I have every regard for his opinion in these matters, which is more accurate than that of our critics on the Opposition Benches. I also agree with my hon. Friend that most people outside the House will welcome the fact that the successful purchaser is a great British company and that it is a major exporter of manufactured goods from this country. I am quite sure that the opposition from the other side of the House would have been very strong if anything else had occurred.

On the last occasion, when we did not proceed in a different way but when rumours emerged about the interest of other companies, the effect was devastating, and in a period of about two months the company lost 2 per cent. of its market share, which it has never recovered. This time, the comparable confidentiality, the expedition of the negotiations and the fact that we never declared open house to all the other bidders has been to the great advantage of the company and of all those who work for it.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): What are the legal arrangements that are allegedly designed to make it not in the interests of British Aerospace to sell within five years, and how enforceable are those arrangements? How can the Minister possibly say to the House and to the nation that he has obtained the best possible offer when he did not provide to any company other than British Aerospace the information that would have been needed in order to obtain appropriate offers from anyone else, including Ford?

Mr. Clarke: We have attached terms to the injection of cash into the Rover Group so that, even if there were to be a sale within five years, the first £650 million of any profit would go the Government? It would not therefore be in the financial interests of British Aerospace to avoid that term. If it attempted to use the tax losses over and above the £500 million that remain, then, pound for pound, that benefit would be taken back by the Treasury, so again it would not benefit the company if it sought to do that.

The hon. Gentleman also asked why we gave no other company the opportunity to make an offer. If we had provided everybody else with such an opportunity, we should have run the risk of causing great uncertainty and disruption to the business.

Mr. Phillip Oppenheim (Amber Valley): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that in 1960 we produced 14 times the number of cars that were produced by the Japanese, but that by 1979 they were out-producing us by eight to one? Have not the British car industry, the British car worker and the British taxpayer paid a heavy enough price already for the years of union plutocracy and the emasculated management of the car industry? Is not this, under very difficult circumstances, an extremely good deal?

Mr. Clarke: I agree with my hon. Friend. In 1988 the vehicle industry in this country is being completely transformed. That has to be compared with the position in the late 1970s, when the Government of the day intervened and poured taxpayers' money into the industry to enable it to remain uncompetitive, overmanned and inefficient, in the belief that somehow that would safeguard jobs in the industry. One sees that there are plenty of Opposition Members who fondly imagine that that is the right way for a Government to behave towards an important commercial undertaking.

Mr. Gould: Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman assure the House, preferably with the authority of his right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, who is sitting beside him, that there will be a full opportunity to debate this extraordinary statement during the week that we return from the Easter recess, particularly so that we can press him for the answers that he has notably failed to give us this afternoon on such issues as the prospective job losses, which the Rover Group must surely have discussed with him? Is he aware that, in the absence of any such assurance I shall ask you, Mr. Speaker, to consider an application this afternoon under Standing Order No. 20 for a debate forthwith?

Mr. Clarke: The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House is sitting beside me, and he has intimated that he will welcome an opportunity to discuss, through the usual channels, the possibility of a debate on this matter. I do not think that he would want me to bind him to exactly when that debate is to take place, but I am sure that he has taken on board the request for an early debate. I personally would welcome such a debate.

I realise that the details of this deal are complex but I attempted to be as explicit as possible in my statement. It is remotely possible that when people have studied the details they will not wish to press for such a debate, but if they do so we shall be happy to debate the matter once more. I look forward to taking the matter further. I hope that by the time we hold our debate I shall have more encouraging news about our progress towards making this conditional agreement a final agreement—as we make progress with the European Commission and as we move towards the general meeting of British Aerospace shareholders.

Urban Policy (Scotland)

4.29 pm

The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about urban policy in Scotland. I am today publishing a document entitled "New Life for Urban Scotland" which explains our policies and sets out our plans for major new initiatives. Copies are available in the Vote Office and have been placed in the Library.

Since the 1970s much has been done to revive Scotland's urban areas and in particular to bring new life to inner-city areas, for example through Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal in Leith and in Dundee. It is generally agreed that Glasgow and other areas of Scotland are being transformed. But in the 1980s it is the people living in the large peripheral estates who are suffering most from choice in the type of housing they occupy, who have the least say in running their communities, and who are most dependent on state benefits and services.

In drawing up our proposals, we have carefully examined the lessons of recent experience. Future action will therefore be firmly based on the principles of helping residents take more responsibility in various ways for their communities, of full involvement of the private sector, and of partnership between different public bodies and the private sector.

It is especially important that we renew the self-confidence and initiative of local people and help them to assume increased responsibility for their communities. The way is open through, for example, involvement in training opportunities, tenant co-operatives, housing associations, school boards, small businesses and self-employment. It is essential that residents are fully involved and committed to plans to regenerate their areas.

The private sector has already demonstrated the important part it can play in bringing back new life to deprived urban areas. The Government are committed to increasing further their involvement, both through our wider economic policies and through encouraging investment in deprived areas. It is part of the task of both central and local government to create a climate in which the private sector feels able to invest. We hope the private sector will examine with enthusiasm the scope for investment in areas currently neglected. We want to see it involved from the outset in new urban regeneration initiatives. There are opportunities for investment which would both be of benefit to the private sector and make a major contribution to the economic and social regeneration of these areas.

For the Government's part, there is in place in Scotland a strong array of instruments to pursue urban renewal. some £500 million will be spent on urban renewal in Scotland in 1988-89, over and above local authority spending. The Scottish Development Agency is using its comprehensive powers in many places. Last year it spent £62 million on urban renewal. Urban renewal is a major priority in its corporate plan over the next few years.

The urban programme will spend £44 million this year, an increase of £6·4 million. We are announcing today approval of 225 urban programme projects, worth £8·9 million. Scottish Homes is soon to be created as a new and important housing agency, which will work alongside the SDA in pursuing urban regeneration. It will build on the expertise of the Housing Corporation and the Scottish

Special Housing Associaton, which between them spend over £125 million per year on urban renewal and which fully support the proposals that I am announcing today.

In addition, we are announcing today that £25 million is being specifically earmarked next year for new housing-related urban regeneration initiatives by the Housing Corporation. This replaces the original figure of £12 million referred to in paragraph 45 of the document. As announced on Friday, we have also just issued extra housing capital allocations to district and islands councils totalling £77 million, as a result of the popularity of council house sales. Policies on health and social services, crime, education and training provide special support to areas of urban deprivation. Enterprise is to be encouraged through the wide network of enterprise trusts, the enterprise allowance scheme, training and the new range of regional assistance. The Manpower Services Commission will spend some £250 million in urban areas, which will contribute to urban renewal.

With so much already happening, the Government's first aim is to sustain the momentum. But this is not enough; over the next 10 years a new priority must be given to tackling the problems of the peripheral estates. The Government will therefore establish a number of initiatives which will simultaneously pursue economic, environmental, housing and social objectives in peripheral estates. Four major new initiatives will be located in Castlemilk in Glasgow, Ferguslie Park in Paisley, Wester Hailes in Edinburgh and Whitfield in Dundee, subject to consultation with the local authorities and other bodies concerned.

Partnership will be required for taking forward these initiatives, involving the local community, the Government, the SDA, Scottish Homes, the local authorities, the private sector, the health boards, the MSC and other public bodies. The Scottish Office will initiate the development of such partnerships over the next few months and will be responsible for steering their progress. Ministers will be directly involved. The Government will look to the SDA and, in due course, Scottish Homes, to play a leading role in implementing the initiatives, and the initiatives will need a local base in the communities themselves.

Moreover, the SDA, with local authorities, the Housing Corporation and the private sector, has plans well advanced for smaller-scale local initiatives in peripheral estates at Barlanark in Easterhouse, Glasgow, Forgewood in Motherwell and Tulloch in Perth. These pilot initiatives are aimed at revitalising these estates through action on housing, employment and the environment. The public and private sectors will contribute an estimated £45 million to these smaller new pilot initiatives. The SSHA, in consultation with the Housing Corporation, also has in hand an important housing initiative in Castlemilk, which will cost several million pounds.

We expect that these new initiatives will make a major contribution to tackling the characteristic problems of urban decay and will set a pattern for urban regeneration in Scotland into the 1990s. The work of urban renewal in Scotland, however, will extend more widely than these outlying estates, and the policies which we have set out are aimed at bringing new life to cities and towns throughout Scotland.

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): After all the advance publicity and public relations hype, this statement is a sad anticlimax. What can we say? It is a beautifully produced brochure; it is glossy; it is splendid in its layout; but, sadly, it contains nothing. There is little hope here for those struggling with the effects of urban deprivation. The statement that the Secretary of State has made takes us no further forward. It deals in banal generalities.

Is financial provision not the key? And what have we been given, apart from a gathering of bric-a-brac from the past ingeniously packaged to give the impression of generosity? What new money is included over and above what has already been announced, and what new money is coming directly from the Government? How can anyone be impressed by talk of an additional £77 million for housing authorities when this depends entirely upon receipts? Glasgow's nominal share is £11 million, but all of it is to be found by selling assets. There will not be a penny, as I understand it, from the Government.

Is it not a fact that capital spending on housing in the public sector was scheduled to fall between 1987-88 and 1988-89 from £556 million to £505 million? The one specific addition that I can detect in this document, which is an additional £13 million for urban regeneration, announced today, still leaves in effect a cut of some £38 million between this year and next year. This whole presentation has been a mirage and a confidence trick.

We are promised four new initiatives; it is stated as a bald fact. But where are the details on structure or on funding? We are told that it is too early to specify what these initiatives will cost, clearly because neither the right hon. and learned Gentleman nor his advisers have thought out what is to be done. The document discouragingly warns that the overall level of expenditure on urban regeneration will be determined annually through the public expenditure machinery. On top of that, we are promised that Ministers will be directly involved. There is certainly little to cheer about there.

The Secretary of State boasts about the role of the private sector, but there is not a name to be seen, no hard information, no figures. Unlike the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, he cannot even promise breakfast for the eager entrepreneurs.

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that we welcome any initiative that involves all the relevant agencies, including local government, is properly funded and does not represent a takeover bid against the wishes of the local community? There is absolutely no guarantee in this document or in this apology for a statement that those criteria have been met.

Does the Secretary of State recall that he and his colleagues have recently been given to quoting the Grieve report? Has he read the committee's final statement, published yesterday? If so, did he notice its view, on the question whether finance could realistically be expected from the private sector to tackle the problems of urban deprivation, that

"the Scottish Office produced no evidence of a conclusive or even convincing character and obscurity remains"?

Is that not a fair and balanced judgment on today's shoddy exercise in window dressing?

Mr. Rifkind: I can now see what the *Glasgow Herald* meant this morning when it said:

"Labour's problem is that it opposes everything and appears to have nothing constructive to say."

That sums it up more eloquently than anything that I could possibly say.

[Mr. Rifkind]

I noticed that towards the end of his remarks, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) said that the Opposition would welcome any new initiatives that sought to work with the local community and to provide partnership between the public and private sectors, leading to proper provision for the problems. The hon. Gentleman should be aware that that is exactly what the statement does.

I would make the following points in answer to the hon. Gentleman's questions. First, the hon. Gentleman was right to say that, for the most part, we are not talking about new money — [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah!"] No, because resources have not been the problem in the past. Hundreds, if not thousands, of millions of pounds have been invested in Glasgow's housing and in the housing stock of local authorities throughout Scotland. If we are faced today with these appalling problems on peripheral housing estates, as Professor Grieve concluded, resources by themselves will not solve the problem unless we know how to use them adequately.

It so happens that the statement includes about £25 million of new resources to be used by the Housing Corporation. Much of it will be available in the four areas in which the initiatives are to take place. I take pride in the fact that those additional resources are available because of the popularity of the Government's policies of house sales. Tenants have responded to the Government's policy and as a result we can now reinvest the resources into the housing stock in a way that gives double chargrin to Opposition Members. They are upset and annoyed that tenants are buying their houses and that the money is going back into housing to improve the remaining housing stock. I can understand their disappointment, but they cannot expect anyone else to share it.

Secondly, the hon. Member for Garscadden said that he of course welcomed any new initiatives but believed that there was nothing in these initiatives to be welcomed. It will be interesting to see whether Glasgow district council shares his view and whether Edinburgh district council and other local authorities declined to co-operate on the grounds that there is nothing in the proposals to benefit the housing estates in their localities.

Mr. Dewar *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is now trying to withdraw that insinuation, but he cannot have it both ways. If local authorities believe that the proposals do not represent any significant new initiative, they will doubtless show complete disinterest. But the hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do that if local authorities have the interests of their tenants at heart they will welcome these initiatives.

Finally, the hon. Gentleman asked about the Grieve report. He will appreciate that Professor Grieve identified what the Government have been saying for a long time — that single-tenure housing estates are one of the causes of the problem. Professor Grieve recommended that Glasgow district council should dispose of up to 25 per cent. of its total housing stock, and up to 50 per cent. in the peripheral areas, to have any prospect of resolving the social and economic problems in those localities. If the hon. Member for Garscadden quotes Professor Grieve, I hope that he supports the report's analysis.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind hon. Members from Scotland that we have a day ahead of us in which they are heavily involved. It may just be possible—I cannot be certain—that some of their questions to the Minister could be raised in the debates to come. I ask them to ask brief, preferably single, questions, so that we do not delay too long.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the attitude of the Opposition to any new initiative, whether in housing or Ford at Dundee, is utterly depressing and negative? Will he accept my congratulations on his new policies and, realising that they are so popular, extend them to the rural areas of Scotland, which are anxious to have the opportunity of further urban development? Will he bring in the Scottish Sports Council to help improve the quality of life, either through private money or directly through Scottish Sports Council aid?

Mr. Rifkind: I thank my hon. Friend and acknowledge that many of the rural areas have difficulties which the Scottish Development Agency and other bodies must take into account.

As for my hon. Friend's general point, it is very sad that the Labour party, which claims so often to speak for Scotland, has produced over the years virtually no original thought on housing, education or urban regeneration; it appears merely to believe that resources, irrespective of how they are used, are the solution to all the social problems that we face. The party offers a depressing prospect.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): The Secretary of State has mentioned four peripheral estates, but is he aware that they are all in areas that have suffered seriously over the past few years from cuts in housing grant and housing capital allocations? If that money had been available to local authorities, many of the problems in those estates would not exist.

It is pathetic that, even after announcing these initiatives, the right hon. and learned Gentleman cannot give a single penny of new money. He says it is "too early" to specify how much the initiatives will cost, and there is no commitment to extra money. If he wants to call GEAR in aid, he might at least acknowledge that it was launched by the Labour Government—by me, in fact. At the time of its launch we took on the financial commitment for the following five years—that is the difference between what we did and what he is doing.

Mr. Rifkind: If the right hon. Gentleman believes that the problems of Castlemilk or Whitfield, or the other areas, began in 1979——

Mr. Millan: I did not say that.

Mr. Rifkind: I am glad that there is a common view that the peripheral estates in Scotland have suffered problems for many years, on which the resources that even the Labour Government provided for them appeared to have little practical effect.

The GEAR initiative, initiated by the right hon. Gentleman and continued with the full enthusiasm of the present Government, has been a great success. He should therefore be the first to acknowledge that other initiatives, this time in the peripheral housing estates, that involve

some principles similar to those of GEAR but which also seek to learn the lessons of GEAR, may have an even better prospect of success.

One of the problems of GEAR was that, although it produced major environmental and housing improvements, it did not provide job opportunities for the local population within GEAR areas, partly, perhaps, because the people were not sufficiently involved in the development of economic opportunities in those areas.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh, and Berwickshire): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that if there is no new money, people are entitled to consider this afternoon's statement a piece of cynical window dressing? Does he acknowledge that the statement portrays a worrying trend of seeking to write down the role of local authorities in the new initiatives? That is of great concern to us.

I ask the Secretary of State how towns such as Hawick in my constituency and schemes such as Burnfoot can expect to benefit from his announcement?

Mr. Rifkind: First, I said that there was going to be an additional £25 million for the Housing Corporation. Secondly, areas such as Hawick in the hon. Gentleman's constituency have pockets of severe deprivation.

Mr. Kirkwood: Pockets?

Mr. Rifkind: Yes, pockets: they are small towns.

Mr. Kirkwood: The whole town of Hawick?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman is free to express his view. If the local authority wants to apply for urban aid, it will be eligible for consideration.

Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn (Perth and Kinross): Will my right hon. and learned Friend appreciate that every time he announces Christmas, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and Opposition Members suggest, by mirage and con tricks, that it is in fact a crucifixion? We welcome today's statement. We in Perthshire are delighted with my right hon. and learned Friend's announcement about Tulloch in Perth. We are glad that he is imitating the great events that occurred, thanks to a Tory administration, in Pilton in Edinburgh, and look forward to him doing the same for the country towns and steadings of Scotland.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. and learned Friend is correct to give the example of Pilton. There, the involvement of the private sector has, as anyone who knows it will confirm, made a substantial difference to improving the locality and the quality of life of those who live in it.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): If the Secretary of State can tell me what new money falls to the Whitfield estate in my constituency — over and above money already in the pipeline—I shall be pleased to welcome it. However, I remind him that there is more than one peripheral housing estate in Dundee. Half Dundee's population live in estates such as Whitfield. Can the right hon. and learned Gentleman give me a guarantee that the four major area-based initiatives will not be pursued at the expense of less funding, less attention and less care for housing estates everywhere across Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: I certainly thank the hon. Gentleman fo. what I think was an indirect welcome for the inclusion of Whitfield in the list of initiatives. While some priority will be given to the four main initiatives, we recognise of course that many other areas in Scotland, including in Dundee, require similar treatment. They cannot all be included in the first areas to be considered. We have tried to achieve a geographical balance, and to recognise some of the different kinds of peripheral estate that require to be the subject of the initiatives we put forward.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the people of Scotland will recognise this initiative as something that really begins to tackle the problems, for the first time, of so many people living in council houses that are in appalling conditions? Successive Governments have failed to tackle these problems, so this initiative will be so welcome along with the involvement of people in their own affairs and in the community in every respect, as well as the involvement of the private sector. All this is real devolution, from which the people of Scotland will benefit.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. Unless one gets active participation and not simply acquiescence of the local community, one cannot claim to have regenerated that community. Therefore, we genuinely believe that the local community must be involved in a very substantive way in the developments and initiatives that will take place within their area. It is not simply a question of regenerating buildings, as we must be able to provide a quality of life for the people in that area. That does not mean that we must provide for them; they must be part of that provision if it is to be at all meaningful.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): Is not the real situation that the Government, through their policy of cutting and capping local authorities, have created a situation in which building and improvement is grinding almost to a halt? In so far as the glossy developments illustrated in the brochure have come from local authorities, that has been achieved despite and against the actions of the Government. They have given us the HP sauce: when shall we see the bloody meat? When will we get new money? Is there any new money?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman, representing as he does a Paisley constituency, might have preceded his remarks by welcoming the fact that Ferguslie Park is included. *[Interruption.]* It may not be in his constituency, but it is a rather curious concept that the hon. Gentleman has suddenly become so protective about anything that happens in the other half of Paisley. I do not take it entirely seriously. This is good news for Paisley and the hon. Gentleman should have had the courtesy to recognise that.

In relation to resources, we announced just two days ago £77 million of new allocations for local authorities, because of the success and popularity of council house sales. Today, I have announced a further £25 million for the Housing Corporation, also as a result of receipts from sales. That will all go towards rehabilitating the housing stock in these localities.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): Does it not accurately summarise the Government's priorities that £800 million can be found to privatise the Rover Group, but only £30 million can be found for Scottish housing, as set out in this document? Is it not the case that £30 million is entirely inadequate to deal with the enormity of the

[Mr. Alex Salmond]

problems in Scottish housing? Will the people of Scotland not read the Secretary of State's glossy brochure and ask where the cash is?

Mr Rifkind: On the contrary. If people wish to know about the cash, they will find out about the £500 million to be spent on urban renewal over the next year in the various ways that I have mentioned. The hon. Gentleman, as an economist, should be the first to appreciate that, despite large sums of money being spent already, it is not the sum of the resources, but how they are spent, that determines whether schemes are successful.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Will the Secretary of State accept that, when we are considering past economic developments, the builders of the new town in Edinburgh and the merchant city of Glasgow did not do their discounted cash flow sums? We are looking for co-ordination of initiatives that involves not just urban Scotland but the whole of Scotland. Will he accept that there are problems, particularly in mining communities, which I have referred to before? They are being decimated under his Administration. People have no buildings like those in the centre of Glasgow to look up to. This is a severe problem. The Secretary of State ought to give it some attention, and give additional money and real resources to these communities.

Mr. Rifkind: I do not dissent from much of what the hon. Gentleman says. It is sad that neither he nor his hon. Friends have said how they believe these additional resources should be spent. They approach this issue simply by saying, "Please give us more money." *[Interruption.]* Well, in none of the contributions made today and on other occasions have we heard any explanation of new ways in which the hon. Gentleman and his friends would wish to use new resources. My statement indicates a new approach to urban regeneration. If the hon. Gentleman disagrees with it, he should address himself to providing a coherent alternative strategy that does not just depend on the incantation, "Give us more money."

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): Does not my right hon. and learned Friend agree that the quality of life in council house estates over many decades has suffered from the tyranny of mismanagement by local authorities, lack of involvement by the tenants, the iniquitous points system, and many other factors? Will he assure the House that, within his proposals today, there will be a real effort to delegate and devolve to people real responsibility for their own homes and estates? Will he do everything possible to assist in that, and in the continued sale of council houses, as in that way, a new sense of pride and involvement can be engendered in Scottish council house estates.

Mr. Rifkind: My hon. Friend is correct. Glasgow district council is the largest landlord in western Europe. In several local authorities, such as Motherwell, about 80 per cent. of the housing stock is still owned by one landlord — the local authority. I do not think that anyone, whatever his political views, believes that that is healthy. To be fair, even the Labour party seems to have come round to realising, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, that that position is not in the interests of their constituents. The real debate is not in terms of the argy-bargy that we have heard today, but about how we can meet the aspirations of people in Scotland who live on these housing estates, and who do not believe that the existing arrangements meet their aspirations or provide them with the sort of community or housing that they want for themselves and their families.

Mr. Allen Adams (Paisley, North): I think the House should be aware that the Minister and his colleagues have received in the past week, to the best of my knowledge, four or five invitations to visit the north end of Paisley. They have turned down every one of them. That shows how much they care about the north end of Paisley.

Twenty years ago, I was elected by the people of Ferguslie Park to Paisley town council. Ever since then, I have seen every cheapskate Tory politician use the poor as a platform to peddle nonsense. Is the Secretary of State aware that the solution for Ferguslie Park is capital investment and jobs? Unemployment there runs at least 60 per cent.

There is no excuse for the Secretary of State's failure. Next to Ferguslie Park is the biggest airport in Scotland. We have one of the best road systems in Scotland and an excellent railway link from Ferguslie Park and Paisley. Yet the Secretary of State has failed abysmally to attract any medium-sized industrial firm into that area in a decade.

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman is implying by his question that he would rather we did not include Ferguslie Park in our major initiatives, I shall be very happy to consider that.

Mr. Thomas McAvoy (Glasgow, Rutherglen): The Secretary of State expressed in his statement enthusiasm for partnership to implement his four initiatives. In Castlemilk, part of which is in my constituency there is a Castlemilk area liaison committee, comprising local authority representatives and statutory bodies and, most important, local community representatives. Will the Secretary of State give an assurance that the Castlemilk liaison committee will be a focal point for implementing the initiative in Castlemilk?

Mr. Rifkind: I hope that it will be very much involved. We shall need to consider who are the proper representatives of the community; if that organisation is representative, of course it will be involved. I must repeat that, with the possible exception of the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion), it is typical of the Opposition that even hon. Members representing constituencies affected by these initiatives are unable to give them even a general welcome. That shows more clearly than anything I could say that it would not matter a whit what the Government say, as Opposition Members are adopting a negative and hostile attitude that is as boring as it is predictable.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): Paragraph 63 of the document that we have been discussing refers to the contribution of sport and the arts to the quality of life in urban areas. Indeed, both the Scottish Sports Council and the Scottish Arts Council are then referred to with approval in the document. In the light of that approval, and the contributions made by both agencies, what additional funds are the Government prepared to make available to both of them so that they can extend and expand the work that the Government obviously approve of?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. and learned Gentleman, I am sure, should know that the Government are providing the Scottish Sports Council with particular new resources to enable it to have new headquarters. That has been identified by the Scottish Sports Council as crucial to its continuing work. The Sports Council and the Scottish Arts Council have the same necessity as everyone else, which is to identify the priorities to be attached to their overall activities. I agree with the hon. and learned Gentleman that those activities are relevant to urban regeneration. That is why the Government have drawn attention to them.

Mr. Tony Favell (Stockport): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that one of the most welcome pieces of news this afternoon is that a realisation is dawning among the Scots media that if Scotland were promised the moon, the Labour party would vote against it? Are the Scots aware that their image in the rest of the United Kingdom is that of a bunch of negative nellies?

Mr. Rifkind: There is a lot of sad truth in what my hon. Friend says, because there is an assumption that it would not matter what the Government announced because the Opposition, and even their Members in constituencies that are most directly affected, would find every possible reason—*[Interruption.]* The fact is that that is the sad reality. It is a matter for great sadness that, instead of seeking to identify in a constructive way changes or improvements that might be made to the Government's proposals, the Opposition simply react in the most predictable and tedious fashion — as they are doing today.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): Paragraph 30 of this document refers to the three extant enterprise zones. It also says that there may be exceptional circumstances which might lead to the creation of a further enterprise zone. What is the likelihood of an announcement about an Inverclyde enterprise zone being made during the Prime Minister's proposed visit to my constituency? Incidentally, I have not been notified of that visit by the right hon. and learned Gentleman or by any other Scottish Office Minister. What is the likelihood that there will also be an announcement about new jobs in Greenock and Port Glasgow during the Prime Minister's proposed visit to my constituency?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman will have to wait to see whether there is an early announcement about an enterprise zone for Inverclyde. I appreciate that the hon. Gentleman attaches enormous importance to Inverclyde obtaining enterprise zone status. I hope that he will show some patience, so that a decision can be reached in due course.

Dr. Godman: Next time, I should be informed.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): Does not the Secretary of State recognise the sheer anger on the Opposition Benches? This document was written 13 years ago in Strathclyde and we have been hamstrung for that time by the lack of resources. Then what occurs? The Secretary of State produces a glossy document claiming the ideas for the Government, but still does not produce resources. I should like to ask the Minister one specific question. Page 7 of the document says:

"The private sector effort has been focused through the Glasgow Action initiative."

How much money is there?

Mr. Rifkind: The hon. Gentleman should know that the private sector has in many ways made a major contribution of a kind that the Opposition prophesied would not happen. For example, Local Enterprise Grants for Urban Projects is a Government initiated scheme, and £29 million of LEGUP has brought in over £170 million from the private sector. The hon. Gentleman should be the first to appreciate that the private sector would like to make a major contribution to jobs in his constituency, despite his opposition to its efforts.

Mr. David Marshall (Glasgow, Shettleston): Since my constituency received some of the benefits of the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal project, I welcome this initiative for other areas even though, unfortunately, it is too little, too late. Will the Secretary of State give us an assurance that these projects will receive the resources that they need to complete the job? The GEAR project did not receive such resources. Will he guarantee that the Government will not pull the plug two thirds of the way through, leaving people feeling bitter and disillusioned, as happened with the GEAR project?

Mr. Rifkind: First, I thank the hon. Gentleman for the comments in the first part of his question. On his latter comments, he will appreciate that, throughout the period of the GEAR project, the Government ensured that major sums of public resources were provided. The fact that GEAR has been the success that almost everyone says it is, must lead him to accept that it could not have been a success if the Government had starved it of resources over the last nine years. The GEAR project was initiated by the hon. Gentleman's Government, but since 1979 the project has been the responsibility of this Government. It could not be the success that it is acknowledged to be throughout the United Kingdom if it had not been generously treated in the way that I have mentioned.

Mr. Kenneth Hind (Lancashire, West): As one who is interested in urban renewal—*[Interruption.]*

An Hon. Member: Is he a Member?

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hind —may I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on a very imaginative approach to a very difficult problem?—*[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. We are in the United Kingdom Parliament.

Mr. Hind: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Are hon. Members to understand that my right hon. and learned Friend sees the sale of council houses as one of the major vehicles of his urban renewal policy? Is it not an achievement for his Department that he has been able to make £77 million available to councils throughout Scotland to add to the money that he is putting in for urban renewal throughout Scotland?

Mr. Rifkind: There is undoubtedly a need and a desire for greater home ownership in Scotland, but it is not simply a question of home ownership. The crucial objective in these very large peripheral housing estates is a multiplicity of tenure, involving housing associations, tenant co-operatives, home ownership and municipal

[Mr. Rifkind]

housing. It is only when we get such a wide variety of housing stock that we can claim to have a proper spectrum of housing opportunity for the people in the locality.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Is the Secretary of State aware that, in the Wester Hailes area, his report and statement will not be welcome because his record shows the Secretary of State's commitment to Wester Hailes to be poor? Three years ago, rather than give additional funds to Wester Hailes, the Secretary of State starved Edinburgh district council of capital allocation and the council had to go to Japan to find extra money.

Mr. Rifkind: I say to the hon. Gentleman, as kindly as I can, that in the months that he has ceased to be a councillor for Wester Hailes he has obviously got out of touch with the local community, because only some weeks ago the people in the community wrote to me saying that if the Government were to initiate projects of this kind, they hoped that Wester Hailes would be included.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Will the Secretary of State confirm that, unlike my hon. Friends the Members for Paisley, North (Mr. Adams) and for Paisley, South (Mr. Buchan) we in Monklands endured a recent visit by the Secretary of State? It is not something that I would necessarily recommend to my hon. Friends. Like this glossy document, which covers a multitude of missed opportunities, the visit had much to do with public relations and very little to do with real jobs.

Does the Secretary of State accept that the second largest employer in my constituency, the laudable Summerlee heritage park, deals with industrial archaeology? Have the Government abandoned any industrial strategy that means investing in manufacturing industry? Will our people who have suffered long-term unemployment continue to do so? There is nothing in this document, just as there was nothing in the Secretary of State's visit, that offers those people any real or tangible hope.

Mr. Rifkind: If the hon. Gentleman had been present when I visited his constituency, he would know that the claim that he has just made is unfair. The purpose of my visit was to open some industrial workshops that are providing employment in the Coatbridge area. So relevant was the visit thought to be that the provost of Monklands, who I understand is a political colleague of the hon. Gentleman, and representatives of Strathclyde regional council who are of the same political persuasion as the hon. Gentleman, thought the occasion sufficiently important to merit their attendance, even if the local Member of Parliament did not.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Will the Secretary of State confirm that every pretty picture in this brochure is the product of work initiated by or involving either a creative Labour local authority or an organisation brought into being by a Labour Government? Will he reflect upon that before spitting any more venom at the Opposition and the Labour party in general? I exclude from the category of pretty pictures his own rather unflattering portrait, for which we claim absolutely no responsibility.

Will the Secretary of State say what there is in this document for areas such as my constituency, which contain many manifestations of urban blight but which apparently are not to be offered any solutions? Does he agree that, while we might ingratiate ourselves temporarily with the right hon. and learned Gentleman and his colleagues by expressing warm welcomes for glossy documents, we would scarcely be doing a duty to the over 50 per cent. of people of Scotland who placed their faith in the Labour party if we were to lead them to confuse myth with reality?

Mr. Rifkind: Making the same exception as the hon. Gentleman did with regard to my portrait, I can confirm that all the projects to which those photographs refer were entirely funded by the Government or while the Government have been in office.

With regard to the value of the proposals, I find some paradox in the hon. Gentleman's question. On the one hand, he says that the document is worthless and of little value to the areas mentioned, but he then goes on to ask why no one from his constituency is included. He must make up his mind. If it is of little value to anyone, he should be uninterested in whether his constituency is affected.

Mr. John Redwood (Wokingham): What scope is there for increasing asset sales and raising more money that way from underused or badly managed assets in the public sector and for attracting more private capital? Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it would be a sign of even greater success for Scotland when he can come to the House and say that the economy is so flourishing that the amount of dependency and reliance on public subsidy has reduced rather than increased?

Mr. Rifkind: That would be true of the United Kingdom as a whole, not simply of any one part of the United Kingdom.

There is indeed a substantial opportunity for further investment through asset sales. In the past week, some £90 million of additional housing expenditure has been announced as being financed as a result of the popularity of the right to buy for council tenants. That example can be emulated in other areas, given that it not only brings pleasure to the tenants involved, but enables much important work to be done on the residual housing stock.

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): Will the Secretary of State concede that unemployment remains one of the key issues in the inner cities in Scotland and on the peripheral estates? Does he accept that a sizeable proportion of the 300,000 people currently unemployed in Scotland are in the age group 18 to 25 and that many of them are located in the peripheral estates and the inner-city areas? Does he accept that the time is now ripe for a major initiative to be undertaken by the Scottish Office, the Manpower Services Commission and the Scottish Development Agency to move beyond YTS and the community programme and to give some life to many young people who are seeking hope in our great cities and deserve a better deal than they are getting at present?

Mr. Rifkind: I certainly acknowledge that the hon. Gentleman has made perhaps the only constructive contribution from the Labour Benches this afternoon. He is right to say that the problem goes beyond the physical infrastructure and includes employment and economic opportunities in the area concerned. That is why, when the hon. Gentleman has a chance to read the document, he will see that we attach special importance to the fact that only

initiatives that provide economic opportunities, either through the generation of small businesses in those estates or through the infusion of private sector investment for employment prospects, will give the full success that we seek.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan), who referred to the GEAR project, would be entitled to say that it did not succeed in every respect. The main area in which it did not succeed as we would all have wished was in respect of jobs in the locality. Although many jobs were created, they were not necessarily created in the GEAR area, but in other parts of Glasgow. We must ensure that employment is created as a result of those initiatives and that it is to the benefit of the people in the locality and not in the wider area.

Mr. Alistair Darling (Edinburgh, Central): Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that, in Edinburgh, many of the urban problems that afflict the peripheral estates such as Wester Hailes also afflict the city centre where, not very far from Prince's street, unemployment is running at one of the highest rates in the region, at over 20 per cent?

In an effort to be helpful, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman consider two points? Perhaps he will consider, first, the Government's policy in respect of grants for house improvements, which has endured a stop-start programme over the past three or four years. Secondly, perhaps he will consider MSC schemes and particularly the MSC's policy of funding a project for perhaps one or two years, then withdrawing funding or insisting that the staff change round so that, as soon as the programme gets off the ground, it has to start from square one again. That problem afflicts the city centre and the Secretary of State's constituency.

Mr. Rifkind: There are problems in the city centre in Edinburgh. My hon. Friend's announcement of a new non-HRA additional allocation to Edinburgh district council as well as to other local authorities will undoubtedly have helped in that matter.

The hon. Gentleman should discuss with his colleagues on Edinburgh district council the poor level of application that the council makes for help under the urban programme. Compared with some 45 applications from Glasgow disrict council, there has been a total of four from Edinburgh district council. The hon. Gentleman should realise that, if Edinburgh district council has the interests of the people of Edinburgh at heart, it is astonishing that it has made a tiny fraction of the applications that Glasgow district council has made. Both local authorities live under the same public expenditure regime. Therefore, if Edinburgh district council has been so inadequate in using the opportunities under the urban programme—it has been even more inadequate than the Lothian regional council—it has only itself to blame if there are many unresolved problems in the city centre.

Mr. Frank Doran (Aberdeen, South): Later today the Secretary of State will be moving new clause 8 to the Housing (Scotland) Bill. That new clause will abolish four specific subsidies under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, whch were specially targeted at inner-city areas. I cannot help thinking that there is a paradox between what the right hon. and learned Gentleman is saying now and what he intends to do later. Will he explain that paradox?

Mr. Rifkind: It will be discussed in detail later. Those are all marginal grants which are of little practical benefit. The resources are still being made available, but in a more effective way.

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): The Secretary of State said earlier that Opposition Members never came up with anything at any time. May I recommend that he reads the Strathclyde document called "Social Strategy for the Eighties"? He has certainly picked up a great deal from that document and put it into his document. Strathclyde regional council has been pushing for many years to involve local communities, private groups and other groups. It is strange to see such a document.

I remember when the previous Secretary of State for Scotland visited the Linwood site and said, in front of many people, that, if anyone came along and wanted to build a factory to produce rubber ducks, the money would be available. The local people set up a group called the Linwood enterprise group. It came forward with a plan to use certain sections of a building to produce goods and work and to give the local folk in Linwood an opportunity to get off the dole and start being creative. Lo and behold, the Scottish Office turned the plan down. The group did not want to produce rubber ducks. It wanted it to produce something meaningful and useful to the community.

When we fly into the airport, as many hon. Members do, we fly over the old factory of India Tyres, which is now vacant. We come along the motorway and we see——

Mr. Speaker: May I interrupt the hon. Gentleman? He must ask the Minister a question.

Mr. Graham: I was just going to put my question.

There are two major areas in my constituency which are lying vacant and are desperate for regeneration and money. This document is meaningless because it does not afford local voluntary organisations the opportunity to get money. It does not show them anything.

Mr. Rifkind: I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman has problems in parts of his constituency. I can assure him that the document is relevant to the whole of urban Scotland and not simply to the four areas which will be the subject of the major initiatives. Clearly there are areas on which we wish to concentrate in the short term, but the resources currently available bring benefit to useful and meaningful projects all over Scotland, including the hon. Gentleman's constituency.

Mr. John Maxton (Glasgow, Cathcart): Is the Secretary of State aware that flashy advertising and cheap political jibes are no answer to the problems of urban regeneration in Scotland? Is he also aware that his performance this afternoon has been an insult both to his position and to the people of Scotland?

If the right hon. and learned Gentleman is so keen to keep saying that Opposition Members want nothing but money thrown at them, does he remember receiving from myself a document called "The Castlemilk Initiative" some three years ago? That document was as glossy as this, but it had much more substance. It was produced by the Castlemilk liaison committee, to which my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Rutherglen (Mr. McAvoy) referred earlier.

We discussed that document with the then Minister, Michael Ancram. We had lengthy discussions with him.

[Mr. John Maxton]

We produced every idea and initiative on economic planning, jobs, housing and environmental improvements in Castlemilk. We and Castlemilk representatives had the ideas and asked for one thing — money. Does the Secretary of State remember his junior Minister's answer? It was no.

Mr. Rifkind: After listening to the hon. Gentleman's contribution, I am not clear whether he is pleased or disappointed that Castlemilk is to be one of the areas for the major initiatives. When the hon. Gentleman has said whether he welcomes or is disappointed by that news, it will begin to be possible to have a coherent dialogue with him.

MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS (TRANSFERS) BILL *[LORDS]*

Ordered,

That the Matrimonial Proceedings (Transfers) Bill *[Lords]* be referred to a Second Reading Committee. — *[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Horses, Ponies and Donkeys

5.20 pm

Mr. David Amess (Basildon): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to protect horses, ponies and donkeys against abandonment by their owners; to provide for statutory code of practice on the tethering of horses and ponies; to oblige owners to arrange for a humane method of identification for their animals; and for purposes connected therewith.

I have been reliably informed by people throughout the country that this is the moment for which horses, ponies and donkeys have been waiting. Indeed, a representative of each of those groups was brought to Westminster this afternoon, but I thought it inappropriate to attempt to bring them into the Chamber.

On a more serious note, the Bill attempts to deal with the abuses that these animals undoubtedly suffer. A report recently produced by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals states that 3,000 horses in Britain live a miserable existence, tethered by a length of rope or chain to a stake in the ground. That restrictive life style is made even worse in many cases when poor tethering and lack of attention mean that horses suffer severe discomfort and even death.

People who lack suitable facilities for these animals choose to restrict their movement by tethering, usually by a rope or chain attached around the animal's neck to a head collar and then fastened to a stake secured to the ground. Increasingly, parents buy a pony for their child without giving any thought to the requirements of the animal's upkeep or the costs involved in looking after it properly. The RSPCA inspectors' research found that many people had no idea of the amount of land required or quality of food needed to look after these animals properly. The cost of keeping a horse is enormous.

The horsemeat trade to the continent is especially prevalent in my part of Britain, the south of England. Horses waiting for the knacker's yard have a low economic value and do not receive anything like the attention they require. A particular cause for concern is the large number of horses and ponies left to fend for themselves on areas of hostile or non-habitable land, such as the Essex marshes. They are often left for several months before being rounded up. In the middle of the night, a van mysteriously arrives, the horses, ponies and donkeys are put into them, and they are then used for horsemeat. These incidents are repeatedly reported but neither the police nor the local authority can take any action.

We should consider the plight of horses used to earn a livelihood—for example, in sea coaling in the north-east of England. Many areas have a tradition of horse keeping dating back to the use of pit ponies, which were well cared for, but now some of these animals are not kept in a wholly suitable fashion.

I should like to outline the precise need for this legislation and why I believe that the Protection of Animals Act 1911 is not sufficient to give the protection that so many hon. Members want for these animals. Over the past year, the number of convictions secured for cruelty to animals increased by 17 per cent. Complaints to the RSPCA from the general public about tethered horses rate second only to those about the ill-treatment of dogs. Complaints increase when temperatures drop and horses tied to stakes or trees on wasteland are exposed to rain, wind or snow, with no shelter or little attention. An

excellent code of practice has been drawn up for the proper tethering of equines by the RSPCA, the British Horse Society and the Horse and Pony Protection Association.

The Bill will attempt to put a stop to illegal tethering by making it an offence to tether a horse without proper provision for the animal's well-being. Owners guilty of such ill-treatment shall commit an offence under section 1 of the Protection of Animals Act 1911. Horses can be badly treated because they are not classed as farm animals, and this is a gap in the law.

My long-term aim is development of an identification system for these animals, because few are properly marked. Although I recognise that it might be difficult to undertake such a scheme, one hallmark of the Government is that they have never stood back from attempting to introduce legislation simply because it is too difficult. The Government seek to introduce legislation because they think it is right.

As it stands, the 1911 Act makes it difficult to prove an offence, whereas this Bill defines suffering more easily, making ill-treatment a specific offence and thus making it easier to obtain convictions. More important, the Bill will prevent suffering, and it is in that spirit that I hope that the House will support it.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. David Amess, Sir Bernard Braine, Mr. David Alton, Mr. Gerald Bermingham, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Robin Corbett, Mr. Stan Crowther, Miss Janet Fookes, Mr. Harry Greenway, Mr. Ken Hargreaves, Mr. Greg Knight and Mr. Allan Roberts.

Horses, Ponies and Donkeys

Mr. David Amess accordingly presented a Bill to protect horses, ponies and donkeys against abandonment by their owners; to provide for a statutory code of practice on the tethering of horses and ponies; to oblige owners to arrange for a humane method of identification for their animals; and for purposes connected therewith: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 15 April and to be printed. [Bill 135.]

Orders of the day

Housing (Scotland) Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.

5.27 pm

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. This afternoon, we had a statement from the Secretary of State for Scotland. We are becoming used to these statements because the Government in Scotland are struggling. I do not understand why a massive number of civil servants from the Scottish Office seem to be necessary to assist with such statements. Is there some way in which the House can regulate who attends in an official capacity? This is an important point because some Opposition Members have no confidence in the Scottish Civil Service since——

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): Order. The hon. Member knows that no breach of order has been committed and that this is not a point of order for the Chair.

Mr. Hogg: Further to the point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it a fresh point of order?

Mr. Hogg: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. Surely, Members of the House regulate, through their Standing Orders, who attends the House. Is it appropriate for a Member to object to the presence of so many civil servants, brought here at great cost to the Scottish people, for little purpose?

Madam Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. There is no Standing Order that governs the attendance of such staff.

Mr. Hogg: Further to the point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker——

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Member is delaying very important business concerned with housing in Scotland. Does he seek to make a fresh point of order —one with which I can deal?

Mr. Hogg: The point that I seek to make is that there must be some means of raising this matter. Let me leave it at that and I shall find some means of raising the matter on another occasion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member is a frequent attender in the Chamber. He could seek to raise the matter through an early-day motion or the Procedure Committee. I am sure that it is not beyond his wit to deal with this matter by other means.

New clause 7

COST FLOOR LIMIT ON DISCOUNT ON PRICE OF HOUSE PURCHASED BY SECURE TENANT

" .—(1) In subsection (1) of section 62 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (purchase price of house being purchased in pursuance of tenant's right) for the words 'subsections (7) and (8)' there shall be substituted the words 'subsection (6A)'.

(2) For subsections (7) to (9) of that section there shall be substituted the following subsections—

'(6A) Except where the Secretary of State so determines, the discount for the purpose of subsection (1) shall not reduce the price below the amount which,

[Madam Deputy Speaker]

in accordance with a determination made by him, is to be taken as representing so much of the costs incurred in respect of the house as, in accordance with the determination, is to be treated as—

(a) incurred in the period commencing with the beginning of the financial year of the landlord which was current 5 years prior to the date of service of the application to purchase the house or such other period as the Secretary of State may by order provide; and

(b) relevant for the purposes of this subsection,

and, if the price before discount is below that amount, there shall be no discount.

(6B) An order under subsection (6A) shall be made by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament and may make different different provision in relation to different cases or circumstances or different areas.'.

(3) In subsection (10) of that section, for '(9)' there shall be substituted '(6A)'.

(4) Subsections (11) to (13) of that section shall cease to have effect.

(5) In section 76 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (duty of landlords to provide information to secure tenants) in subsection (1), for paragraph (c) there shall be substitued the following paragraph—

"(c) section 62(6A) may affect any price fixed as regards the house under section 62(1),".'.

(6) The said sections 62 and 76 shall, however, continue to apply as originally enacted in relation to the price of a house in respect of which the offer to sell (within the meaning of section 63 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987) was served on the tenant prior to the commencement of this section; but nothing in this subsection restricts the power of the tenant to withdraw his application to purchase or prejudices the effect of such withdrawal."—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 102 and 103.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I would not wish to shrink from responsibility for the fact—indeed, I very much welcome the fact—that housing is regarded as such a supreme priority in Scotland that a considerable number of civil servants do, indeed, attend housing debates. It is a measure of the importance that we attribute to the matter.

Mr. Norman Hogg: The Under-Secretary raises an important point in referring to the fact that so many civil servants have been brought to the House to support him on this important matter. Can he tell the House how many civil servants have been brought from Scotland today to support him at the Dispatch Box?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I cannot give the exact number. However, we regard future housing provision in Scotland as of supreme importance. Some of the amendments that we shall be debating are very complex, and it is vital to get them right and ensure that they are in a form that stands the test of time.

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman will have his chance later.

The amendments seek to give effect to the Government's decision, as announced on 1 March, and as I explained in Committee, on the right-to-buy cost floor rule. The new clause and the two amendments seek to repeal the present arrangement under which the discount available to tenants wishing to exercise their right to buy can be restricted, if the sale would otherwise take place at a price less than the debt outstanding on the house. We suggest instead that discount should not bring the price of the house in terms of the right-to-buy provisions below the historic costs incurred by the landlord in providing or improving the house since the relevant date, or the undiscounted market value if that is lower. The relevant date will be the beginning of the financial year five years before the right-to-buy application is made.

So if a local authority tenant applies to buy his house in November 1988, the cost floor will be the total costs incurred by the authority on that house since 1 April 1983. The price that the tenant has to pay for his house will fall below that figure only if the market value, as determined by the district valuer, is less than those costs. We propose that the relevant date should roll forward each year. So if a tenant applies in November 1989, the cost floor will be the costs incurred on the house since April 1984.

Hon. Members will recall that our White Paper last November suggested that the discount restrictions involved in the outstanding debt test should be abolished completely. We have, however, taken note of the many representations received from local authorities and other interested parties that difficulties could arise — on building and modernisation programmes and on house allocation—if we were not to keep in place some kind of discount restriction on new or newly modernised houses. The proposals we are bringing forward in these amendments reflect the care with which we considered these representations.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): I was not a member of the Standing Committee, so my colleagues on both sides of the House who worked hard in that Committee will forgive me if I ask a question. In the areas that the Minister and I represent — Queensferry and Linlithgow — there have been problems with the definition of "newly modernised". What is the definition of "newly modernised"?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I cannot give a technical definition, but I can give a general off-the-cuff definition. Houses that have been modernised by the district council will be taken into account in the five-year period. If the house has been modernised in the five-year period, the costs will be added to the historic cost of the House and it will be taken into account.

Mr. Dalyell: In the five-year period?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In the five-year period; that is absolutely right. I think that this is a matter of common sense. I do not think that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) would disagree about what constitutes a modernisation programme or what a local authority might define as a modernisation programme.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): Will the Minister confirm that the price must not fall below the historic cost involved in the previous five years but that if the tenant waited six years, the price could fall as low as that tenant's discount enabled it to fall? The tenant can get the full discount after six years even though the council may have spent £20,000 on modernising the house six years before. Is that right?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman is right, but I should make it clear, as I did in Committee, that housing support grant would be increased if there was an adverse impact on the figures for the authority concerned, given that that authority was receiving housing support grant; some authorities just outside housing support grant might be brought back into it as a result.

Mr. Dalyell: There is a problem here. I have some sympathy with the Minister when he says that the question whether a house is newly modernised is a matter of common sense, but I am clear that in two cases the matter has gone to lawyers. There needs to be some kind of legal definition. What the Minister and I might think is common sense might not be accepted by people's solicitors.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall be delighted to look into the hon. Gentleman's constituency cases. Indeed, I should be grateful if he would send me the details because it is very important that these matters should be properly resolved.

I believe that the proposals will meet the general points of concern raised—for example, by local authorities—while at the same time allowing more tenants to purchase their houses without a restriction of the discount to which they are entitled on the strength of their public sector tenancy records.

The new clause refers to a determination which the Secretary of State will make on the costs that should be taken into account in calculating the new cost floor. We intend that the determination applying in Scotland should be broadly similar to that which applies at present in England and Wales under section 131 of the Housing Act 1985.

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Is the Minister saying that under his proposal it is still possible to sell a council house below its outstanding debt? Will he clarify that point?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In certain circumstances, yes, but we have to bear in mind that a house increases in value considerably in the five-year period—perhaps by as much as 10 per cent. a year. The new clause represents a compromise that will meet the aspirations of tenants who wish to purchase with a discount while not disadvantaging local authorities. That is why, after careful thought, we proposed the new clause in this form.

The provisions in the new clause and the consequential technical amendments represent a fair compromise between the interests of tenants and the interests of public sector landlords. Authorities will be able to adopt sensible building, modernisation and allocation policies without the distorting effect that the absence of any cost floor might have introduced, and more tenants will be able to exercise their right to buy without having their discount entitlement reduced. I commend the new clause and the amendments to the House.

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): The civil servants referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth (Mr. Hogg) were not much help to the Minister when he was bowled a difficult one by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). I understand why he brought those civil servants here; he has no Scottish Back Benchers, although I see the seventh cavalry arriving in the form of the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker).

What we need in housing in Scotland is not civil servants but brickies. We seek from the Government some indication that they will ensure that houses are built and improved to cater for the needs of people in Scotland. The Government are simply trying to redistribute existing housing stock in an ill-considered manner. I stress that the Labour party strongly supports the development of home ownership in Scotland, but we should be encouraging home owners and private developers to invest in housebuilding and in the improvement of housing stock rather than simply raiding the public sector housing stock as has happened in recent years.

We object to the way in which the Government approach this question, which is reckless in a number of ways. Sadly, we are already discovering that it is reckless from the point of view of some home buyers, because people who have bought their council houses are finding that they cannot afford the real costs of home ownership, and a disturbingly large number are becoming homeless as their homes are repossessed by building societies. In my constituency, 5 per cent. of the allocation for council houses last year went to people whose homes were repossessed because of mortgage default. Therefore, owner-occupation is not the best answer for everybody, and the policy of encouraging owner-occupation regardless of the consequences does not always make sense.

That policy is also tragically harmful to the prospects of homeless people and for those who are stuck on housing waiting lists. Every time another council house is sold—although that may be very nice for the people who buy it—it means that there is less council housing stock, a slower turnover of that housing stock and a longer wait for those who are waiting for housing. Obviously, the policy represents reckless interference in the finances of local housing authorities.

We are all increasingly weary of reading Scottish Office press statements that give the impression that the Government are giving local authorities money to spend on housing. The Minister issued another only yesterday. The fact is that the Government are allowing Scottish district councils to borrow £58 million less than they were allowed to borrow last year, while the Government cheerfully anticipate a massive increase of £93 million in the profits from council house sales. That projected figure is 60 per cent. more than the figure for last year. Whether all that will come to pass, goodness knows, but it seems a particularly haphazard way of budgeting for capital expenditure on housing in Scotland.

This "policy" of cut-price council house sales is not a housing policy; it is simply a device for redistributing the ownership of some houses from the community to individuals who may be fortunate enough to qualify for the discounts on offer. There is no question but that that is popular among those who are in a position to take advantage of it. I fully acknowledge that. However, equally, there is no doubt that it has made life more difficult, for the reasons that I have already given, for people who are waiting to rent homes. There is increasing and distressing evidence that owner-occupation is not always the best form of tenure. I have given an example of the situation that is developing in my constituency which, I suspect, will be mirrored elsewhere in Scotland, where people are getting into difficulties after having bought their council houses.

[Mr. John Home Robertson]

The new clause seriously undermines the cost floor which at least ensured that district councils were not required to sell houses for less than the outstanding debt on those properties. Under the new clause, the cost floor will cave in after only five years. Incidentally, there is an interesting difference and disparity between that figure and the figure for England and Wales, where there will be an eight-year holding period for the cost floor. Perhaps the Minister will explain that difference.

Under the new clause, it will be possible for a district council to build a house for, say, £35,000 and if a tenant transfers into the house and qualifies for the full 60 per cent. discount, he might be able to buy the house for as little as £15,000 only five years after it has been built. Therefore, the district council would sustain a loss of £20,000 on that property. Only a small fraction of the 50-year loan charges will have been paid off during that period. Therefore, the district council's remaining tenants will have to pay the cost of that compulsory sale for, perhaps, another 40 years. It is the other tenants who have to pay the costs that the Government are building up for local housing authorities under this scheme.

There might be a case for that practice if the Government were to make up the shortfall that the district councils will sustain as a result of such sales, but, of course, the Government are not prepared to do that. The Government are saddling district councils with yet another serious financial hardship.

We know, that the district council house building programme in Scotland has seldom been smaller than at present. In the second quarter of 1987, only 316 houses were started by district councils in Scotland. That figure is only one quarter of the number that were built when the Government came to power nine years ago. Therefore, there has been a disturbing tail-off in the amount of council house building in Scotland. The Bill will make matters substantially worse. District councils will still have to cope with the growing needs of homeless people, but with a diminishing stock of houses to let because of the increasing rate of sales. That is generating particular problems in rural areas in Scotland, but the problem is reflected in other parts of Scotland also.

I seek one particular assurance from the Minister on new clause 7. Will the Government ensure that no district council runs into trouble with the district auditors for investing in new building while under the threat of compulsory cut-price sales after only five years, as would be possible under the new clause? District councils could be criticised for investing in urgently needed new housing if there is a prospect of those houses being sold within as little as five years for a fraction of what they have actually cost. If the Government cannot give an assurance on that, they will have to accept responsibility for halting the building of homes to let by local authorities in Scotland.

Finally, I repeat this question to the Minister. Why is the cut-off period for the cost floor being set at five years in Scotland, when the equivalent figure in England is eight years?

5.45 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Although I am supposed to be reassured by the Minister, I have certainly not been reassured by his comments on the new clause which, in its potential effects on local authorities and therefore on the provision of housing in Scotland, is one of the most serious parts of the Bill.

By tinkering with time limits, the Government's proposal makes only a slight modification and in no way meets the problems that it will create for local authorities throughout Scotland.

I regret that amendment No. 165, which I tabled, was not selected, because it would have reversed the present proposed financial unfairness and given local authorities, and the public purse, a greater chance to survive and contribute to Scotland's housing.

District councils should never be asked, unless as a major exception, to sell houses at less than the outstanding debt on them. The outstanding debt must be the minimum acceptable or the remaining tenants will carry debt for a lost public asset. If less than the outstanding debt is taken, the consequence must be that the poorer tenants will simply carry that loss, due to the Government's council house sales policy. District councils will carry out considerable administrative and legal inquiries on receipt of an application. Those costs also will be unfairly borne, at no benefit, by the remaining council house tenants.

The new clause merely tinkers with the time limit and fails to address the real and dangerous problems that the Bill poses for local authorities. In one local authority, a house built in a prize-winning council estate at a cost of £34,000 is now likely to be sold for £23,000—in other words, at an immediate loss of £11,000, which is almost equivalent to taking £1 from every council tenant. If that happens due to the sale of only one house, the consequences of a housing sales drive are potentially catastrophic to that district council.

The new clause will not change that situation. Without any protection for existing local authorities and existing public authority tenants, such sales will be a massive burden on rent payers and will virtually stop all new public sector house building. Is that really what the Government want? The problem strikes at the heart of the public housing system and will lead to the poorest tenants directly subsidising the wealthiest ex-tenants and the best houses.

Such catastrophic financial losses would also stop modernisations, because the value of a house does not rise proportionately to the money that is invested in modernising it. A £10,000 modernisation, for example, might hardly affect the price arrived at by the district valuers. It would certainly be nothing like the public money that had been invested. Therefore, local authorities would have a disincentive to modernise and to create a capital debt for no return.

I fear that, unless it is amended, this part of the Bill will lead to the downgrading of public housing to such an extent that it will cease to be a dynamic, progressive and innovative system, due purely to the kind of financial penalties that have been created by legally enforced sales of assets at massive subsidies. That would be bad news for Scotland's homeless people and for those in damp or overcrowded housing, and it would be major blunder by the Government.

Under the new clause, housing sales can take place at prices below the outstanding debt but without added discount—but going back for only five years on new properties or modernisations. Councils should never be forced to sell houses at vastly less than the outstanding debt. The Government are failing adequately to address this core problem.

Mr. McAllion: It is always wise to approach any initiative taken by the Government with considerable circumspection.

I was recently visited by two constituents who looked to benefit from the provision, and were pleased to find that, if they put off buying their house for another couple of years, they would be able to gain substantially. The Government's intention, of course, has been to direct their legislation towards particular groups of tenants, hoping to win them across politically — but to do so at the expense of other tenants who are bound to lose from such measures.

It is important to place the new clause in the context of the existing housing position in Scotland. The position outlined in the glossy document, "New Life for Urban Scotland", is entirely fictitious. In reality, 30,000 families in Scotland are homeless, and that number is continuing to rise. More than 1·25 million Scots live in overcrowded conditions, and millions of pounds need to be spent to eradicate the damp and condensation that make far too many lives a misery.

I am especially concerned about the effect of the new clause on the public sector housing authorities, the district councils and the Scottish Special Housing Association — shortly to be replaced by the new agency Scottish Homes. Those are the very authorities many of whose houses badly need modernisation programmes, but their capital budgets make it impossible for them to carry out modernisation and rehabilitation to meet the needs of the tenants to whom they are responsible. The district councils and the SSHA must therefore be selective about which houses they pick for modernisation — so many in the current financial year, and so many in the next. But for the majority of houses in need, there is no prospect of modernisation or rehabilitation in the short or medium term.

My constituents in the Craigiebank area draw my attention again and again to the state of their windows. As the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) knows, the housing scheme is one of the most desirable under the control of Dundee district council.

Mr. Bill Walker (Tayside, North): Does the hon. Gentleman remember the capital costs of building the Craigiebank houses? If he does not know the answer, I do, and I shall be delighted to give it to him.

Mr. McAllion: I am a much younger man than the hon. Member for Tayside, North, so I do not remember. The houses were built pre-war, when the hon. Gentleman assures me that he was fighting the Japs—although, as he is only 50, I doubt that very much. I am making a serious point. My constituents come to me complaining that their windows need replacing. No one would deny that, but the sad reality is that, owing to the restrictions placed on Dundee district council's capital spend programme, the houses are not included in the five-year programme for that council, and there is no immediate prospect of their being accepted for modernisation.

Mr. Walker: My intervention was meant to be helpful rather than disruptive. The hon. Gentleman does not seem to have understood that. The very desirable Craigiebank houses were built for a few hundred pounds, which is interesting in the light of the impression given by the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh), that all houses will be valued at less than their historic costs.

Mr. McAllion: That point is not really relevant to my concern. I am talking about modernisation programmes, and the district council's responsibility for selecting groups of houses for those programmes. Many of the tenants have been there for a very long time, and therefore qualify for the maximum discounts—up to 60 or 70 per cent. of the market price. As each house can cost the district council up to £20,000 to modernise, the new clause will add a new factor to local authorities' considerations when they decide which houses and flats to include in modernisation programmes: they will now have to take into account how long tenants have been in the houses.

Surely it is better to decide to spend up to £20,000 on a house in the knowledge that the tenant has not been in the house for long, and that when, after six years — under the new clause—he applies to buy the house, it will represent a much smaller loss than the council would incur if he had been there for 25 or 30 years, and qualified for the maximum discount. When tenants of houses such as those in Craigiebank, who have been in their houses for a considerable time and qualify for the maximum discount, apply to buy their houses under the new clause, the council—which spent £20,000 only six years earlier — will experience a much more serious loss than if it had modernised a house whose tenants have been there for only a short period.

The new clause contains an in-built bias against two groups of tenants: those who have been in their houses for a long time, and those who are in a position—and the council knows it — to buy their council houses. The council will have other considerations. It must consider the important group of tenants who live in damp houses, houses with condensation, overcrowded houses — properties that are unsuitable for one reason or another. Tenants on low incomes or social security benefit will never be in a position to buy their houses.

Surely the council will say to itself, "Is it not better to spend what money we have for modernisation programmes on those who we know will be our tenants for the next 20 or 25 years, so that the money is spent for the benefit of our tenants, rather than for those who will buy their houses from us in five or six years?" To spend the money on houses that will be transferred from council stock will represent a loss not only to the council but to all the tenants who live in unsuitable housing, and who will never be able to buy their houses and take advantage of new clause 5.

The Minister has given an incentive to district councils to choose for their modernisation programmes only the houses that they know will remain in the housing stock for a long time, and on which it will therefore be in their financial interests to spend money. Why should they spend £20,000 on a house that they know they will lose in six years' time? District councils are not fools, and they will act accordingly.

The Minister assured me that there would be a readjustment of housing support grant for authorities that are still in housing support grant, or just out of it. Dundee district council lost all housing support grant in 1983. It has been many years since it received any such grant, and there will be no readjustment or compensation for it. Every time that it spends money, it will take into consideration how long the house is likely to remain in its ownership. The new clause contains a bias against tenants in a position to buy their houses, as opposed to those who have been in their houses for a long time.

Mr. Dalyell: On one matter I do not share the views expressed by some of my colleagues. I happen to think that extremely good advice from civil servants in the Scottish Office has been available to Scottish Ministers for a long time. I can speak only for myself, but whenever I have had occasion to approach civil servants I have always received courteous and helpful responses. I do not go along with what too many politicians are doing—casting a slur on the Civil Service. That, I feel, is quite unacceptable. To be able to criticise civil servants, it is necessary to be very specific with dates and facts.

In the light of that, I think that the Minister has probably received good advice on two matters, on which I should like to ask questions. Some of my hon. Friends, including Front Benchers, raised the issue of slow turnover. Necessarily, evidence is anecdotal, and I do not believe that any of us, without statistics, can form a very good idea of how bad the position has become. In parts of my constituency, however, it seems to have reached very sad proportions. In areas such as Queensferry, where there is a high demand for housing, it is extremely difficult for those who were born and bred there to obtain it. That is also true in other parts of the Linlithgow constituency. My first question is: has any statistical work been done recently in the Scottish Office to try to give an overall impression of whether turnover is markedly slower than it was before?

My second question is about modernisation. I think that my constituent, Robert Lee, of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and chairman of the West Lothian housing committee, is well known to Ministers. He prompts questions about the rate of modernisation that is possible even for authorities about which the Scottish Office cannot, in all conscience, complain. The anecdotal evidence is that, because of the financial inability to carry out modernisation that is desperately necessary, great injury is being done to the housing stock.

From the Front Bench, my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) talked about windows. We all see windows rotting away in our constituencies. The excuse of "no money" is used far more often than it ever was before. Of course, there were always problems, but my anecdotal view is that the problems are becoming greater. What statistical evidence on modernisation problems and the stitch in time saving nine is available to the Minister?

6 pm

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I rise belatedly just to ask one or two questions which are more technical than anything else. I preface my remarks by saying that the list of amendments that the Government have tabled on Report, after the long and arduous Committee stage, will make it difficult for the House properly to digest what the Government are bringing forward.

Of course I understand that some of the amendments are concessions and, in so far as they are concessions, they are welcome. Some are for the purposes of clarification, but this highlights the claims that were made by hon. Members on both sides of the Committee that the consultation procedure that preceded this piece of legislation was inadequate in time and depth. We are seeing the fruits of that. It makes it difficult for hon. Members on both sides of the House to follow the implications of some parts of the Bill.

I am referring particularly to new clause 7 and the two related amendments. It is the first time that I have seen the Government amend the long title of a Bill on Report. Surely some standards must be sacred. If the Government are tackling new areas of legislation that are not envisaged in the original Long Title of the Bill, surely it is incumbent upon them to think again and bring forward a new measure. There will be further housing measures. The procedure of consultation on this aspect of the Bill, which was intimated to the Committee only in the latter stages, suggests that the local authorities, which will be left to pick up the pieces of this sort of change, have not been properly consulted.

Against that background, the first question that I want to ask the Minister is what consultations he has had recently with local authorities about the problems that moving to the new historic cost floor system of limiting discounts will have for them. It is incumbent upon the House to consider carefully the Minister's answer to that question when forming its judgment on the new clause.

I assume that there is a typographical error in subsection (6B), because the word "different" is used twice in the phrase:

"may make different different provision in relation to different cases".

Even I do not think that the parliamentary draftsmen would seek to pass that off as anything other than a typographical error. Perhaps the Minister will clarify that.

An earlier part of the clause uses the phrase:

"Except where the Secretary of State so determines".

I have not had time to check this in its entirety, but I do not think that the equivalent provision in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, dealing with restriction of discounts, puts that phrase into operation. If that is the case, I shall be happy to be so reassured. However, if that is a new phrase that has crept into the legislation, what does it mean, and in what circumstances will it be used? What exceptions will the Secretary of State consider before he determines the content in the rest of the clause?

When looking at the new clause 7 provisions side by side with the provisions that they replace, the definition of the word "costs" is important, and we have heard little about that. I am not satisfied that there is legal clarity in terms of what is meant by "costs". Tenants were able to find out quite easily what the discount was, and the formula and calculation could be made and checked by tenants who were prospective purchasers. Using words such as "costs" in the body of the new clause will lead to many difficulties, not just for tenants who are prospective purchasers, but for the local authorities. What does "costs" mean, and where is the definition of it? How will that be decided by individual prospective purchasers when they try to take advantage of the new clause?

I keep making this point, and I risk being boring on the subject. In the new clause it seems that we are again using the negative procedure. When the Secretary of State brings forward statutory instruments that are subject to annulment, it is sensible on every possible occasion to have them subject to the affirmative procedure, not the negative procedure. The Minister may simply be slavishly following the provisions in the 1987 Act and he may be hiding behind that measure as a precedent. I have heard all that before, but I make the point again. If we are considering the provisions afresh, and if we are starting to introduce words

such as "costs" that have no legal definition, the orders should be subject to statutory scrutiny under the affirmative procedure.

I ask for clarification of the phrase—I referred to it earlier when I mentioned the typographical error—which states, inter alia:

"may make different provision in relation to different cases or circumstances or different areas."

From memory, I think that the 1987 Act provisions talk about varying cases and varying circumstances in different areas. However, what exactly does that mean? Have there been any cases under the 1987 Act where different provisions have been made in different areas? What is that phrase intended to embrace in terms of the position on the ground?

Those are important questions. I would risk being boring and incurring the wrath of the House if I went on in a legal vein such as this. However, I simply make the point that I have given four examples of vagueness and difficulties that can be created and can creep into pieces of legislation that are as ill-digested as this clause.

The Government are wrong to seek to impose this sort of legislation on local authorities, and it makes it difficult for them to work out exactly what provisions they are to make for new and modernised housing stock. If the Minister wants to be even-handed to prospective purchasers, he should make sure that local authorities are indemnified financially for the costs that they will lose over a long period by having to pay the loan charges, and so on.

I am opposed to the clause, and if Opposition Front Bench Members seek to press it to a Division, I shall have great pleasure in supporting them.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I want to deal with some of the detailed points that have been raised. The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) is a highly qualified lawyer and he raised many technical problems. He worked hard in Committee on behalf of Age Concern and other bodies.

The hon. Gentleman raised the question about the clarification of the phrase relating to different provisions in different areas. That allows for the different time periods to be set for the cost floor in different parts of the country. The hon. Gentleman asked whether the repetition of the word "different" was a printing error. It is, but that will be cleared up later. The hon. Gentleman referred to the Bill's long title. It is not unusual for a Bill's long title to be amended. I cannot readily give a precedent, but I am sure that there are many precedents I could cite if I had time to look them up.

The White Paper clearly stated that the outstanding debt was to be abolished. We considered a considerable number of representations very thoroughly. As I said earlier, we changed our policy as a result of those representations and that represents a compromise between the interests of local authorities and those of tenants.

Historic costs are total costs and therefore easy to calculate. The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire also referred to the negative statutory instrument procedure. That is a regular procedure and is used quite often.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) raised a number of points on behalf of his constituents. He was correct to state that the Scottish Office has carried out research which has revealed that in the vast majority of cases where tenants purchase their homes, they stay in the same houses that they purchased. There is no evidence of a marked change in the turnover. Obviously, research has taken place over many years.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow also referred to the rate of possible modernisation. West Lothian's allocation is £8 million on the housing revenue account. That is 6 per cent. higher than last year's allocation. The council must determine its own priorities within the framework of the available resources.

Mr. Dalyell: Does the Scottish Office research reveal that there has been no marked increase in the rate of turnover? If so, that is a very odd conclusion.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I will have to check upon that. The information that I gave a moment ago was correct: there has been no marked increase. However, I will check that. I said that there has been no evidence of marked change in the turnover. I will check that, and if there is any additional evidence I will reassure the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is the Minister seriously suggesting that, if there has been a reduction in the Scottish local authorities' housing stock of more than 100,000 since the scheme was initiated, there has been no change in the rate of turnover of re-lets in housing? The Minister must accept that in due course there will be a significant change.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I said that in the vast majority of cases, once the tenants became owners, they stayed in the same houses.

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) referred to public expenditure in Scotland. Taking account of the increased allocations to local authorities announced yesterday, total capital provision for housing through public sector agencies in 1988-89 now amounts to £825 million. That is £44 million, or 5·6 per cent., up on the equivalent figure for 1987-88. I stress to Opposition Members including the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) that the amount to be spent on housing next year will increase. I am glad to say that yesterday Dundee, like the other authorities, received a substantial additional allocation. Dundee received an extra allocation of £3,550,000.

Mr. Home Robertson: Will the Minister acknowledge that the money which he refers to as allocations is not grant from the Government to local authorities, but authority for local authorities to spend their own money?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The bulk of the money came from extra receipts. Estimates are made by the Scottish Office in co-operation with local authorities, and we take a cautious view of the receipts. The authorities can keep the additional receipts.

Mr. Bill Walker: Will my hon. Friend confirm that not all the receipts received from the sale of council houses go to the authority which sold the houses? The Scottish Office determines the priorities and gives the money to the area where it judges the priority is greatest. For example, Perth and Kinross district, which has a fine record of selling houses, has not had all the money which it has made from the sales.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Yes, I can confirm that allocations are made strictly on the basis of need throughout Scotland, in terms of the authorities with the most pressing housing problems.

With regard to resources, this year the Housing Corporation will receive about £158 million. That is a record figure, and well up on last year's allocation.

Mr. McAllion: The Minister said that more than an extra £3 million will be allocated to Dundee district council this year. Will he confirm that all that money comes from the receipts from the sale of council houses? Will he also confirm that it comes from the sale of council houses in Dundee?

6.15 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I would not be able to confirm the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's question without looking carefully at the figures. However, I can confirm that the money comes from receipts.

The hon. Member for East Lothian referred to the auditors. There will be no problem with the auditors, because the requirement to sell is a legal requirement. He also asked why the position is different in England. There always was a difference in this area, even before we introduced new clause 7. The cost floor in England refers back to 1974, and in Scotland the outstanding debt floor relates back to 1978. The difference has always existed. The system of housing finance is not the same in Scotland as the system prevailing in England.

Mr. Kirkwood: I want to revert to a reply which the Minister gave me earlier. I think that he said that the phrase

"different provision in relation to different cases or circumstances or different areas"

could mean that the time limit could be changed in different areas at the discretion of the Secretary of State. Is that correct?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: If the hon. Gentleman studies what I said in *Hansard* tomorrow he will see exactly what I said. I will check what I said. I am reasonably certain that it was absolutely accurate.

The hon. Member for East Lothian referred to the £35,000 house which was sold for £15,000 five years later, with a loss of £20,000. The chances are that the value of the house will have increased at the rate of 10 per cent. each year. It is reasonable to assume that that rate of increase would take the value of the house after five years to more than £55,000. The discounted price would be £22,000, not the £15,000 which was suggested. Therefore, the loss would be restricted.

Mr. Home Robertson: Is the Minister suggesting that it is Government policy that the value should increase by 10 per cent. a year?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: That is obviously a matter for the market and depends entirely on market circumstances. I cannot determine house prices. However, as a matter of practical realities, house prices tend to rise considerably, and it is fair to take that into account.

The constituency of the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) offers a different example of housing problems. I understand that Angus district council is having to sell houses in Montrose at less than the construction price. However, that has little connection with the rules applying now or in future in the new clause to the right-to-buy sales. The situation is a direct consequence of house prices in the area generally.

At the beginning of the month, Angus district council wrote to the Scottish Office seeking guidance on whether my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State might be prepared to make an order under section 62(7) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The council suggested that that should require the selling price of houses on the Caledonian Station development in Montrose to be sold at not less than the debt outstanding on those houses, even though the market price of the houses had fallen below the debt level.

At my request, the Department replied in a letter informing the council that my right hon. and learned Friend is unlikely to be willing to make such an order because we do not believe that it would be equitable to expect any tenant exercising the right to buy to pay more than the current market value of the property in question. I should emphasise that under the current rules, and those which will apply if the new clause is agreed, the tenant will have to pay the full market value without discount.

Mr. Welsh *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I believe that I have covered that point, and I want to get on.

Mr. Welsh: I want to refer to the general problem of councils paying out less than the outstanding debt and bearing that burden. If that happens, as I fear it will in general, the Minister said that the Government would recompense through the housing support grant system. As the Minister is aware, the minority of councils receive housing support grant now. If the Government's policy continues, no council will receive that grant. Will he give an undertaking that if this becomes a problem for councils, the Government will restore housing support grant to meet that problem?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am not going that far. I am making it clear that in the context of this case it would not be fair or proper not to set a figure at the market value, which is what has been arranged. We have arrived at a compromise between the interests of local authorities and tenants. I commend the new clause to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 8

ABOLITION AND CAPITALISATION OF CERTAIN SUBSIDIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

.—(1) No subsidy or contribution shall be made under the following provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (the "superseded provisions")—

(a) section 200 (slum clearance subsidy);

(b) section 254 (contributions towards improvement grants, repairs grants and grants for fire escapes);

(c) section 255 (contributions for improvement of amenities);

(d) section 296 (contributions towards certain other expenses)

in respect of any expense or expenditure incurred by a local authority on or after 1st april 1989.

(2) No claim for subsidy or contribution under any superseded provision in respect of or towards any expense or expenditure incurred by a local authority before 1st April 1989 shall be entertained by the Secretary of State unless—

(a) it is received by him before 1st October 1989; and

(b) any information reasonably required by him in relation to any such claim is received by him within two months after the receipt by him of the claim.

(3) Where two or more periodic payments of a subsidy or contribution under a superseded provision would, apart from this subsection, fall to be made on or after 1st April 1989, these payments shall be capitalised and made as follows—

(a) if one or more earlier such payments have been made before that date, the Secretary of State shall, instead of making the remaining instalments, pay an amount equal to the appropriate percentage of the relevant capital amount;

(b) if no earlier such payment has been made before that date, the Secretary of State shall, instead of making any such payments, pay such amount as appears to him to be equal to the appropriate percentage of the relevant expenditure.

(4) In subsection (3) above—

"the appropriate percentage", in relation to a relevant capital amount means the percentage specified in or under the superseded provision in relation to the subsidy or contribution to which the capital amount relates and, in relation to a subsidy or contribution, means the percentage specified in or under the superseded provision in relation to that subsidy or contribution;

"the relevant capital amount", in relation to a subsidy or contribution, means the sum of—

(a) such amount as the Secretary of State considers would, on the date of his payment under subsection (3)(a) above, be payable by the local authority were they then to repay a loan, repayable over twenty years, taken out by them from the Public Works Loan Board to meet their expense or, as the case may be, expenditure in respect of or towards which the subsidy or contribution was made; and

(b) any other amount which he considers would be then payable on such repayment of that loan;

"relevant expenditure", in relation to a subsidy or contribution, means the expense or expenditure in respect of which the subsidy or contribution was made.

(5) Payment made under subsection (3) above shall be—

(a) applied in reduction or extinguishment of such debt (whether then payable or not) of the local authority as the Secretary of State thinks fit; or

(b) made to the local authority; or

(c) partly so applied and partly so made.

(6) Payments made to a local authority under subsection (5) above shall be applied by them in the repayment of such debt and in such a manner as the Secretary of State directs.

(7) Notwithstanding the repeal by this Act of section 254 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, subsection (4) of that section (obligation upon local authority to pay to the Secretary of State sums recovered by them in consequence of breach of conditions of improvement grant or by way of voluntary repayment of such grant) shall continue to have effect in relation to expense incurred under that section by a local authority prior to 1st April 1989, being expense in respect of which contributions were made under that section.

(8) After paragraph 1 of Schedule 16 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (which, amongst other things, requires a local authority to carry to the credit of its slum clearance revenue account any slum clearance subsidy payable to them for that year) there shall be inserted the following paragraph—

"1A. — Paragraph 1(b) above is subject to section *[Abolition and capitalisation of certain subsidies and grants]* of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988 (abolition and capitalisation of, amongst others, slum clearance subsidy).".'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): With this it will be convenient to take Government amendment No. 103.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The new clause will abolish a number of specific Exchequer subsidies and contributions with effect from 1 April 1989, which will be replaced by Exchequer support through the revenue support grant system. The principle of the clause has been agreed with and is accepted by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

First, the clause terminates specific Exchequer contributions to expenditure incurred by local authorities on housing improvement and other grants with effect from 1 April 1989. The clause also deals with what is to happen to the future payments to which we are committed for up to 20 years and which result from past awards of these grants and the debt repayments to which they have given rise. Finally, it deals with what is to happen to expenditure incurred by a local authority before 1 April 1989, in respect of which no periodic payment has been made by that date.

To meet the wishes of COSLA, the clause is drafted in such a way as to enable the Secretary of State to buy out the Government's obligations by capitalising the amount of future payments which would be due to a local authority. The amount payable is to be paid by the Secretary of State to redeem outstanding debt with the Public Works Loan Board, where that exists. But the clause is sufficiently flexible to enable special arrangements to be made for Orkney islands council and Ross and Cromarty district council, which have a total debt to the PWLB of less than the expected capitalised sum. It also enables the amount to be paid by the Secretary of State to include any sum which a local authority might be obliged to pay for the early repayment of loans.

I should make it clear that the new clause will not at all affect the present arrangements for local authorities giving improvement and other grants to indviduals. Only the way in which the Government fund these grants will be changed under this clause.

Mr. Home Robertson: I can confirm that the local authorities have no objection to the new clause. They only express the rather optimistic hope that the Secretary of State will exercise his discretion under the new clause reasonably.

Mr. Kirkwood: Let me raise as part of the principle of capitalisation some of the issues that we discussed in Committee. I refer, in particular, to the capitalisation of the amenity charges that are levied by the Scottish Special Housing Association on tenants who are owner-occupiers of former SSHA-tenanted stock. I sought to raise the matter in Committee and it is relevant to the abolition of capitalisation of certain subsidies and contributions contained in new clause 8.

I hope that the Minister will not rule out the fact that capitalisation can take place on the amenity charges, which would allow Scottish Homes— as it will become to enter into an agreement with local authorities to capitalise the charges so that the local authority receives a sensible amount of money which will enable it to maintain the amenity of the common grounds that are currently maintained by the SSHA by levying charges on the residents who were former tenants and are now owner-occupiers. The matter was raised directly in new clause 15. Unfortunately, it was not selected, but I am sure that the Minister will see its relevance to new clause 8.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: With the leave of the House, I shall reply briefly to the hon. Gentleman. He

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

raised the matter in Committee and he is aware that there have been discussions with Midlothian district council and the SSHA, and that we have found a way forward. Obviously, we shall be glad if a similar way forward can be found for his council in the discussions that it is now having with the SSHA. We hope that they come to fruition in due course.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 1

SCOTTISH HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY

'The Secretary of State shall, upon coming into force of this Act and every five years thereafter, conduct a Scottish house condition survey in order to establish the current condition of the fabric of local authority, housing association and privately owned housing stock in Scotland; to identify property which is below the tolerable standard; and to assess the likely future requirement to repair and refurbish those homes.

(2) The Secretary of State shall present to Parliament the results of each Scottish house condition survey within six months of completion of each survey.

(3) In consultation with local authorities the Secretary of State shall calculate and provide such funds as are necessary to effect all repairs to public sector houses as have been identified as necessary by any Scottish house condition survey.

(4) The Secretary of State shall have regard to the house condition survey in determining the provision of incentives for the improvement or repair of private sector housing.'.—*[Mr. Home Robertson.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Home Robertson: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 2 — *Scottish housing needs survey*

'The Secretary of State shall, upon the coming into force of this Act and every five years thereafter, conduct a survey of Scottish housing needs in order to establish the number of individuals and or families in Scotland who are homeless or who are housed in inadequate or inappropriate homes and he shall take steps to house them adequately and appropriately.'.

New clause 14—*Homeless persons annual return*—

'The Secretary of State shall, after consultation with local authorities, Scottish Homes and any other relevant housing agencies, make an annual return to Parliament showing:

(a) the number of applicants under the Homeless Persons provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;

(b) the number of successful applicants under the above-mentioned provisions

(c) the number of successful applicants under the above-mentioned provisions who were subsequently found suitable accommodation.'.

Amendment No. 126, in clause 1, page 2, line 12, at end insert

'(h) establishing a programme with local authorities to share responsibility for dealing with applications received under the Homeless Persons provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.'

Mr. Home Robertson: New clause 1 would require the Secretary of State for Scotland to conduct a house condition survey and provide for remedial action to deal with any problems identified in that survey for the public and private housing sectors in Scotland.

New clause 2, which we are also debating, would require the Secretary of State for Scotland to conduct a survey of housing needs, with particular reference to homelessness, every five years. It would also impose on the Secretary of State a duty to take steps to deal with the problems that would be identified. We are also debating new clause 14 and amendment No. 126 in the name of the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), which also deal with homelessness.

The Bill is described as a housing Bill, but it makes no reference to or provision for the most serious underlying problems of housing in Scotland. It is simply a doctrinaire measure to undermine the functions of elected local authorities in Scotland, to destroy the rights of tenants and to promote the interests of private landlords. The new clauses are a serious attempt by the Labour party to persuade the House of Commons to incorporate in the Bill a recognition of the condition of Scotland's housing stock and housing needs.

At present, the Bill includes a list of seven general functions and 19 specific powers for the new quango that the Government propose to set up in part I—Scottish Homes—but there is no reference to a duty to survey the condition of Scottish housing or the housing needs of the Scottish people.

The Minister should be aware of the problem, because I remember being a member of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs at the same time as he was. That was in the good old days when there was a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs. We looked at the problems of dampness and other conditions of housing in Scotland, and the consensus was that there was a case for establishing a house condition survey in Scotland. However, we are still waiting for something like that to be carried out.

Let me start with housing needs. Surely the right to decent, secure housing must be one of the most fundamental human rights to be recognised in any civilised nation. However, as we know to our cost, an intolerable number of Scots are being denied that basic human right today. The number of Scots who are becoming homeless each year has risen by over 50 per cent. since the Government came to power.

The official Scottish Office figure for homelessness for 1987 is 24,196. That was the number of applications accepted by local authorities. However, we understand from Shelter that the real figure may be in excess of 30,000 because a number of local authorities allocate houses to people who may become homeless before they fulfil all the criteria provided for by the Act.

In addition, we know from statistics furnished by COSLA that 200,000 Scots are stuck on waiting lists waiting for rented housing in Scotland. Scottish Members come face to face with that problem every time we open our mail and conduct surgeries in our constituencies. I fear that, because the Government have so few elected Members from constituencies in Scotland, they may not be genuinely aware of the depth of human misery being experienced by so many people in our nation.

There are 1,250,000 Scots living in overcrowded accommodation — one quarter of Scotland's population. That is significantly worse than the comparable figures for England and Wales. Indeed, overcrowding is such an inherent problem that the Government have seen fit to devise a tax on overcrowding. Because so many people cannot obtain homes of their own, they cannot become ratepayers. They have to stay in shared accommodation. The Government are evidently so appalled by the fact that those unfortunate people cannot pay their local taxes

directly because they are denied the opportunity to become householders, that they have devised a poll tax, which is a tax on overcrowding and bad housing conditions. That is the depth to which the Government are prepared to descend.

The Government's failure or refusal to tackle or recognise the housing crisis that is afflicting people in Scotland is nothing less than a national scandal. The Bill is designed to make things worse by promoting high rents and insecurity for tenants, and it is a cruel insult to thousands of Scots who do not want or comprehend the policies of this minority Government in Scotland.

The Minister tells us that under the legislation there will be an upsurge in the building of new houses to let by the private sector. He should listen to the private sector. He should read the evidence of the Grieve report in Glasgow, which makes it abundantly clear that it is unlikely that the private sector will be able to respond to the Government's challenge.

6.30 pm

The Government should be encouraging local authorities to provide for housing need in the way that they best understand. It would be helpful if the Bill contained some reference to a housing needs survey, which would at least recognise the existence of the mounting tragedy of housing need in Scotland.

I shall move on to the case for a house condition survey. It is important to put it on record that the Scottish Office is alone among Government Departments responsible for housing in the United Kingdom in refusing to conduct a proper house condition survey. There is a house condition survey in England and Wales, but the Government steadfastly and resolutely refuse to conduct such a survey in Scotland. The Scottish Office administration evidently prefers to remain in ignorance of housing conditions in Scotland. It is rather like the three wise monkeys who see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil. However, Ministers in the Scottish Office appear to be evil in regard to people in Scotland.

On the basis of incomplete returns from local authorities, based on information given to councils rather than on any active survey, the Government are sticking to the fatuous assertion that there are only 55,000 houses in Scotland below the tolerable standard. We know that that figure is inaccurate. We had a long debate on the subject in Committee, but the Minister is determined to continue the daft pretence that there are only 55,000 homes below the tolerable standard in Scotland.

We are indebted to Glasgow district council, which conducted a scientific survey of housing standards in that city. It identified 44,500 homes as being below the tolerable standard in the city of Glasgow alone. That leaves only 10,500 in the rest of Scotland. If we then look at the figures that the Government like to quote from the returns from local authorities, we discover that a further 4,180 of the houses below the tolerable standard are in the district of Argyll and Bute.

If we take that district out of the calculation, it appears that in the rest of the nation of Scotland there are only 6,320 homes below the tolerable standard. That is obviously nonsense. The Minister simply wants to conceal the fact that there are many more sub-standard houses in Scotland.

During an interesting debate on the subject in Committee, it became all too clear that the Minister preferred not to know about the grim picture of housing conditions in Scotland. Not only is ignorance bliss for the Scottish Office; it appears to be official Government policy.

If there was time, I could offer the House a long and disturbing list of estimated figures produced by COSLA and by voluntary agencies such as Shelter, indicating that there are probably 500,000 damp houses in Scotland and that there are probably 250,000 council houses in need of major repairs or refurbishment. I invite the Government to face their responsibilities and conduct a survey so that we can evolve proper policies to deal with the underlying problems of housing in Scotland.

The Minister saw the evidence with his own eyes when he was a member of the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs in 1983. The Grieve report put before the Government more devastating evidence about the situation in Glasgow. There is a serious problem affecting housing in Scotland. There is a desperate need for investment to improve the standard of housing in Scotland and provide for the needs of people who are homeless or living in overcrowded conditions. Why do the Government not get on with the job of identifying the facts so that we can have a practical debate about housing to deal with the problems?

Mr. Bill Walker: It is important that we should understand the difference between activity and action. I cannot say whether the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) is right in saying that there are 500,000 damp houses in Scotland, because I do not know. I was a member of the Select Committee that conducted the inquiry into dampness and it was clear that at the beginning of the inquiry local authorities were claiming that there was no problem. It was only as the inquiry developed that local authorities began to accept that there was a problem. At the beginning of the inquiry, local authorities were not prepared to accept that there was a problem, and in some instances it seem that they were oblivious to any problem. Local authorities have been responsible for housing problems for a long time.

I am not convinced about going through the motions of activity rather than action. I believe that the Opposition's response to the statement earlier this afternoon showed that they are still more interested in activity than action. This afternoon represented action; the proposal represents activity.

Mr. McAllion: The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) said that local authorities would not admit there was a problem at the beginning of the Select Committee inquiry. Will he substantiate that claim and name the authorities that would not admit that there was a problem?

Mr. Walker: The hon. Member may be interested to know that one of those local authorities is Glasgow. It is all clear in the Select Committee report. I know that other members of the Select Committee are present. Indeed, some of the Labour Members on the Select Committee were horrified at what it found. Officials to whom we spoke during the initial stages of the inquiry were trying to tell us that the problem was not of the scale that we discovered it to be. I make that observation only because it seemed that the local authorities, which have had responsibility for many decades, were unaware of the condition of their properties.

[Mr. Walker]

The survey that the hon. Member for East Lothian proposes in the new clause would not change anything. That is why it would be activity rather than action. The problem requires the kind of action that was taken earlier this afternoon—selecting specific areas and dealing with them in a way that will resolve the problem. We should be united about how we deal with that.

I find it offensive that the hon. Member for East Lothian should think that he knows more about the problems of council housing than Conservative Members. I find it equally offensive that he should talk about overcrowding when some Conservative Members have first-hand experience of overcrowding and know what it means to be one of eight children living in a two-roomed house. That is overcrowding. I could give him more details, but we do not solve these problems by hurling insults at each other. However, I found that abusive tonight and during the debate in Committee. We should be concerned about finding solutions to real problems.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Walker: I shall give way in a moment.

The Government acknowledge that there are real problems. They are changing what was done in the past because it did not work. That is why new ways of tackling the problem were announced in the statement this afternoon. The Opposition should be welcoming such proposals, but, again, they were girning and greeting in a way to which we have grown accustomed. The solution to the problems will be found in using resources in the most effective way and by involving local people. That is what the Government are doing.

I suggest that one of the reasons why county councils' coffers are so devoid of funds is that many decades of artificially low rents have deprived them of millions of pounds which they would have got from the public purse. Housing support in all its various forms, including housing benefit, has been available for many decades, but a low-rents policy artificially depresses the rent value and stops a council receiving public support in the form of housing benefit and the other forms of housing support that existed before housing benefit came into being. That deprives the housing coffers.

It is a deliberate policy, followed largely by Labour-controlled authorities, which starve themselves of funds that could be used to maintain their stock in a much more habitable condition. That is another indictment of housing management. The Bill will create much better management for national housing resources. The Government should reject the clauses. They are activity, not action.

Mr. Kirkwood: I rise to speak to new clause 14 and amendment No. 126 that stand in my name. I subscribe entirely to the argument deployed by the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) about the housing needs survey and the house condition survey, both of which are extremely important. However, I shall confine my remarks to homelessness.

There is no consensus about the scale of homelessness, largely due to disagreement about how the problem should be measured. New clause 14 is a very neutral and anodyne attempt to remedy that problem. The Government regard as homeless only those people who satisfy official statutory criteria that are established by the homeless persons provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The Government argue that there was a decrease last year in the number of homeless people, but the figures are still one third higher than they were when they came into office. The Government figures available to me show that in 1985-86 the number of officially homeless persons was 10,906 and that in 1986-87 that number fell to 9,868.

Pressure groups and local authorities have criticised those criteria; they are suspect and far too restrictive. They exclude many genuinely homeless people from the official statistics, such as married couples living with parents or parents-in-law. Shelter's regular survey of people who apply to be considered as homeless and who are therefore granted priority status for housing allocation purposes shows a steeply worsening trend. Shelter's figures show that, in 1985-86, 26,329 people applied to be classed as homeless and that in 1986-87 there were 31,218 applications. That controverts the figures that were given to me in a written answer on Monday 14 March. The Government gave information about those who had applied to be classed as homeless in each local authority from 1978-79, and it is set out in a table in the *Official Report*.

The purpose of new clause 14 is to establish a formal mechanism to allow the true extent of homelessness to become known. Under new clause 14, the number of people who consider themselves homeless and who apply to be granted homeless status by the local authority—such figures are now collected by Shelter but are not kept centrally by the Scottish Office — would be set out. Furthermore, those who succeeded in being classed as homeless — those are the only figures that are now acknowledged by the Scottish Office—would be set out. Finally, those who were found accommodation after having been classed as homeless would be set out and would thereby become known to Parliament.

The nature of the success or otherwise of the Government's housing policy for the homeless would then be much clearer. At the moment, the homelessness problem is substantially understated, whether deliberately or otherwise. Poor statistics hamper attempts to assess the extent of the problem in Scotland. I ask, therefore, that new clause 14 should be considered in that light.

6.45 pm

Amendment No. 126 seeks to establish a programme with local authorities to share responsibility for dealing with applications received under the homeless persons provisions of the 1987 Act. There is no obligation on the new housing agency, Scottish Homes, to concern itself with homelessness. The amendment seeks to remedy that omission. Scottish Homes will probably be the largest landlord in Scotland. The amendment seeks to oblige the new agency to share the responsibility for homelessness.

Local authorities have an exclusive statutory duty to attend to that problem under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. Scottish Homes will be the largest landlord in Scotland and local authorities will be deprived of both resources and stock to tackle the problem of homelessness if many of their tenants transfer their homes to other landlords, as the Government clearly hope and intend. In those circumstances, it would be ludicrous if Scottish Homes did not share the responsibility for housing the homeless.

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): I intervene, I hope briefly, to support new clause 1. My hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) made an excellent case for it. Although the case is overwhelming, the Government still resist it.

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): I remember a debate when the Conservative party were in opposition. On that occasion, the Minister was on the same side as me. He called for more action from the then Labour Government to establish a house condition survey. The Minister has the power to do that now, but he sits on his backside and does nothing.

Mr. Clarke: I accepted my hon. Friend's intervention because I knew that the Minister was listening carefully. He is a very good-natured Minister. He can show great courtesy, which puts to shame most of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench. Therefore, I live in great hope that on this occasion my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) will not be disappointed. The argument is extremely powerful.

The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) has been consistent on each occasion when he has spoken on this matter. The Select Committee on which my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian, the hon. Member for Tayside, North and I served took evidence that suggested that Scotland should adopt the practice that has been followed in England and Wales for some time. If the hon. Member for Tayside, North believes that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and many other organisations that gave evidence to the Select Committee were wrong on that point, I should like him to put forward an argument that would persuade me that the money that has been spent in England and Wales has been spent unwisely.

The hon. Member for Tayside, North made a splendid point in support of the new clause moved by my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian when he said that, as he recalled the evidence that was given to the Select Committee, some of the councils were "oblivious" of their conditions. If that is so, it is all the more reason for having a national survey.

Mr. Bill Walker: The point that I was making was that what the Select Committee achieved by having its inquiry was to make councils aware of the situation. That was one of the really positive effects of that inquiry, which I believe was the Select Committee functioning and operating as it should, which sadly was not always the case. It was a very good inquiry, which did a lot of good and made councils aware of a situation which before the inquiry they were at least suggesting did not exist.

Mr. Clarke: I find myself again with the hon. Gentleman, in that I agree that it was a good inquiry. It was so good that it made a recommendation to the Government, and the Government tossed it out. Had they accepted even the proposal that we should have a pilot scheme, as recommended by the Committee, my hon. Friend the Minister for East Lothian might not have found it necessary to move this new clause today.

If there are so many variations in the approach of one local authority as against another—I submit that there are — clearly we ought to be trying to establish a national standard in an attempt to identify the national problems that exist in Scotland and the local implications of those problems.

I will give an indication of the absolute confusion that reigns on this matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), on 8 July 1987, as recorded in *Hansard*, column *184*, put a question about dwellings requiring major repair in 1986 and received a reply from the Secretary of State for Scotland. I will not go into great detail, because an enormous table was provided, but it only adds to the confusion. For example, taking districts neighbouring Monklands district, I find that in Falkirk ther are 14,708 such houses; in Motherwell there are 4,600 and in Strathkelvin there are 1,119.

I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) hopes to catch your eye later, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on very important problems that Strathkelvin experiences in terms of capital, where it was found that the sale of council houses was not the prize that it was offered as being. The same table suggests that in Monklands the score is nil. I thought that I was reading about Albion Rovers! I cannot accept, based on my own local knowledge and on the number of constituents who come to me, that the situation in Monklands can be represented by nil. I do not believe it.

I do not necessarily criticise the Secretary of State, or the council, because Monklands district council's officials, in responding to the request from the Scottish Office to give this information, may have found their own method of making the calculation, but I believe that, given the problems of dampness which the Committee identified and of which we are all aware, given the problems of overcrowding, which we are discussing today, and given the problem of homelessness, it really is quite unacceptable that we should have information which is nowhere near that available to our hon. Friends who represent English and Welsh constituencies.

This was the plea even of the Institute of Environmental Health Officers. They did not want, within given local authorities, to take it upon themselves to say what standards should be set and that they therefore should make a judgment in terms of inspection and the efficiency of their own authority. They were hoping that there would be national standards and national provision of information. The small amount of money that the English and Welsh experience has cost — over £1 million, as I understand it, in each case—is a great deal less than the £800 million that COSLA quite rightly demands as necessary to invest in our housing stock. But in the absence of a survey, we shall keep getting the kind of confused reply to which I have referred.

I end as I began, by explaining that I find it quite astonishing that the Government are being so stubborn. The Secretary of State referred to COSLA, which clearly would support the new clause suggested by my hon. Friend, but the Secretary of State is very selective. Last night, during the exchange on the poll tax, it was said that there was not a single question at COSLA, and that somehow or other left the Secretary of State feeling that he had COSLA's support.

Whether or not the right hon. and learned Gentleman is selective, the fact is that COSLA, based on the kind of experience for which there is no substitute — that of its own councillors and housing committees dealing day after day with the problems that we are addressing — strongly takes the view that we are making a meal of this in Parliament by not taking our positive decision. When we do so, I hope that we shall do so in terms of my hon. Friend's new clause.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: These new clauses seek information about and clarification of the reality of Scottish housing conditions and Scottish housing needs and to find out the truth about homelessness nationwide. I should have thought that they would be welcomed by all Members. The solution to any major problem must be preceded by an analysis if it is to be made effectively and efficiently. Housing is no different. It is important to delineate the problem, identify the exact extent and nature of it, and then to gather the necessary resources and apply them in a sensitive way in meeting the needs of people.

Mr. Bill Walker: Is the hon. Gentleman telling the House that Angus district council does not already know how many dark houses it has, how many people it has on its waiting list and what the problems are in Angus?

Mr. Welsh: I should be happy to tell the House what a good housing authority Angus is, with a zero rent increase this year and record spending on repairs, maintenance and the modernisation of houses. Angus district council would do exactly what I am suggesting — find out the extent of the problem and apply the resources sensitively to meet the needs of the people — but I am talking about housing survey for the whole of Scotland.

In Scottish housing we have not even reached that simple first base, and it has taken quite a deal of time for the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) to figure that out. There is no accurate statement of the extent of Scottish rural and urban housing problems. The reality is not known. The remaining problems can be guessed at from the statistics applied by COSLA and organisations such as Shelter, but enough is known to encourage further and more detailed study of the reality of Scottish housing needs and Scotland's housing stock. Carry out that study and a very important first step will have been taken towards providing a solution to our major national housing problems.

The Government maintain that local housing authorities already have sufficient information about the condition of housing stock and, in particular, public housing stock. The local authorities disagree, and I am inclined to believe them. Even the Government do not claim that there is enough accurate information about the condition of privately owned houses. The estimates that exist cannot easily be reconciled. For example, the 1981 census recorded 23,400 houses as lacking an indoor toilet, while local authority returns for the same year suggested that the figure might be as high as 70,000.

With such huge disparities between existing sources of information, surely it is essential that an objective assessment of housing conditions be carried out. A crucial feeling about all existing information is that it fails to provide any assessment of the general level of disrepair in either the public or the private sector.

In July 1985 an inquiry into British housing, chaired by the Duke of Edinburgh, published a report making considerable use of the English and Welsh house condition surveys. It stated:

"No comparable information is available for Scotland; we think it should be."

With an attitude like that, would that the Duke of Edinburgh, rather than a lord, was the Scottish Housing Minister.

In November 1985, the Department of the Environment conducted an inquiry into the condition of local authority housing stock in England, which produced an assessment of the structural condition of English council houses and of factors such as poor heating systems, condensation and insulation, asbestos, security, vandalism and environmental problems, and window and door replacement, so that information is available for England. Why should it not be available and put to use in Scotland? Surely such information is the only basis for any sensible housing policy.

7 pm

The means of conducting such a housing survey exists through Scottish local organisations such as COSLA. It has produced a housing information survey kit, adaptable to the needs of local authorities. The means of delivering such a survey are already in place, thanks to local authority initiatives, so it would be easy for the Government to carry out this necessary housing survey if they had the will. It must be national, giving the national picture of what faces the Scottish population. I am under no illusion that such a survey would be the be-all and end-all, but it would give us a snapshot of the reality, and as such it would be an important first step towards examining the problems and getting in the resources to solve them.

Parliamentary answers tell me that England has had four such surveys and that yet another is planned for 1991. If the Minister's English colleagues believe that such a survey is essential and invested more than £1·5 million on the last house condition survey, why is it not possible for Scotland to have one, given our much worse housing? Three housing surveys have been conducted in Northern Ireland, along with a mini-survey last year — why nothing for Scotland?

It cannot be for financial reasons, because the Government have told me that it would cost only about £5 million for a Scottish survey. Surely such a small amount is a worthy investment, given that it will form the basis from which to tackle Scotland's housing problem. Where better to use a unified Scottish housing agency than as a basis for such a survey? Would the Minister allow Scottish Homes to carry out the survey, given the small amount involved? If not, why not?

I know the answer to my questions: such a survey would give an exact picture of the atrocious conditions in which so many of our fellow Scots live, and the Government have no intention of meeting the Scottish housing needs or supplying the resources with which to tackle them. A housing needs and conditions survey should be undertaken, along with a survey of homelessness, as a first step in seriously dealing with Scottish housing problems, but I guess that the Government will once again duck their responsibility and Scotland will be left out on a limb — with no survey, no basic information, and no resources with which to tackle our housing problems.

Mr. George Galloway (Glasgow, Hillhead): Nothing bears better testimony to the utter cynicism of the Conservative party about Scottish housing than the vast expanses of green on the Conservative benches. I thought for a moment that they were about to grow vaster, but I see that the hon. Membr for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is not leaving us. We see precisely two Scottish Conservative Members, yet when the Division Bell rings no doubt their English compatriots will flood in to vote through this attack on Scottish housing, just as they did

Mr. Bill Walker: There are only 11 Scottish Labour Members present.

Mr. Galloway: The hon. Gentleman has proved that he has at least 10 fingers, but there are, as I say, only two Scottish Conservative Members present to deal with this vital issue. The Minister gets paid to sit where he is and would lose his job if he did not, and the hon. Member for Tayside, North is the only Conservative Member not much in demand as a dining companion, so he can sit here at 7.3 pm.

My point was a serious one. When the Division Bells ring, English Conservatives will flood through the doors, never having seen a Scottish home or a damp house in Scotland, to vote through the legislation which has nothing to do with an attempt to make the critical problems of Scottish housing better and everything to do with lining the pockets of their friends, who they hope they will be able to conjure into the private rented sector when the legislation is passed.

The Government's cynicism is almost Orwellian. The title of the Bill, Housing (Scotland), and Scottish Homes, which has nothing to do with Scotland and was never voted for by the Scottish people, are evidence of that. Indeed, the concept was decisively rejected by them at the general election. So the Bill's title is an abuse of language and its contents are utterly alien to the Scottish housing scene and have nothing to do with houses, as the next 48 hours will show — and as the 80 hours in Committee showed.

Nothing shows the Government's cynicism more than their refusal to accept the new clause, which would oblige Scottish Homes to have a national house condition survey. How could anyone go into an enterprise as vast as tackling the problems of Scottish housing without a survey to show how serious the problem was? Much was made in Committee, in the White paper and on Second Reading, of the similarity between Scottish Homes and the Scottish Development Agency. Does anyone seriously believe that the SDA would undertake a vast and important strategic enterprise such as running Scottish housing without first conducting a survey to see what the problems were? Scottish Homes wil be whistling in the dark — deliberately and wilfully so—if it sets about its business without ascertaining the extent of the problem.

In an earlier intervention, my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) attempted to flatter the Minister into giving way on this issue, but I could have saved him his breath. We tried that many times in Committee, by reminding the Minister of his previous support for the demand for a national survey. We flattered him by telling him he was the most civilised and gentlemanly of the Tory Ministers—but to no avail.

Many Conservative Members have given their reasons for resisting our demand. Some of them care about Scottish housing—I include the Minister in this category —but are afraid of such a survey because of the results it would yield. After being studied, the survey would lead to a demand by people of all political persuasions in Scotland for resources, money and energy, which the Thatcherite Government in Scotland are not prepared to put into Scottish housing, the Scottish economy or any other aspect of Scottish life.

Other Conservative Members do not want the survey because they do not give a damn. Some Members on the Committee were not even Scottish; others were Scottish but lived in castles; others were so dry in their Thatcherite philosophy that they almost thought it was a crime that people should depend on the public sector for housing in the first place. So if their houses were damp, their roofs leaked or the close in which they lived had not been decorated for goodness knows how many years, that was their own fault. If they would only pull themselves up by their boot straps, their problems, according to these Conservative Members, could be solved.

A house condition survey would illustrate the fact that Governments and local authorities of all political colours labour under misconceptions about the critical problems of Scottish housing. Certainly the Government seriously underestimate the scale of those problems.

Let us examine the issue of sub-tolerable conditions. We had great fun discussing that in Committee. The Secretary of State thought that there was a different number of sub-tolerable houses in Scotland from the number given by his junior Minister. The Minister gave two different figures within 20 minutes about the number of such houses in Scotland. It all depends on one's definition of tolerable. What is being forced on Scottish tenants as tolerable would certainly not be tolerable for many of us. If there was such a survey, we would find that the number of houses involved was dramatically different.

It has been said that there are lies, damned lies and statistics. I shall use the example of Glasgow, because of the shortage of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. According to the Government, there are only 11,000 houses in the city of Glasgow that are below tolerable standards. That would be a joke if it were not so tragic. Glasgow district council, which has, I dare say, every reason to know better than the Government — shame though that may be on the Government — estimates that 44,000 houses are below tolerable standards. That figure is reached after applying a moderate definition of "tolerable". My experience of just 10 months as a Glasgow Member of Parliament is that a hell of a lot of the sub-tolerable houses in Glasgow must be in my constituency, but, when I look around at the constituencies of some of my hon. Friends in Glasgow, I know that that cannot be true.

Such a survey might also throw light on an issue that is perhaps not so politically contentious, but it is one that I raised in Committee and want to raise again on Report. It relates to obsolete and sub-tolerable wiring and electrical equipment. Members on both sides have correctly made all sorts of noises of concern and consolation when fire tragedies have occurred in many parts of the country. Yet how many of those fires were caused because innumerable houses, perhaps millions of them, in Britain as a whole have ineffective, inefficient or obsolete wiring?

I shall give, if I may, only the Glasgow statistics. According to Glasgow district council, 45,000 houses in Scotland have obsolete or inadequate electrical wiring, or equipment, and heating. That is a scandal which Scottish Homes would do well to address, but the organisation cannot address the problem unless it knows it exists, and it cannot know that it exists until it carries out a survey to ascertain it.

The great problem of dampness in Scottish housing is even greater than homelessness, in my opinion. The Scottish Opposition, which is 50 strong, happen to know this because many, if not all, of us represent areas where dampness is endemic. Because there are so few Conservative Members, who in many cases represent

[Mr. Galloway]

constituencies where dampness is much less of a problem, I do them the credit of saying that they may not appreciate its seriousness.

Every week people come to my surgery with children's toys, with coats, or with photographs that demonstrate dampness on an obscene scale. Children are living in houses and sleeping in bedrooms that are giving them bronchial problems and asthma and making them ill. The Government do not even care enought to conduct a national survey of dampness in housing so that they at least know the extent of the problem, even if they do not make any attempt seriously to redress it.

I hope that the Minister will obey his instincts and agree to set up a national house condition survey. I know that he will not, for he would be sacked if he did.

7.15 pm

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I shall be brief, but I wish to speak on the important issue of a house condition survey. I put it to the Minister that the lack of a survey points to the Government's indifference to the value of the public debate on the issue during the past nine months.

The Government had several objectives in the White Paper. They wanted increased home ownership, diversification of choice and tenureship and a major revamping of the peripheral housing estates. The word that was missing from those objectives was "quality". I suggest that quality of housing was absent because the Government are not interested in the quality of homes in Scotland. If the Government were the least bit interested, they would have included a house condition survey in the White Paper, as the new clause demands.

What are we asking for? Hon. Members have said that Scotland wants the same as England and Wales. How could the Minister possibly undertake a major revamping of Scottish housing, which was mentioned in the White Paper and the consultative document, without thoroughly knowing the problem and having detailed statistics? The least that the Government could do is to set a target, and set it in concrete, so that we know where we are going. The Government have failed to do that because they are not interested in housing in Scotland. That is the only message that could go out from the House.

The statistics have been gone over in the past few months and I will not repeat them. Experts have estimated that more than £6 billion is required for modernisation and repairs. It is up to the Government to knock down that figure and to come back and prove that that money is not needed. I contend that they cannot do it because they have not investigated the matter sufficiently.

Homelessness has been mentioned. In my surgeries, like those of other hon. Members, the majority of cases concern housing, notwithstanding the fact that local district councils do their best. Indeed, my district council has undertaken its own housing condition survey and submitted it to the Scottish Office. It requires £110 million over five years. The Scottish Office says that the council can have £20 million over five years. The Scottish Office did not request details about what was wrong with the housing in my constituency. Every utterance of the Government must be rejected because they will not undertake any basic analysis of the problem. Until they do that, we cannot accept their word.

Mr. Canavan: I rise to support my hon. Friends briefly and, first, to congratulate them on tabling the new clause.

It is a poor reflection on Conservative Members that only one Scottish Tory Back Bencher is in the Chamber to listen to this very important debate. I hope, therefore, that the Minister will bear in mind the fact that Opposition Members have put forward a very strong case for a survey of housing conditions and needs.

I hope that the Minister might remember his days as a humble Back Bencher when he made radical statements supporting the needs for the type of survey that is outlined in new clause 1. I remember the hon. Gentleman making great emotional speeches about the sufferings of his council house tenants in West Pilton — the Minister agrees with me — which was in his constituency at that time, although it is no longer. West Pilton is an area of Edinburgh which the Minister claimed at that time was suffering from multiple deprivation. He rightly fought a good fight on behalf of the council house tenants of West Pilton, in the House, in the Scottish Grand Committee and in Scottish Standing Committees dealing with housing legislation.

The Minister was in opposition then and he could afford to stand up against the then Government and promise the earth to his constituents once he got into office. The hon. Gentleman now has responsibility for housing in Scotland. I know that the appointment was subject to criticism and that unkind remarks were made about him. People talked about his lack of experience in such matters as council housing and spoke about his being one of the last remnants of the Scottish aristocracy. I do not want to repeat those unkind remarks because I know that, despite his aristocratic background, he is a sincere and honest man.

The Minister is one of the more honourable or at least one of the least dishonourable of the rascals in the Scottish Office ministerial team. Certainly when we compare him with Ministers who have responsibility for such matters as health, education, sport and the arts, we see that, despite his obvious faults and failings, he is a man of some integrity. I am sure that when he replies to the debate he will bear in mind the valid points made by my hon. Friends. I know that he will not be so partisan as to say that merely because one of his own Back Benchers made a contribution, he will, out of party political prejudice, ignore the needs of Scottish council tenants and other tenants. The new clause refers not just to public sector tenants but to those in the private sector.

New clause 1 says:

"The Secretary of State shall, upon coming into force of this Act and every five years thereafter, conduct a Scottish house condition survey".

The five-year period is very important. Some people may think that such a survey should be conducted every 10 years while others may think that housing is such a fast-moving, dynamic matter that there should be a survey every two or three years. My hon. Friends have struck a good balance, because five years is the maximum lifetime of a Parliament so that we could expect a housing survey in the lifetime of each Parliament. Five years is just one year longer than the maximum lifetime of a housing authority, if we confine the meaning of housing authority to directly elected district councils.

That means that, within the lifetime of each Parliament and probably within the lifetime of each local authority,

between elections, we can expect a housing survey to take place. My hon. Friends have got the timing just about right.

What is the purpose of the survey? The new clause says that it is

"to establish the current condition of the fabric of local authority, housing association and privately owned housing stock".

Not only the fabric of houses should be surveyed; we should also survey the social conditions that arise because of the state of the fabric. However, I do not want to quibble over that. If the fabric is faulty, that usually leads to miserable social conditions, and action must be taken to remedy such faults. Obviously the problem must first be identified and that is why the need for a survey of the fabric is absolutely essential.

My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Galloway), spoke about the problem of dampness in houses in his constituency. He spoke in moving and graphic terms about the poor people who come to his surgery week after week, month after month. I certainly sympathise with my hon. Friend. I am sure that all hon. Members who represent Scottish constituencies, and particularly Labour Members who represent deprived inner-city areas and other areas in which poor housing conditions still exist, can testify to the great need to eradicate the problems of dampness.

Less than a decade ago the Minister was speaking in the House and in Committee about the problems of dampness in houses in his constituency. I supported him at that time and all that I want him to do now is to support me. There is no point in saying that local authorities, the Scottish Special Housing Association, the future Scottish Homes and private landlords should each deal with the problems of dampness in their own houses. The Minister knows that local authorities often lack the resources even for a comprehensive survey, never mind the remedial action necessary to deal with the problems once they have been diagnosed.

Dampness can be a severe problem, causing not just social but severe medical problems. As my hon. Friends have said, mothers sometimes come along with children to our surgeries. They become almost like doctors' surgeries when children are coughing and spluttering because of dampness in the house. We can hear the child wheezing.

It is impossible to visit every home in one's constituency and to conduct some kind of personal survey, but I have visited many homes because some parents have pleaded with me to come and see the conditions in which they and their families have to live. Sometimes I have had the time to go to view these conditions and it is a heart-rending experience to see such problems in a house that may be less than a decade old. There is something wrong with the architecture or the building or the heating of such houses, or possibly all three factors come into it, when severe problems of dampness or condensation arise. Houses of that age could not by any stretch of the imagination be called old.

If we had a national survey such as the one outlined in the new clause, at least we would be able to identify the scope of the problem. I hope that we could also identify the root causes and deal with them. I hope that, if the Minister accepts the need for a statutory survey of the sort that my hon. Friends have in mind, he will bear in mind that it is not good enough simply to look at the fabric of the houses and carry out a superficial diagnosis. It is essential to ask the tenants about the heating system, for example.

Local authorities often say that a tenant is using the wrong kind of heating system for his house and that it is contrary to the advice that he has been given by the council. Such tenants often come to me and ask, "How can I possibly heat my house using gas, electricity or whatever system is recommended by the council? Here is my weekly income. I simply cannot afford anything other than a paraffin heater." As we all know, a paraffin heater is disastrous not just in terms of the fire risk, especially when there are young children around who might coup the heater, but because it causes severe condensation.

If a survey such as that outlined in the new clause were conducted throughout Scotland, we should find that many poor people who are eking out a living on supplementary benefit are being forced, because of economic circumstances, to use paraffin heaters.

In view of the Minister's experience in West Pilton, perhaps he will tell us whether there are still areas in his constituency in which such problems prevail. Perhaps he will tell us what he intends to do to alleviate the situation for his constituents and for other people. If he says that he does not have as many council house tenants as he used to have, as a result of the boundary changes, I remind him that the new clause also refers to privately owned housing stock in Scotland.

Tory Members are very good at pointing the finger at the inadequacies of the council housing stock. Ironically, those inadequacies are often caused by the Government's failure to give housing authorities sufficient resources to improve or expand their housing stock. However, the problem is not confined to local authority, Scottish Special Housing Association or other housing association property. The problem cuts across the divide between the public and private sectors.

7.30 pm

Unfortunately, even in relatively new houses in the private sector, we find problems of dampness. That may be due to the economic circumstances of the owner-occupiers. They may take on a mortgage to buy a house when both the husband and wife are earning. Then perhaps a family comes along and the woman stops working. The man is then made redundant, so the family finds itself struggling to keep up the mortgage payments. There may be a tendency in such circumstances to cut down on heating costs, so a cycle of dampness and damage to the fabric of the house is established. Perhaps the problem does not exist to the same extent in the private sector, but it certainly exists in much of the older private sector housing stock and in some newer private sector housing.

New clause 1 states that one of the objects of the survey is

"to identify property which is below the tolerable standard".

That is an excellent idea. It is about time that the Government started to look at houses in Scotland that still fall below the tolerable standard and to consider ways of improving the standard. What may have been considered tolerable 10 or 20 years ago may now be considered intolerable. We should never be complacent about housing standards. We should always be considering ways of improving them.

[Mr. Canavan]

Perhaps the Minister will give us the most up-to-date figures of the number of houses in both the public and private sectors which fall below the tolerable standard. I refer to the statutory definition of the tolerable standard which appears in the Scottish Development Department's circulars and in statutory instruments.

It is a terrible indictment of the Government that they have contributed in some respects to a lowering rather than a raising of standards. For example, the building company Barratt indulged in some disgraceful lobbying to try to influence hon. Members in an attempt to lower the building regulations standards. As a result, some people in Scotland live in what has been described as hen-hut accommodation and do not have sufficient room to move around in the house.

The Tory Government connived with Barratt to lower those standards, despite the fact that building control officers, representing local authorities throughout Scotland and with no political axe to grind, were adamantly opposed to the lowering of those standards.

I should be interested to know whether the financial link between Barratt and the Tory party had anything to do with the Government's lowering of those standards. Some people in Barratt accommodation are living in property that would previously have been described as intolerable or at least below the standards set down by the building regulations. That is a bad record for the Government. They have flouted professional advice. I do not know what advice they received from their officials at the Scottish Development Department. I have always believed that most civil servants, with a few exceptions, are incorruptible, and I am sure that they would not be over-influenced by Barratt.

The lobbying appears to have been done at the highest levels of the Conservative party. Barratt obtained the ministerial ear and had the regulations changed. That was a disgraceful episode in the history of housing in Scotland. I shall be interested to know which Tory party members, Tory Members of Parliament and, possibly, Ministers have received hospitality from Barratt and invitations to their time-sharing flats in the Highlands. It is a shoddy business when a private sector company is able to influence the Government unduly in the formulation of Government regulations.

I did not originally intend to raise that matter, but it came to mind when I saw the statement in new clause 1 about tolerable standards. Part of the object of new clause 1 is

"to assess the likely future requirement to repair and refurbish those homes."

In other words, it is not sufficient to conduct a survey and find out what is wrong. We must also obtain an estimate of the resources required to carry out the necessary repairs, refurbishment, modernisation and, in some cases, demolition and rebuilding. Many mistakes have been made by architects and builders.

Sometimes it is not old houses that need to be demolished. I remember canvassing at a by-election in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Central (Mr. McTaggart). We visited a high block of flats which, I believe, was opened by the Queen not very long ago. I have no doubt that those flats would come within the scope of new clause 1. Only a few people were living in them even at that time. Those flats should be demolished and, as I understand it, that is in the process of being done.

Perhaps the Minister will tell me what, if anything, has been done about a booklet that I came across in the Library and which was produced by the last Labour Government when Hugh Brown was Minister with responsibility for housing at the Scottish Office. An excellent Green Paper was produced in about 1976 and, whether or not one agreed with some of its tentative proposals, it certainly contained a wealth of statistics on housing conditions in Scotland. It was obvious that at least elements of a survey had been carried out. Will the Minister consider upgrading the good factual information which was contained in that excellent Green Paper?

In 1977 the Scottish Development Department published "Guidance for Local Authorities—Assessing Housing Needs". I do not recall the Tory Government saying when they won the 1979 general election that that document's approach was no longer Government policy or that it was null and void just because there had been a change of Government. In case the Minister does not have that report, its reference number is ISBN 0114914826.

The report was the result of much hard work by a committee chaired by Mr. C. J. Watson, BA in geography from the centre for urban and regional studies of the university of Birmingham. Most of the others on the committee seemed to have a Scottish background. The report contained more than 100 pages. Can the Minister tell us what has happened in the decade since it was published? Do the Government still hold by the report, or have they updated it? What are the Government's criteria for conducting a survey along the lines set out in new clause 1?

Subsection (2) of new clause 1 states:

"The Secretary of State shall present to Parliament the results of each Scottish house condition survey".

That should go without saying. Unfortunately, with this Government, who do not believe in open democracy, we must spell out the details for them. I congratulate my hon. Friends on doing so in the new clause. We do not want such a survey to lie on the shelves collecting dust in New St. Andrew's house. It should be presented to Parliament and be accessible to all Members.

I suggest that the Minister should consider breaking down such surveys, not just by local authority area but by constituency, so that we can all see the state of housing in our areas. I am sure that that would equip us better to ask constructive and well-researched questions in Scottish Question Time. I am sure that the Minister would welcome such questions based on these surveys rather than have hon. Members ask him to provide the information that should be available in them.

Obviously, house condition surveys must be open to parliamentary inspection. I go further and say that such surveys should be debated. Members from down south have been invading debates on Scottish affairs on the Floor of the House and if some hon. Members take exception to too much time being taken up on Scottish affairs, I suggest that we debate the house condition surveys in the Scottish Grand Committee. Of course, that Committee has its limitations because it normally meets for only two and a half hours and, by the time the Front Benchers have had their shilling's worth, there is only enough time for Back Benchers to have a pennyworth each. That means that only two or three Opposition Back

Benchers can speak. There should be open-ended debate, without a guillotine, either on the Floor of the House or in the Scottish Grand Committee.

7.45 pm

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I doubt whether this is the appropriate moment to discuss that matter. The hon. Member should address his remarks more directly to the new clause.

Mr. Canavan: I am referring to subsection (2) of the new clause, which states:

"The Secretary of State shall present to Parliament the results of each Scottish house condition survey within six months of completion of each survey."

There are various ways of submitting measures to Parliament. They can be submitted to Parliament as a whole or can be referred to the Scottish Grand Committee. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the great respect I have for the occupants of the Chair and, if it is your wish, I shall proceed to subsection (3) of the new clause — it is important as I am sure you will agree—which states:

"the Secretary of State shall calculate and provide such funds as are necessary to effect all repairs to public sector houses as have been identified as necessary by any Scottish house condition survey."

We should not let the Government off the hook. It is a matter not only of identifying the problem but of attempting to solve it. Some local authorities have put great efforts into carrying out a local survey of housing needs and conditions, but they are not able to do all that they would like to remedy the problem, because the Government will not give them the funds to do so.

My local authority has had a drastic cut in its capital allocation since the Government came to power and has received not a penny in housing support grant in recent years. If Falkirk district council has not had a penny of housing support grant and has suffered a capital allocation cut as well, what hope do council tenants have that repairs will be carried out? Under the new clause, a survey will have to be conducted and local authorities will have to be given enough money to do something about the problems that would be discovered by such a survey.

My hon. Friends have restricted subsection (3) to cover public sector houses, but in subsection (4) they extend the new clause to cover

"the improvement or repair of private sector housing."

Certain statutory minimum requirements have been laid down in terms of private sector housing improvement grants. I should like the Minister to clarify a point. If a house falls below the "tolerable standard", the person who lives in it—whether as an owner-occupier or as a tenant —or the owner is entitled to an improvement grant. This is a mandatory grant, but there are other types of improvement grant that are discretionary. It is up to the local authority to decide what percentage of grant to give.

My former constituency contained not only part of Falkirk district housing athority but several other housing authorities. As I recall, the practice seemed to vary from one local authority to another. I wonder whether there is perhaps a case for increasing the amount of statutory grant—provided, that is, that local authorities are given adequate resources to implement a raising of the standards.

I have no doubt that some of my constituents' problems would be identified in a national survey as outlined in new clause 1. At present, they go along to the local housing authority to ask for an improvement grant. They are told, "All right. We have to give you an improvement grant to bring your house up to tolerable standards. But you want standards slightly above tolerable standards and we shall not give you a grant for that element." That is a pity. Surely we should not think simply in terms of the minimum standard. I have always said that there should be nothing but the best for the working classes. I am sure that the Minister, as a good aristrocrat, will agree with me that we should be bettering standards all the time rather than contenting ourselves with minimum standards.

Is not there a case for tightening the definition of tolerable standards and giving local authorities more money to make home improvement grants to bring houses up to those improved tolerable standards, as well as allowing them to exercise more discretion in making grants to people who want to improve above tolerable standards?

New clause 2 would also provide for a survey, but it refers to needs as well as housing conditions. That is very important, too. Perhaps the Minister does not hold centrally the figures for the number of people on waiting lists. In the past when we have tabled questions — for example, asking the Minister whether he will give us the number of people on housing waiting lists in each local authority area — we have received one of those word-processor replies saying, "Ha, ha. This information is not held centrally." Frankly, that is not good enough. If we had a survey as outlined in new clause 2, we should have access to the information required.

New clause 2 deals with the identification of housing needs. I suppose that we would need some kind of questionnaire; it would be no use writing to a local authority and asking, "What are the housing needs in your area?" A lot of groundwork would have to be done and people would need to be asked what their needs and wishes were. Like the Minister, I recognise that many people want to buy rather than rent their houses. Unlike the Minister, however, I do not think that the Government are entitled to cut to a minimum—perhaps even reduce to zero—the assistance that they give local authorities to replace the housing stock that they are forcing them to sell off. Perhaps the Government think that they will get cheap popularity by opening a bargain basement to sell council houses at huge discounts, but future generations may be very hostile to them if, as a result of their one-off decision in the late 1970s and 1980s, there is a vast reduction in the amount of public sector housing at a reasonable rent.

I have always believed that the Government should try to get the balance right. If in a survey under new clause 2 someone expresses a preference for buying a house rather than renting, in the public or private sector, that is fair enough; let us give that person help. We should help first-time home buyers such as young couples, in particular. However, we should never try to minimise the importance of the job that local authorities have to do in continuing and expanding public sector letting. I hope that the Minister will bear that in mind.

New clause 14 is a Liberal proposal and, as usual, the Liberals are not here. I shall speak in support of the new clause because it seems very reasonable. I do not want to be sectarian and say that just because it is a Liberal proposal Labour Members should not support it. It refers to the homeless persons provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The House will recall that the original homeless persons' legislation emerged from the Lib-Lab

[Mr. Canavan]

pact. I was not a supporter of the Lib-Lab pact, but I was certainly a supporter of better provision for homeless persons.

What has happened since the Act was passed? This Tory Government have refused to give local authorities adequate resources to fulfil their obligations under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 and the homeless persons provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. I am sure that many other hon. Members have heard constituents who have been on the waiting list for a considerable time — perhaps for years — complain not only that they cannot get a house but that someone else has been jumping the queue under the homeless persons provisions. That has caused a lot of aggro and the resulting antipathy has been misdirected against local councillors, although the fault lies fairly and squarely with the Government and their lack of an effective housing policy.

Let us examine the alleged queue-jumping. Often, the local authority is looking at a particular case and judging it under the terms of the homeless persons legislation which obliges it to give priority to a homeless person or family. Almost inevitably, those who are already on the waiting list—perhaps initially with more points than the homeless person—feel that they are being penalised and that they will therefore have to wait much longer for the house that should be theirs as of right. This Government do not consider housing to be a basic human right, and the operation of the homeless persons legislation therefore presents increasing difficulties.

There may be nothing wrong with the legislation itself. I am sure that most hon. Members agree that those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness should be given statutory protection. However, that statutory protection will cause difficulties unless local authorities are given adequate resources to deal more effectively with those on the ordinary waiting list rather than what is sometimes referred to as the homeless persons' list.

8 pm

I see a need for new clause 14. Indeed, as I said earlier, the Liberal, Stephen Ross who used to represent the Isle of Man — *[Interruption]* — no, the Isle of Wight — was instrumental in getting the homeless persons legislation onto the statute book. I believe that the Isle of Wight is now represented by a Tory.

This is a Liberal new clause, but I support it and I am sure that if he were here, Stephen Ross would support it too, although like many things about the Liberal party the clause is a bit pussy-footed. It states:

"The Secretary of State shall . . . make an annual return"

but that does not mean anything. Where are the Liberal Members? They are not even here to answer the point.

If the Secretary of State makes an annual return, we can guess what will happen to it. It will gather dust on the shelves of New St. Andrew's house. It is important that some action is taken on that annual return. If we had formulated the new clause—if it had been formulated by the Labour party rather than being a damp squib of a Liberal amendment — we would have beefed it up and stated that more resources should be provided. Of course, the reason why we did not bother to do that is because it can be adequately covered in new clause 1.

To get back to where I started, new clause 1(3) is very important as it relates to the provision of funds, as is new clause 2, the other Labour new clause, which states:

"The Secretary of State shall . . . take steps to house the"—

individuals or families—

"adequately and appropriately".

Although I am not a lawyer, I understand that in a Bill "shall" means "must". I understand that lawyers, like Liberals, are different people and say "shall" as if it was something futuristic and predetermined, but we know that that is not always so. Instead of saying "must", it states "shall". It is a bit of an abuse of the English language, and it is legal jargon, but so be it.

Finally, amendment No. 126 is also a Liberal amendment and establishes a programme for local authorities to share responsibility for dealing with applications received under the homeless persons provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. I am not sure what "sharing responsibility" means, because a local authority has that statutory responsibility at present. I am sure that that means that most of them are not trying to shirk that statutory responsibility, despite the difficulties in taking it on. All that is required is not so much a sharing of responsibility as the Government giving the local authorities sufficient resources to fulfil that responsibility.

We have had an interesting debate on the three new clauses and one amendment. I apologise to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) because, as a result of urgent commitments and problems in my constituency, I missed his speech, but I do not need to read *Hansard* tomorrow because I could virtually repeat his speech verbatim, as I have heard his housing speech on many previous occasions. With the exception of the hon. Member, every hon. Member who has spoken has been constructively critical of Government policy.

I repeat that the Under-Secretary has at least some integrity left, unlike some of the other Ministers in the Scottish Office. Therefore, I hope that he will respond constructively, in the same constructive spirit with which the Government policy has been criticised during the debate. I very much look forward to what he has to say.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am very glad to respond to the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) and to tell him that yesterday I was able to make an additional allocation to Falkirk of £2 million under the housing revenue account of which he was perhaps — *[Interruption.]* Well, although the hon. Gentleman is questioning it, that is certainly in the documents before me.

On the hon. Gentleman's question about below tolerable standards — *[Interruption.]* I am speaking to the hon. Gentleman. I wish to answer his speech, which lasted for an hour. The number of below tolerable houses in Scotland has been reduced from 121,000 in 1979 to 55,000. Those are the most recent figures that I can give. They come from the local authorities themselves.

The handbook to which the hon. Gentleman referred, "Guidance for Local Authorities — Assessing Housing Needs", was published nearly 10 years ago. It shows that even the previous Labour Government acknowledged the need for housing surveys, which I believe are very necessary.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) is not in his place, but I would advise him that it is our commitment, in the White Paper, to improve the supply and quality of housing. As I have said, the statistics that we use come from the local authorities. There is a dilemma, because a worthwhile survey would cost at least

£5 million—probably slightly more—and, quite frankly, that sum would modernise 1,500 council houses or provide over 2,000 repair grants. Therefore, I did not feel that it could be justified, for a variety of reasons.

New clause 1 seeks to impose on central Government responsibilities that are properly those of local authorities. The front-line responsibility for considering the requirements of an area rests with the district or islands council. The authorities have ample powers to carry out surveys of their areas to establish housing conditions. With this in mind, my Department is undertaking a research project on the conduct of local surveys with support from the Institute of housing, the Rowntree Trust, the Scottish Special Housing Association and a number of local authorities. The pilot survey in Nithsdale district has now been completed and we hope to issue guidance to local authorities this summer which will assist them to derive the maximum benefit from any survey work which they may comtemplate.

As I said during the Standing Committee's consideration of the Bill, we are keeping the possibility of a national house condition survey under review. We are not, as yet, however, convinced of its merits. In particular, it is unlikely that a national survey would yield useful results at below district level unless the sample size was large, and consequently the survey would be expensive. As I have already said, the cost of a national survey—which we estimate to be just over £5 million—would have to come out of the total resources available for housing. Frankly, I did not feel that I would be justified in reducing the increase that has just been made in the allocations to local authorities in Scotland in order to spend more than £5 million for a housing condition survey.

Incidentally, I advise the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) that Glasgow's housing revenue capital allocation for next year, 1988-89, is now £88 million, which is 6 per cent. on the equivalent allocation for 1987-88. It received an additional £19·5 million yesterday.

My brief response to new clause 2 is that the Scottish Development Department gathers information about the level of homelessness from local authorities throughout the year on a case return basis. In any event, I cannot agree that it would be appropriate for the Secretary of State to take action to provide housing directly. This is properly the responsibility of local authorities.

For much the same reasons, I do not believe that new clause 14 is acceptable. I can, of course, appreciate the difficulties and anxieties that occur when people are made homeless or are threatened with homelessness. Indeed, my Department is at present undertaking research into how authorities discharge their duties under the homelessness legislation. The aim of this research is to draw out, to document and in due course to disseminate examples of good practice. The more effectively and sensitively the legislation is applied, the more we can ensure that the distress that people face if they become homeless is kept to a minimum.

In addition to that research, the Scottish Development Department already collects statistical information from authorities through the year on a case-return basis to determine the extent of the homelessness problem. My Department also monitors the numbers of applications under the homeless persons legislation and the working of the Act generally. I do not believe that a formal requirement to consult relevant housing agencies and to make an annual return to Parliament on the level of homelessness would in any way ease the very difficult problems that can arise. We need to build on the existing links between all the agencies involved and to promote improved housing management.

Finally, let me say a little about amendment No. 126. The current legislation places responsibility for helping homeless people, in my view correctly, on district and islands councils. It is right that councils must consider whether changes are required to their housing allocation policies, and whether they can make better use of their existing stock, in the light of their exercise of that responsibility.

The problem of homelessness is not simply one of the total accommodation available. Indeed, as I often argued in Committee, there are some 130,000 more houses than households in Scotland. Homelessness is also to an increasing extent a problem of mismatch—with, for example, much accommodation being in the form of family houses, but the trend now being the formation of smaller households.

If these difficult problems are to be solved, we need good housing management and close co-operation between local authorities and the agencies involved. I do not believe that it is sensible to impose on local authorities a statutory requirement to act in tandem with Scottish Homes and to share responsibility in dealing with homelessness applications. In my view, one body in each area should have a clear duty to take the lead in ensuring that the homeless are found accommodation.

The Government will certainly look to Scottish Homes to co-operate to the full with local authorities on all matters of mutual interest. In areas where Scottish Homes acts as a landlord, local authorities will of course consider whether houses owned by Scottish Homes are available to house those whom the local authority determines to be in need of accommodation under the homeless persons legislation. There is therefore room for sensible and constructive co-operation between local authorities and Scottish Homes in dealing with people who require that necessary assistance, but I do not believe that this co-operation would be encouraged or enhanced by the terms of the amendment.

I do not believe that the new clauses and the amendment are acceptable, and I ask the House to reject them.

Mr. Home Robertson: I wish that the Minister would stop spinning this yarn about housing capital allocations and suggesting that the Government are giving local authorities money to do the job. That sort of remark simply aggravates people such as my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan). The Minister should come clean about what is going on.

As for all the mealy-mouthed stuff about homelessness, statistics and a mismatch between available and overcrowded houses, homelessness is not a matter of statistics or of mismatch. It is a personal disaster to those who are affected by it.

It has been made abundantly clear in the debate that there is an overwhelming case for proper surveys of housing needs and conditions in Scotland. How can there possibly be a proper investment planning process in Scotland, let alone a proper assessment of housing needs, in the absence of accurate information?

[Mr. Home Robertson]

We do not have adequate housing for our people in Scotland. The Minister knows it, and the House knows it. What we need is a proper, planned programme of investment, and the basis of such a plan must be accurate information. The Minister keeps saying that they are thinking about it, that they might carry out a survey at some time, that they are still thinking about it. The legislation provides the opportunity to lay a duty on the Secretary of State for Scotland to deal with the Scottish housing crisis, and he cannot begin to do that without accurate information.

We are about to move to a vote. Let me remind English Members, who form the overwhelming majority in the House, that in their country there is a house condition survey so that there can be proper planning of housing investment. All that we are asking is for the same facility to be available to the people of Scotland. I urge my hon. Friends and, indeed, the whole House to support the new clause.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 174, Noes 243.

Division No. 237] **[8.15 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Hardy, Peter
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kilfedder, James
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Frank Cook.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith

Hasley, Jeremy
Hamam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Mrs Maureen *(Wolv' NE)*
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

Question accordingly negatived.

New Clause 5

DETERMINING A RENT BY RENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

'—(1) A tenant may, at any time, irrespective of any existing rent agreement between himself and the landlord refer the rent of his home for assessment by a rent assessment committee and the committee shall determine the rent at which the committee consider that the house might reasonably be let to the individual tenant concerned.

(2) In making a determination under this section the committee shall have regard to:

(a) The amount of rent which the tenant can reasonably afford to pay

(b) The suitability of the house concerned to the requirements of the tenant and any members of his family.'.— *[Mr. Home Robertson.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Home Robertson: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 6 — *Prohibition of premiums for assured tenancies*—

'It shall be unlawful for any premium to be charged to a tenant for the creation of an assured tenancy, except that a deposit not exceeding one month's rent may be charged.'.

New clause 16 — *Application to rent officer by local authority*—

In Part V of the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984, after section 46 there shall be inserted the following section:

"*Application to Rent Officer by Local Authority.*

46A.—(1) A local authority may apply to the rent officer for consideration of fair rent for any dwelling-house within their area for which a rent may be or has been registered under this Part of this Act.

(2) If on the application the rent officer is satisfied that the rent, or the highest rent, payable for the dwelling-house under any lease or agreement exceeds what in his opinion is a fair rent, he shall register a rent for the dwelling-house.

(3) The rent officer may under subsection (2) above take account of the rent payable under any lease or agreement whether or not that exceeds the recoverable rent and whether or not the lease or agreement has taken effect.

(4) Where a rent for a dwelling-house has been registered under this Part of this Act, no application under this section shall be entertained before the expiry of three years from the relevant date (as defined in section 46(5) of this Act) except on the ground that, since that date, there has been such a change in the condition of the dwelling-house (including the making of any improvement therein), the terms of the tenancy, the quantity, quality or condition of any furniture provided for use under the tenancy (excluding any deterioration in that furniture due to fair wear and tear) or any other circumstances taken into consideration when the rent was registered or confirmed as to make the registered rent no longer a fair rent.

(5) For the purposes of section 46(5) of this Act, a case where the rent officer does not register a rent on an application under this section shall not be treated as a confirmation of any rent already registered."'.

Amendment No. 1, in page 15, line 16, leave out clause 25.

Mr. Home Robertson: This new clause enables the House to move on from its consideration of the needs for housing and the condition of housing in Scotland to the

[Mr. Home Robertson]

question of the likely spectacular increase in rent levels that will be generated if the Government are successful in imposing the new system of so-called assured tenancies in a supposedly increasing private rented sector in Scotland. Frankly, we doubt whether there will be the spectacular increase in private renting on which the Government are evidently pinning their hopes. However, tenants who are enticed into that form of tenure could find themselves in serious difficulties, and the House should dwell on that for a moment.

The assured tenancy system is designed to promote the interests of private landlords and to undermine the rights of tenants in Scotland. Nowhere is that more evident than in rents. The concept of fair rents is being jettisoned by the Government in favour of the law of the jungle and a free market approach to rents in the private sector in Scotland. In that context, it is important to emphasise the fact that for the foreseeable future housing in Scotland is likely to be a seller's market, certainly in connection with rented housing. The drastic cutback in local authority new building and the continuing erosion of existing local authority stock is contributing to a slow-down in the turnover of local authority housing in Scotland, whatever the Minister may try to say on the subject. That means that waiting lists are getting longer and things are bound to get worse.

We know that there are already as many as 200,000 people stuck on housing waiting lists in Scotland. There may be some duplication in that figure, but that is the number of outstanding applications for houses being held by local authorities in Scotland at present. Another connected figure is the depressing and distressing statistic that 1·25 million people in Scotland are living in overcrowded accommodation.

In circumstances such as those, people are obviously desperate to obtain homes. Anybody is bound to be desperate for a house for himself and his family, and it is not surprising that some people take serious risks in order to secure a house. In that connection, I have noticed a disturbing increase in the number of mortgage defaults, and that is a symptom of the problem.

There must be a significant number of people who, finding themselves stuck for years on end on waiting lists for district council houses, recognise that one way out of that problem is to get a mortgage and buy a house. They look at the Barratt show houses and are taken in by the soft sell. They manage to secure a mortgage and move into a house. So far, so good. However, it takes only a minor change in circumstances, such as someone losing his job or becoming ill or any other change in a family, to mean that the household can no longer afford to keep up the mortgage repayments. People face the prospect of having their homes repossessed and as a result finding themselves homeless.

That is happening in Scotland today as a result of the Government's obsession with the promotion of owner-occupation. A significant number of people being allocated local authority houses under the homeless persons procedure at present come from the private sector because they are mortgage defaulters. Other people stuck on the local authority housing waiting lists see that as queue-jumping and that is causing considerable ill-feeling.

8.30 pm

Any landlord who can offer a house to let in most areas in Scotland will be able to depend on fierce competition to rent it. There will be a buoyant market for rents as prospective tenants try to outbid each other in the hope of obtaining a home for themselves and their families. That is the kind of market that the Government are trying to stoke up. One does not need to be terribly clever to understand the pressures that that will cause as people who cannot afford high rents find themselves facing high rents and other inducements as they try to secure housing for their families. That situation is wide open to abuse by unscrupulous landlords. It is shamefully irresponsible of the Government to undermine rent controls to the extent proposed in the legislation.

In passing, it is relevant to refer to the new restrictions on housing benefit which will come into effect next month. They will cause severe difficulties for people who depend on them as a source of cash to pay their rents. I am indebted to Edinburgh city council for making available the results of a survey that it carried out in the city of Edinburgh into the effects of the social security changes on housing benefit. I understand that nearly 2,000 claimants who currently receive housing benefit in Edinburgh will lose that completely. They will receive no housing benefit after the changes come into effect. In addition, another 17,000 claimants will see a significant reduction in the amount of benefit that they receive under the housing benefit system. In total there will be 19,000 losers under the new regime of housing benefit in Edinburgh alone. On average, each claimant will lose £6·42 a week. That gives us an idea of the kind of squeeze that will be imposed on people claiming housing benefit.

The city of Edinburgh will lose £6·8 million in housing benefit. No doubt there will be similar figures of loss in other cities of Scotland. People must be protected in those circumstances, and there is no sign of that protection in the housing benefit system or in this legislation. On the contrary, the Government are deliberately seeking to stoke up rents in Scotland.

New clause 5 would enable a tenant to refer the rent to the rent assessment committee, which would be able to consider all relevant circumstances in determining and enforcing a reasonable and affordable rent for the sake of the household and tenant concerned.

New clause 6 would deal with the likely abuse of the principle of key money or premiums whereby a landlord might require a payment from a prospective tenant to secure a lease. That is a fundamentally corrupt and unjust practice, which most of us hoped had been stamped out of the Scottish housing scene a long time ago. Inevitably, that practice would be encouraged under this pernicious new regime of so-called assured tenancies which the Government are heralding in the legislation. That practice should be outlawed, and we have tabled new clause 6 to give effect to that.

I am not surprised that the Minister is totally isolated and all alone on the Conservative Benches tonight. We have the spectacle of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland without a single Conservative Back Bencher in sight. The only other Member on the Government Bench is the indefatigable hon. Member for Penrith and the Border (Mr. Maclean), an Assistant Government Whip, who does not even represent a Scottish constituency. The Minister alone is facing the music for what he is doing to Scottish tenants.

I am not surprised that the Minister's hon. Friends are embarrassed by the legislation. I invite the Minister to put something on the record about the extent to which he envisages that rents in Scotland will rise as a result of the legislation. Is he prepared to do anything about that, or is he not in the least bit concerned about the hardship that the legislation will inevitably create for many tenants in Scotland?

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): I fully support all that my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) has said about new clauses 5 and 6. I want principally to refer to new clause 16, which is being considered with the other new clauses. New clause 16 stands in my name.

New clause 16 deals with a long-standing scandal of outrageous rents being levied by landlords on slum properties, many of which are in Glasgow. However, the problem is not restricted to Glasgow. The rents are typically imposed on tenants who are unemployed or otherwise receiving DHSS benefits. The scandalously high rents have therefore been paid straight from the public purse by the DHSS, sometimes direct to the slum landlord.

The scandal was exposed some years ago by the Glasgow *Evening Times* in relation to particular landlords in Glasgow, one of whom I shall refer to shortly. At that time some of my colleagues from Glasgow constituencies and I pressed the Government to take action to stop this outrageous behaviour, which was an imposition and hardship on the tenants because they were often subjected to harassment and intimidation. It was also an imposition on the public purse. As I have said, the money to pay for the rents came from the Government through the DHSS.

At the same time the Government refused to take any action, although the scandal was well documented. There was no excuse on the Government's part for saying that they did not realise the problem. Mr. Michael Ancram dealt with the problem from the Scottish Office at the time.

The Government refused to take action. They said that the tenants could always apply to the rent officers for a reduction in rents, but that was completely unrealistic, for several reasons. First, there was no financial incentive on the tenants to apply through the fair rent procedure, because they were not paying the rents. The rents were being paid by the DHSS. Incidentally, the rents charged for unemployed tenants were several times higher than those applied by the same landlords to tenants in similar slum properties who were not unemployed. The people receiving the worst rents had no financial incentive to apply to the rent officer for a fair rent, because, I repeat, they were not paying the rent. They were also vulnerable in other ways, and in many cases they were subjected to harassment and intimidation.

I produced a private Member's Bill in 1985 to do what new clause 16 would do if it was accepted by the House, as I hope it will be. My Bill would have given power to the local authority in those circumstances to apply to the rent officer. It did not take power out of the hands of the tenant, because none of his powers would be reduced. It gave additional power to the local authorities in those cases to apply to the rent officer for the establishment of a fair rent. The local authorities supported that. It granted to Scotland a provision that existed, and as far as I know still exists, in the corresponding rents legislation in England. However, the Government blocked the Bill, despite the fact that there was a scandal that was costing the public purse considerable sums of money. That situation has been maintained to the present day.

I am glad to say that the most notorious landlord involved, a Mr. Barry Solomons, who was responsible for a company called Norman Properties, was eventually caught by the police. He had to be extradited from Florida, where he was living in considerable style on the backs of my unfortunate tenants and at the expense of the DHSS. He was prosecuted, and I am glad to say that just a fortnight or so ago he was convicted and sentenced to four years' imprisonment.

The verdict and trial vindicated everything that we had been saying right back to 1985, and, indeed, before. This was an outrageous abuse of the system. Reporting the sentence, the *Glasgow Herald* said:

"Landlord Barry Solomons made a killing from needy tenants. He rented out slum flats to the penniless and jobless, and made thousands of pounds by fraud."

He did not only make that money by defrauding the tenants; he was also involved in false claims for mortgages and a number of other criminal activities, for all of which he has now been convicted and sentenced.

In sentencing Mr. Solomons, Lord Weir said:

"I hope that lessons have been learned by those who disburse public funds for the benefit of people who cannot support themselves. This case has revealed remarkable gaps in the safeguarding of these funds."

That is precisely the point that we have made all along and was dealt with in the private Member's Bill that I introduced in 1985 that was blocked by the Government.

Belatedly, the Government have now noticed that such abuses are going on. However, they seek to deal with them by giving a new power to rent officers in clause 64. I am glad to see that a later amendment seeks to leave out clause 64. This clause gives rent officers powers to determine a rent lower than that being charged where housing benefit or rent allowance is being paid. It does not give powers to reduce the rent; it simply gives powers to reduce the amount of money that goes to the tenant to pay the rent.

In other words, the abuse has been dealt with, not by getting at the landlords who are responsible for the abuse and are making vast sums of money out of the public purse, but by penalising the tenants even further. Those tenants are either unemployed or on benefit, they are vulnerable and, I repeat, often subject to harassment and intimidation.

It is scandalous that the Government should be tackling the problem in that way when public money is involved. The Government are constantly lecturing local authorities about not squandering public funds. New clause 16 is, with adjustments, a copy of the equivalent English legislation and would give local authorities the power to step in in those circumstances and have a fair rent determined. This would mean that rents in such cases would be reduced to only a fraction of what they are at the moment. The position will get even worse with assured tenancies. The clause would protect the tenants and the public purse.

I repeat that it is a scandal that we do not already have such a provision in our legislation. It will be a scandal if the Bill is enacted with the powers contained in clause 64 and the Government fail to tackle the problem at its roots — the problem of unscrupulous and, in some cases, positively crooked landlords abusing and milking the system.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak on these new clauses because they go to the heart of the Government's philosophy in producing the Bill — that is, not just to seek an expansion of private landlords, but to back up the worst type of exploitative aspects of private landlords that we have seen in our history in Scotland. The Bill is an extension of landlords' rights as against tenants' rights.

I should like to cite a number of examples to back up what my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) has said. It is clear that the use of the rent assessment committees is a retrograde step. There is no doubt, from the evidence of Edinburgh, Glasgow and other towns and cities in Scotland that the rent assessment committees are far more harsh and impose far higher rents than the rent officers or, indeed, the local authorities or any objective observer would think to be fair.

8.45 pm

In Edinburgh, the advice of housing advice agencies, which are non-political, is that a tenant should not go to the rent assessment committee because it is likely that the rent will be increased to an even higher level than it was thought it would be set originally. Therefore, to use the rent assessment committee is a retrograde step, and it is better to stick with the present rent officer system. That would be consolidated by the Government's acceptance of the new clause this evening.

The crucial point is the ability of people on low incomes, or without independent incomes, to have their rent met via housing benefit. Another terrible aspect of the Bill is the fact that people who have brought up their children in houses with more than one bedroom — perhaps two or three bedrooms—will suddenly be faced, if the Government get their way this evening, with someone coming along and saying that their housing benefit will not cover that size of house because it is too large or, in the words of the Secretary of State, "too luxurious" for them. That is a retrograde step and will penalise many people in Edinburgh, Glasgow and other parts of Scotland.

The net impact will be to force people on modest and low incomes, who have their housing benefit restricted by the Government's agents, to dip further into their low incomes to preserve the homes that they have. It is outrageous that the Bill should seek to impose and implement that.

The Government know that the reason why housing benefit, and, indeed, the DHSS social security budget, has rocketed is nothing to do with the fact that the Government have increased the incomes of people on supplementary or housing benefit, but everything to do with the fact that the Government have driven millions of people into poverty and made them dependent on housing and social security benefits. The way to address that problem is to provide a climate for getting people back to work, not to throw them on the dole and then penalise them for that. *[Interruption.]* I will happily give way to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker), who is making comments from a sedentary position, but I do not think that they are worth paying attention to.

It is vital that we drive out the worst type of exploitative landlords, and that is what our new clause seeks to do. It is vital that we do not encourage them, but that is what the Bill does. We must make sure that we do not go back to the Rachmanism of the 1960s, or, indeed, do anything to consolidate the position which my right hon. Friend the Member for Govan said exists today in Scotland and the United Kingdom where private landlords, who have thrived under the Government for eight years, can not only exploit their tenants, but, in many cases, get away with it. There is no doubt that the sort of prosecutions about which we have been hearing are rare and too few and far between.

What we need to do, and what we can do by accepting new clause 16, is to ensure that the powers of local authorities to control landlords and drive out the bad ones are consolidated. The Government need to back up local authorities in driving out private landlords of the worst type, but to protect good and responsible landlords of whom there are a fair number. The problem is that good landlords find it hard to compete with bad landlords. They find it hard to provide good conditions for tenants, to carry out repairs and to levy fair rents when they know that bad landlords can exploit the system to make sure that the weakest and most vulnerable groups in our society are exploited to the full.

We need the Government to provide some determination to ensure that bad landlords are driven out and that local authorities are provided with the resources, the funds and the staff to monitor landlords so that those who provide good services are consolidated. Sadly, the Bill contains precious little to achieve that aim.

Mr. Frank Doran (Aberdeen, South): I support the new clause moved by my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson). In Committee, it became evident that the Government had not put a lot of thought into the Bill. Their guiding philosophy was that, by freeing private landlords and thereby removing various benefits which tenants presently enjoy under the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, more housing would come on to the market and the Scottish housing problem, including homelessness and damp houses, would thereby be resolved. As the Committee progressed, it became clear that that was a fallacy.

The new clauses deal with rent control and the removal from tenants of their present right of access to the rent assessment committee. In Committee, I managed to enumerate a large number of rights that tenants will lose. Tenants will lose the right to a written lease; they will lose the right to attend meetings of local authorities or to send a delegation to that local authority if they are local authority tenants; local authority tenants will lose the right to buy if the Government have their way; they will lose the right to the phasing of rent and to protected or secure tenancies. Tacit relocation, an ancient legal document, was virtually written off in Committee. Tenants will lose protection against eviction; and the right of succession.

In regard to rent control, a tenant has the right to go to the rent assessment committee, if he or she regards the rent as unfair. If the Bill is enacted, the process of determination of rent will be in the hands of the landlord. The landlord will be able to send a notice to a tenant on one occasion only that he requires an increase in rent. There will be no question of a fair rent; it will simply be an increase in rent.

It has to be stated as loudly as possible that the Bill is a considerable diminution in the rights of tenants. What incentive will there be for a tenant to move from an existing landlord if all those rights are removed? On the

question of rent, my hon. Friends have already made the point about the housing benefit system and its impact on housing. In Scotland, we are reaching a crazy position.

In Committee, I put it firmly to the Minister that the rent assessment officer would be required to do two distinct jobs for the same tenant. In column 1191, I asked the Minister a straight question:

"It could be read from what the Minister has said that a rent officer may, by applying the criteria in section 48 of the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 determine a rent for a particular property, but that he could, thereafter, for the purposes of the housing benefit regulations, be required to determine a different rent. Is it possible that two different rental figures could be provided by the same person? From what the Minister says, the criteria will be different."

The Minister's reply was blunt and stark. He simply replied:

"The answer is yes."—[*Official Report, First Scottish Standing Committee*, 1 March 1988; c. 1191.]

That is a crazy situation. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) pointed out, it will impact more seriously on the most vulnerable and poorest sections of society—on those who depend on housing benefit to pay their rent.

There is a prospect of a gap opening between what the rent officer, wearing one hat, thinks is a fair rent for the property, and, wearing another hat as the agent of the Government in determining a fair rent for housing benefit purposes, determining another rent. In the middle will be tenants living on unemployment benefit, invalid benefit, pensions and supplementary benefit who will have to find the difference. Tenants will find not only that their social security supplementary benefit payments are being reduced in real terms, but that more of that benefit will be clawed away through measures such as those in the Bill.

It is important to bear in mind just how substantial are the payments from the public purse to the private sector. A huge subsidy of something like £5·4 billion a year is paid in housing benefit. Not all of that goes to the private sector, but £600 million a year is paid in Scotland. Those are huge figures. Not only do we subsidise private landlords to a huge extent, but there is no real benefit to the tenant because the majority of houses in the private sector are at the lower end of the market. They are the least modernised houses in the worst areas, and the tenants are the most exploited.

Finally, the Secretary of State made a statement today on urban Scotland. The document is entitled "New Life for Urban Scotland." He repeated some of the specious claims that he had made during the debate on Second Reading and in Committee. He said that the housing objectives are encouraging greater individual responsibility for and control over the conditions in which people live. I do not see how the Government can live up to that claim given the number of rights being taken away from tenants, the impositions being placed on tenants and the whole philosophy in which the power base is shifted to the private landlord and the further exploitation of the most vulnerable people in society.

Mr. Dalyell: I strongly agree with the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan). It is a pity that the private Member's legislation to which he referred did not reach the statute book.

I wish to ask the Minister one question. In east Scotland, house prices have rocketed in the past 12 months. Clearly this is either the reason, the excuse, or both, for raising rents. My question is rather simple. What work has gone on in the Scottish Office about the likely rise in rents? Before introducing the Bill, the Scottish Office must surely have made some rough estimate about the likely effects. Can the House of Commons have the results of any work that has been done?

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): The Under-Secretary of State knows that there are some Ministry of Defence houses in my constituency and that there is a great deal of pressure to push up the rents of those houses. The local authority ought to be able to acquire those houses, which it cannot do now, or they ought to come under a new form of Scottish housing authority. The Under-Secretary has some Ministry of Defence houses in his constituency and he knows that there is a problem.

These homes are occupied by old people, many of whom are on supplementary benefit or other forms of social security. It is unfair that the rents of a large number of people who have served their nation well should be pushed up. I speak in particular of the village of Crombie. I hope that the Minister will refer to that problem.

9 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home-Robertson) asked by how much rents will rise. It is impossible to say. The present system has distorted the market, to the detriment, we believe, of tenants' interests. The rent increase will be different in different areas. I expect that in some areas property rents will not rise. Because of the drop in the oil price, market levels in the north-east will be very different from elsewhere in Scotland.

The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) asked what studies the Government had made of rent levels. I shall have to inquire, but what I have just said correctly states the position. We cannot estimate exactly how different areas will respond, because it will depend on market levels. If our policy works, and we strongly believe that it will, more accommodation in the private rented sector will become available. That will have a favourable impact on rent levels. A prospective tenant will choose the best available accommodation.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) said that it is unrealistic to expect tenants on housing benefit to seek an unregistered rent. That is correct. Consequently, we have inserted clause 64, which provides a new power to control such abuses of housing benefit. It will ensure that excessive rents will not be charged.

Mr Millan: That is being done at the expense of the tenant. If a rent officer determines that the rent is excessive and fixes a lower rent, why should that not be the rent that is registered and paid to the landlord? Why should the landlord get a scandalously high rent?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It will operate as a deterrent. It will deter landlords from fixing excessive rents. We are not in favour of controlling rent levels because that would militate against freely negotiated agreements. We are putting forward plans to increase the private rented sector. The hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) said that good landlords cannot compete with bad landlords. That is because good landlords have been prevented from earning a proper return on their property. The assured tenancy system will create more choice in the private rented sector, which will make life much harder for bad landlords.

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

I should like to explain the purpose of clause 25 which the Opposition seek to delete from the Bill. It deals with the situation where, at the end of a contractual assured tenancy or during a statutory assured tenancy, the tenant receives from his landlord a notice of a proposed rent increase and refers that notice to the rent assessment committee for adjudication.

When a tenant refers such a notice to the rent assessment committee, the committee will determine the rent which should apply. The rent so determined will be the rent which, in the committee's opinion, the house could fetch on the open market. The rent determined by the committee will be the rent payable, unless the landlord and tenant agree a different rent—either a higher or a lower one. There may be circumstances in which the two parties will want to settle on a different rent. But the tenant will have the protection that he need not pay any rent above the figure determined by the committee. The determined rent will be payable from the date specified in the landlord's notice, unless the committee specifies a later date, which it will do if it considers that starting the new rent on the landlord's proposed date would cause the tenant undue hardship.

The Opposition's new clause 5 would introduce a completely different system, although the defective drafting makes it difficult to know exactly how the system would operate in all respects. The two main elements of this are that all tenants, whether assured, protected, secure, or otherwise, would be able to apply for a determination of rent at any time, not only at the end of a contractual tenancy or during a statutory assured tenancy and that rents would be determined according to the tenant's means and the "suitability" of the house, rather than by reference to market rent levels. I cannot accept either of those propositions.

One of the underlying principles of the assured tenancy regime is that rents will be freely negotiable between landlord and tenant and it follows that whenever a landlord and tenant enter an agreement both parties should be bound by that agreement. When a tenancy agreement comes to its end, it is appropriate that the tenant should then have the right of recourse to the rent assessment committee. The existing clause 25 provides precisely that right. But it would be contrary to the whole purpose of the assured tenancy regime if tenants were to be given an open-ended right to challenge their contracts, and to give the right to all tenants, whether assured or not, would be entirely unacceptable.

Turning to the question of the criteria for the determination of rents, I quite understand that Opposition Members do not like the idea that a tenant should pay a market rent. That is because they oppose anything that would lead to a regeneration of the private rented sector, which has shrunk enormously in the years since the second world war and is now just over 6 per cent. New clause 5 would be an invitation to tenants deliberately to seek unsuitable accommodation, negotiate a reasonable rent with a landlord and then apply to the rent assessment committee for a determination of a lower rent. That would be unfair on landlords who had negotiated a tenancy agreement in good faith.

The essence of the Bill is to get an appropriate balance between the rights of tenants and the rights of landlords. We believe that the proposals are most certainly not a charter for Rachmanism. They strengthen the protection of all tenants against harassment and illegal eviction. Tenants will have security of tenure very similar to that under existing legislation and there are safeguards built in to prevent the charging of excessive rents above market levels.

I have listened carefully to the case put forward for new clause 16, but I am convinced that the power that it would give local authorities is unnecessary.

The main purpose of part II of the Bill is to introduce the new assured tenancies which will steadily replace the regulated tenancies, which are subject to the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984. The provisions in that Act will therefore become transitional, although the period of transition is likely to cover many years. It is therefore right that regulated tenants and their landlords should retain the right to have a rent registered. I do not see a strong argument for extending that power to local authorities.

Hon. Members argued in Committee that tenants on housing benefit had no incentive to have a rent registered for fear that their rent would be reduced, and it was argued that local authorities would be seen as being neutral and therefore not likely to be affected by these considerations. I have to say that the evidence from England and Wales, where local authorities have this power, is that very little use of it is made in practice. And in Scotland, where local authorities can refer rents of part VII contracts to the rent assessment committee for registration, the number of such referrals is very small indeed. I see no point in legislating to give local authorities a power that will be used little if at all and will become useless as regulated tenancies are phased out.

New clause 6 seeks to prohibit premiums on short assured tenancies. The arguments in favour of prohibiting premiums on assured tenancies have been fully expounded in Committee and I accept that there is no place for premiums in the present tenancy regime. If landords had been allowed to charge premiums for granting protected tenancies, that would have been used as a device for effectively avoiding the system of rent control.

That argument does not apply to the new regime, because landlords who grant assured tenancies will not be subject to any statutory rent control and will be able to charge a market rent. So landlords will have no incentive to charge a premium. Indeed, any landlord who did attempt to charge one would probably not succeed in letting his property. I expect that some landlords will want to charge a moderate deposit on letting; that practice is fair enough.

I said during the Standing Committee's consideration of a similar proposal that the Government would give particular thought to the case for prohibiting premiums on short assured tenancies. It is true that there will be a form of rent control for short assured tenancies, in that anyone with this type of tenancy will be able to seek a determination of rent from the rent assessment committee at any time during the tenancy. However, as the rent assessment committee will make its determinations on the basis of market rents, we believe, on reflection, that landlords will have no greater incentive to charge premiums for this type of tenancy than for assured tenancies. Our current view, therefore, is that there is no need to prohibit premiums under the new regime.

Mr. Home Robertson: The Minister is an innocent abroad. He is suggesting that there would be no incentive

for landlords to try to secure premiums—key money—to enable a tenant to take up a tenancy. There will be considerable incentives to do so because they will be able to get away with it. Given that there is a severe shortage of housing to let in Scotland and that there will be fierce competition to take up tenancies whenever they occur, it will be all too easy for landlords to abuse the system in this way.

It is appalling that the Government are not prepared to take any steps to outlaw this sort of abuse. The Minister implicitly acknowledged that it was an abuse, but he is not prepared to do anything about it. He chides us on the grounds that we are hostile to his proposed redevelopment of the private rented sector, but he is wrong to do so. The Opposition would be happy about any development of the rented sector in Scotland that would meet the need, but the difference between the Minister and us is that we are not prepared to accept that tenants should have to pay any price for that development in the private rented sector.

We have already established that there is a severe shortage of housing to let in Scotland. We know that there are many desperate people who would be prepared to make serious sacrifices, which they probably cannot really afford, to secure homes for their families. They are likely to be prepared to pay premiums under these desperate circumstances and may be prepared to offer inflated rents. Yet the Minister has the gall to describe them as freely negotiated rents. There is no freedom for people facing the threat of homelessness; that is the point that the Government refuse to tackle.

We are discussing a distorted and unfair market, and it is deplorable that the Government are introducing legislation that will deprive tenants of any protection from unfair practices by landlords. The reference to freely negotiated rents is absurd.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) mentioned experience in his constituency, where there has been palpably criminal conduct on the part of one private landlord. I have no doubt that there are perfectly reasonable private sector landlords in Scotland. No one wants to inhibit them, but the Minister has acknowledged on another occasion that there is a criminal element, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Govan made it clear that there has recently been a serious abuse in his constituency.

In spite of that, the Government are apparently prepared to open the floodgates and allow rents to go sky high, with no recourse to tribunals or controls of any kind. We want to ensure that there is a proper regime of fair rents, as there is now. We are not prepared to see tenants in Scotland making the sacrifices that the Minister seems prepared to impose on them.

We are extremely alarmed about the difficulties that will confront people claiming housing benefit in these circumstances. I shall quote from the Scottish Development Department's consultation paper on the private rented sector and the implications for housing benefit. Paragraph 13 states:

"The rent set by the rent officer will not be a maximum rent chargeable for the dwelling. It will be open to the landlord to set the rent at the maximum eligible level, or to charge a higher rent and seek a tenant willing to pay that rent. It will be open to the existing tenant, should he have the means to do so, to make up the difference."

How on earth can someone on housing benefit make up the difference? That is a formula for forcing these people out of their homes, and the Government are apparently prepared to accept it. The formula means more evictions, more insecurity and more homelessness, and the Minister should be ashamed of himself. I urge my hon. Friends to vote for the new clause.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 175, Noes 230.

Division No. 236] **[9.15 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alex *(Mont'g)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fearn, Ronald
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Patchett, Terry
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Randall, Stuart
Redmond, Martin

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Reid, Dr John
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Rowlands, Ted
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mrs. Llin Golding and
Mr. Nigel Griffiths.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkins, Robert
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Irving, Charles
Jack, Michael
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Kenneth Carlisle.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 9

RIGHTS OF SCOTTISH SPECIAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION TENANTS

'It shall be the right of any tenant of the Scottish Special Housing Association whose home is transferred to Scottish Homes under section 3(1) above to decide whether his home shall continue to be vested in Scottish Homes or whether it shall be transferred to

(a) the district or islands council in whose area it stands; or

(b) any approved landlord.'.—*[Mr. Home Robertson.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Home Robertson: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 18—*Rights of SSHA tenants*—

'Nothing in this Act shall affect the security of tenure or the conditions of tenancy agreed between the Scottish Special Housing Association and a tenant unless the tenant agrees to any such change and, in the event of disagreement between the tenant and the landlord or future landlord, the tenant shall have the right of appeal to the appropriate rent officer or rent assessment committee.'.

New clause 19—*Transfer of ownership of Scottish Homes houses*—

'The transfer to a private landlord or landlords of ownership of any house owned or administered by Scottish Homes shall not take place without the written consent of the tenant of that house, in cases where the tenant had the tenancy of the house at the time of the establishment of Scottish Homes.'.

Mr. Home Robertson: New clause 9 deals with the rights and prospects of tenants of the Scottish Special Housing Association. The SSHA still has 83,000 houses throughout Scotland and the tenants in those houses are understandably anxious about the Government's plans for them. I should like at the outset to pay tribute to the powerful and effective response that has been brought to bear by SSHA tenants to the threat posed by the Scottish Homes consultation document, which was published by the previous Minister for Housing in Scotland before he lost his seat of Edinburgh, South in May 1987.

That consultation document referred to the establishment of a landlord division of Scottish Homes as

"an essentially transitional . . . holding operation"

to administer SSHA housing stock until it can be transferred into the private sector or somewhere else, out of sight and out of mind so far as the Government are concerned.

The consultation paper went on to say that Scottish Homes

"would not need any programme of new housebuilding".

Therefore, the Government clearly had it in mind at that stage to phase out the SSHA, or its successor organisation, Scottish Homes, as a provider of public sector rented housing in Scotland. In other words, in the Government's view, the SSHA was an undesirable phenomenon, to be run down and disposed of, regardless of the opinions of the tenants in those 83,000 SSHA houses.

The tenants concerned were not going to put up with such treatment. We have seen an impressive campaign over the past year on behalf of the SSHA tenants' organisations. There have been media rallies in different parts of Scotland. I was present at a rally in Edinburgh on 27 February and was impressed by the number of tenants and their families who turned out to take part in a march in Prince's street and to fill the Usher hall to make it abundantly clear that they did want to be pushed around by the Government or by anybody else. They wanted to retain their existing tenants' rights and security.

I suppose that we should acknowledge the fact that the Government have moved slightly on this question since the original consultation document was published. They recognise the overwhelming weight of opinion and, as a result, both the White Paper and the Bill made no specific reference to the Government's objective of disposing of SSHA houses when they are transferred to Scottish Homes. Nevertheless, the implied threat is still there. The Government have made it clear that they do not like the concept of public sector rented housing and that they would rather farm out that housing stock in other directions.

There was an interesting development in the Shetland Islands in recent months, and no doubt the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) will want to refer to it, if he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker. The Scottish Special Housing Association is attempting to unload its housing stock in the Shetland Islands on to a housing association in the area, despite the fact that a significant number of the tenants have made it clear that they would prefer either to remain with the SSHA or to have the option of transferring to the Shetland islands council. Those tenants should have been consulted about that proposed transfer of public sector housing stock.

9.30 pm

This experience underlines the fears that many of the tenants inevitably feel after the questions that have been raised about their homes in various Government publications during the past year. They are entitled to be suspicious of the Government's motives and of the nominees whom the Government will appoint to the board of Scottish Homes. There is no proposal for any direct representation for tenants of Scottish Homes on the board of Scottish Homes. That is a serious shortcoming in the constitution for Scottish Homes as laid down in the Bill. The absence of tenant representation underlines the fears that tenants have expressed.

Obviously, SSHA tenants do not want to be pushed out of their secure tenancies and the fair rents which they enjoy into new-style, insecure tenancies with sky-high rents under the assured tenancy system which the Government propose. The Government have clearly rejected the case for a ballot for SSHA tenants which we put in Standing Committee—so much for all the Government's slogans about tenants' choice. There is not much sign of tenants' choice for these people. They will not even be represented, let alone given an opportunity to choose whether to stay with the SSHA.

The new clause will establish a clear-cut right for SSHA tenants to choose whether to stay with Scottish Homes, whether to transfer to their local authority, whether to transfer, if possible, with continuing secure tenants' rights to a housing association or other approved landlord or whether to take the big risk of abandoning all their rights and becoming assured tenants in the private sector. These tenants should have an opportunity to decide what happens to their houses, where they may have been tenants for a long time.

I cannot believe that many SSHA tenants would take the option of transferring to assured tenancies. My conversations with my constituents who are tenants of the SSHA in various parts of East Lothian reveal that it is likely that a substantial number would like to take the option of transferring to the local authority. Who can blame them? Local authorities in many parts of Scotland have a good record as landlords, whatever the Government may like to say about them. I urge the House positively to consider the suggestion that 83,000 SSHA households should be given a genuine and fair choice about the future of their tenancies and their homes.

Mr. Bill Walker: I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State realises that many Conservative Members and my supporters believe that there are already sufficient tenants in the public sector in Scotland. Consequently, we believe that the imbalance that exists should be redressed. The only way to do that is to ensure that there is an increase in the private sector.

[Mr. Bill Walker]

which we are making possible in the Bill, and that those who transfer from the SSHA to Scottish Homes either remain with Scottish Homes or take the other options open to them.

I should oppose those people becoming tenants of local authority landlords because, contrary to what the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) said, local authorities have not been the world's best landlords. Frequently, they have been very poor landlords. Many of my constituents' complaints have arisen from the fact that the local authority has not behaved as well as it should. I know a number of tenants of the Scottish Special Housing Association, and I would not wish them to be moved into the care of the local authorities in whose areas they live.

Mr. Home Robertson: What SSHA houses are there in the hon. Gentleman's constituency?

Mr. Walker: They are not in my constituency. Unlike the hon. Member for East Lothian, I know a lot of people who live in council houses and SSHA houses. Many of them grew up with me and I know their children. That is a fact of life. The hon. Gentleman probably knows far more people who live in castles than I do. I am not being nasty, but it would not surprise me, given his background. He ought not to be surprised, therefore, that I know many more people who live in SSHA houses than he does, and I would be totally opposed to their having a landlord like the local authority inflicted upon them.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): I welcome the new clause tabled by the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson). As I understood the thinking behind the Bill and the White Paper that preceded it, the intention was to extend the scope of choice for tenants. As it now seems likely that Scottish Homes will be created, the new clause would seem admirably suited to allowing an increase in tenants' choice.

As I understand it, under the new clause an SSHA tenant would be able to opt to transfer to Scottish Homes, to the local housing authority, or to any approved landlord. He cannot, of course, choose the status quo. Once Scottish Homes – a centralising quango – has been created, the tenant will not be able to decide to continue with his landlord of many years' standing, however satisfactory. Nevertheless, as Scottish Homes is to be created, the new clause is useful because it will enable the tenant to have a wider choice than would otherwise be the case.

It was often said in Committee that the theme of the Bill was "pick a landlord". As my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) pointed out, the phrase "choose a tenant" was more appropriate in some respects. The new clause would make the concept of picking a landlord more apt.

I wonder why the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) is so opposed to that. He seems to accept that tenants should be allowed to choose Scottish Homes or a private landlord. If so, why should tenants be denied the freedom to choose a municipal landlord? The hon. Gentleman seems to advocate a denial of choice. The Tory party tells us that it is the party of freedom and of individual choice. I cannot understand why Conservative Members are so ready to deny tenants a choice open to them at present – a choice that some of my constituents have welcomed.

As the hon. Member for East Lothian said, the issue has been highlighted sharply in Shetland in recent months. If events in Shetland are a forerunner of what will happen under Scottish Homes, they are worth studying. The matter was debated in Committee, and I do not propose to go into the history in detail. There has been a background of dispute between Shetland islands council and the SSHA over factoring by the council. Over a number of years it became clear that the SSHA took the view that its tenants in Shetland were isolated from tenants in the rest of its housing stock. The association felt that the tenants were not getting the service that it would have liked.

Latterly, the SSHA proposed that tenants should be offered the option of becoming tenants of the Hjaltland housing association. The option of transfer to a housing association had been put forward in March 1984, when the tenants were consulted at a public meeting, but the SSHA itself accepted that that option was not particularly well developed at that time.

When approached in the latter part of 1986, the Hjaltland housing association did not object in principle to the transfer of tenants, but made it plain to the SSHA that if tenants were to be given that option, it was important that sufficient time be given for them to be properly consulted. The sorry episode that subsequently developed does not give one any confidence in the consultation methods that were adopted by the SSHA. One fears that such a lack of consultation would also be the case with its successor body. That episode does not give us any encouragement that the new legislation will be a marker on the road to greater tenant choice.

A public meeting was arranged in November last year to explain the situation to tenants. It was explained that there would be full consultation with them, which would start immediately. Unfortunately, only three days were set aside by the SSHA, when only 50 of the 142 SSHA tenants in Shetland were visited.

The SSHA then published comments that were highly critical of the local authority. Following that, the local authority took steps to meet the SSHA to see whether it could resolve the differences. At the meeting some important agreements were reached, including, first, that in any subsequent transfer of a tenancy, an independent source of advice would be available to the tenants; secondly, that all options were to be discussed, including the possibility of transfer to the local authority.

However, only a week after that a letter was sent out by the SSHA to all tenants. They were not given the option of transferring to the local authority; they were set a deadline. The letter was sent out on 18 December – a week before Christmas and two week before new year. The deadline was 31 January, by which time they had to make up their minds. The letter stated:

"I would ask you to indicate your views on the transfer of your tenancy to Hjaltland by January 31st 1988 and unless I hear from you before that date, it will be assumed that you are prepared to support the Association's recommendation that you should become a Hjaltland tenant."

It is not acceptable that tenants should be put in the position of making a positive reply or else finding that their rights as tenants and their legal status are transferred. That seems wholly inequitable, but it was the manner in which the SSHA went about its business that should be noted. The time given was far too short. It did not allow an adequate opportunity for full and independent advice

to be taken. In the short time available, Tenants' Participatory Advisory Services came to Shetland and efforts were made by the local authority to consult the tenants.

Along with others, I approached the SSHA to ask it to extend the period of time within which the tenants were to reply. That was not agreed, although subseqently it has been in practice. There has been some doubt about what response there had been. When the Minister addressed the Committee on 25 February, he suggested that the results had been submitted to his Department. But in a written answer to me last week he refused to disclose what the results were.

Through correspondence between the chairman of the SSHA and my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire I have some indication of the result. Of the 88 tenants who replied, an analysis has shown that 40 per cent. of all SSHA tenants wished to transfer to the Shetland islands council, 12 per cent. wished to remain with the SSHA and 6 per cent. requested more time.

The letter continued:

"43 per cent. did not respond and in terms of the Association's letter could be assumed not to object to their tenancies being transferred".

I have no doubt that the figures are accurate, but it seems a distortion of the truth because 57 per cent. responded, of whom 70 per cent. — I draw that figure to the attention of the hon. Member for Tayside, North — wanted to be transferred to the local authority, 20 per cent. to remain with the SSHA, and 10 per cent. wanted more time for consideration. Clearly, no one positively sought a transfer to the Hjaltland housing association.

It is unfortunate that the Hjaltland housing association has been dragged into this by the less than satisfactory means used by the SSHA. The Hjaltland housing association is a reputable housing association, with a good record in Shetland, not least in providing housing for single people. It is regrettable that the local image of the association has been tarnished to some extent by an incident for which it can carry no blame whatever.

9.45 pm

Why, if the Government are anxious to promote the idea of choice for tenants, is that choice not open to tenants who have said that they wish their tenancies to be transferred to Shetland Islands council? In Committee the Minister said that, under section 12(7) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, the transfers were possible. If they are possible, why should tenants be denied the choice? We want a clear and direct answer to that question.

It is now being said that tenants can still transfer to the local housing association if they do so before 30 September this year—indeed, before the implementation of the Bill, if it is implemented. What happens if there is a transfer to the housing association before that date, and there is a subsequent transfer within housing stock belonging to the association? Will tenants' rights be subsequently lost — the rights guaranteed to them under the proposed terms of transfer?

It also seems unfair, although at present possibly quite attractive, to offer tenants, until 30 September, terms better than those that would be given after the Bill comes into operation. That is an indication of how tenants' rights will be restricted, rather than increased, by the legislation.

Many people would like to know the answers to those questions. Why will tenants not get their first choice, and what will be their rights if they have not exercised their transfer rights by 30 September? If the Government cannot give a satisfactory answer, the legislation will be shown up for what some of us suspect it to be: a manoeuvre, in the guise of individual choice, designed in reality to emasculate the public sector—especially local authority housing—and to limit the choice available to tenants.

I hope that the Government will indeed agree with the principle of wider choice and accept the new clause.

Mr. Galbraith: I am pleased to rise to support the new clause. I am sure that it comes as a surprise to many that an hon. Member representing a constituency such as mine should speak on local authority housing.

Mr. McAllion: It is lost on English Members.

Mr. Galbraith: It is indeed lost on some hon. Members with constituencies south of the border.

I should explain that my constituency has the highest number of owner-occupiers of any Scottish constituency or, indeed, of the top quarter of the United Kingdom. It is often described as "the leafy suburbs of Bearsden and Lennoxtown, nestling under the hills of the Campsie glens." What is not immediately apparent is that it contains some very serious housing problems.

The reason for that is that my constituency also contains Strathkelvin, and within that is a district that I share with my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke). As a direct consequence of the present Government's policy, housing has been poorly funded over the years, although there is an outstanding housing department and outstanding councillors and local officials are running a highly efficient and effective local authority housing service that responds to everyone's needs.

It is suspected that that under-funding is not unrelated to Scottish Homes, the SSHA tenants and their right to transfer back to local authority housing. As the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) said, to deprive them of that right is a basic negation of their democratic rights and freedom of choice. It is a disgraceful piece of legislation and, in time, it will come to be seen as that. There will be a demand that tenants should have the right to transfer back to a local authority. The Government are trying to run down the local authority stock so that the option will not be available to them. That is what is happening in my constituency.

I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Monklands, West is in the Chamber. As I have said, he shares with me a district in the constituency of Strathkelvin. Strathkelvin wanted £15·5 million capital allocation, but it received only £5 million—one third of what it required. Can the Minister say why Strathkelvin received only £5 million this year?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: According to my list, Strathkelvin received £2,412,000 in the allocation yesterday.

Mr. Galbraith: Yes, and it is made up to £5 million by the money from council house sales.

I ask the Minister to go away and consider further the fact that Strathkelvin received only one third of what it required. That is not new. The Government have been running down the finance to Strathkelvin for some time. Housing support grant for 1980-81 was £2·2 million, and it has received nothing in the past four years. The rate fund

[Mr. Galbraith]

contribution was £200,000—a cut of £2 million in three years. That is what is happening and it is related to Scottish Homes and SSHA tenants.

Within my constituency, 10 per cent. of the housing stock is lived in by SSHA tenants who will be transferred to Scottish Homes. None of those tenants have been consulted, but they are to be pushed over without any right to transfer back. They will be transferred into a quango. At present they have democratic rights under a first-rate district council and a first-rate housing committee. They will lose all those rights when they are transferred.

We should look at the quango to which they are being transferred. It has no members, but the Bill says that the Secretary of State shall

"satisfy himself, before he appoints a person to be a member, that that person will have no such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially the performance of his functions as a member".

When the Minister replies, perhaps he will develop that further and say whether Scottish Homes will ever have members who were private landlords at any time. I would like the Minister to answer that specifically.

In relation to Scottish Homes and the loss of SSHA stock, my constituency is particularly concerned about homelessness. A total of 240 people are homeless in my constituency. That is an increase of 12 per cent. since 1985. The local authority has agency arrangements with the SSHA to help deal with that. Will the Minister tell me what will happen after the formation of Scottish Homes? Will the agency arrangements be maintained? Can he be specific about what will happen in my constituency?

As a result of this legislation, as the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland said, some of my constituents will lose the choice and the ability to opt for a local authority landlord. Will the Minister accept the clause and give my constituents the choice of transferring into first-rate local authority housing, run democratically for the benefit of all people?

Mr. Thomas Graham (Renfrew, West and Inverclyde): I am probably unique in the House because I happen to be an SSHA tenant and have been for the past 17 years. I have raised my family in an SSHA house and I am proud of the standard of the house in which I live, which was built specifically for the SSHA.

I should like to point out to the Minister that for five years I was the chairman of Linwood tenants association and we often went into battle with the SSHA about maintenance, repairs and incredibly high rents. Nevertheless, as a tenant I received an invitation to join in consultations about Scottish Homes. I received the letter in July and was told to have the letter back by August. Everyone is on holiday in Scotland in July. The Minister should have been aware of that, but he did not consider that when consulting the Scottish people on this important point about their homes.

I am delighted that the Government have the opportunity tonight hopefully to support the new clause. This is the first opportunity that the Government have given or could give to SSHA tenants. Rather than being represented by a quango or unelected body, SSHA tenants will have the opportunity to go to district councils and shelter under the umbrella of elected, responsible and democratic councillors who will take care of the issues that concern the tenants. This is a golden opportunity for the Government to support the new clause.

We are going to create Scottish Homes from the SSHA. The district council will become a wee fly stuck to the wall. I understand what the Government are really pushing for. They want private landlords. I can assure the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) that if the Government gave my constituents the opportunity to vote in a ballot, they would support going to two very respectable, decent local authorities — Renfrew district and Inverclyde. If the Government want to take up the challenge, they should, and my constituents will respond to it.

I represent the area with the largest number of SSHA tenants. Some of the largest meetings ever held in my constituency were about Scottish Homes. I can assure the House that my constituents are terrified at the thought of private landlords coming in. Some of the older tenants remember the heyday of the private landlords in Glasgow. Worse still, some of the young people are aware of the speculation that is taking place now by some private sector landlords.

Statements have appeared recently in the Glasgow *Evening Times* about one of those private landlords; I will not name him because proceedings are under way. If the Government support the new clause tonight, they will respond to the democratic wishes of my constituents. Clearly the 83,000 tenants would praise you, rather than castigate you. The consultation process was a disgrace. It did not afford the tenants in my area reasonable opportunity to discuss the Government's programme in full. However, I honestly believe that you are not interested, and that all you are interested in——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Not "you".

Mr. Graham: I apologise, Mr. Speaker. When I said "you", I meant the Government.

Clearly, the Government are more interested in dismantling and fragmenting local authority housing — and especially SSHA housing — into the private sector for pure political gain instead of considering the needs of Scottish housing in general. They are not concerned about damp houses or rebuilding for the homeless.

What will happen to the sensible arrangement operated between the SSHA and Renfrew district council whereby SSHA families are nominated for Renfrew district council houses and Renfrew council house tenants are nominated to become SSHA tenants? If that stops, we shall have the largest problem of homelessness this century. If the private landlords come in, our children will not be able to afford the exorbitant rents that are charged in London.

Mr. Welsh: I support the new clause. The Bill is supposed to be about freedom of choice, but it is about the very opposite. The Government stopped short when it came to the freedom of tenants to choose the public sector. In other words, the Government are saying that a person is free to choose his landlord as long as it is a private sector landlord. It is like saying that a person can have a car of any colour as long as it is black. That is not freedom of choice——

It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting the Housing (Scotland) Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour — *[Mr. Ryder.]*

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Welsh: The Government should follow through their own philosophy and give tenants real freedom of choice. The new clause starts to do that by giving SSHA tenants a real choice between the public or private sector. It is up to them to choose whether they prefer the public or private sector, but they should be given that opportunity SSHA tenants have been particularly well-organised and eloquent in putting forward their views on the Government's proposals, and they would be well equipped to make a rational and disciplined choice about their preferred type of tenure.

The problem with the Bill is that it is all one-way traffic — out of the public into the private sector. The Government are making a mistake in adopting such a lopsided approach to housing tenure. Tenants may only leave the public sector; they may not return to it or join it out of choice. There can be no real freedom of choice for such tenants until a genuine two-way traffic is allowed between the public and private sectors.

It may come as a surprise to Conservative Members that tenants may see the public sector as desirable. There has been a long and good working relationship between the SSHA and Angus district council, and many SSHA tenants believed that they were in Angus district council houses until, instead of having no rent increases like the tenants of Angus district council houses, they were faced with the shock of whopping increases within the SSHA system. Such tenants may find it desirable to go into an organised, prudent and progressive authority with a well-established housing department. There would be many advantages in making such a choice.

I shall support the new clause because it will give tenants choice. The Government are making a mistake in not following through the concept of freedom of choice, which is not what the Bill offers.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I was pleased to hear my new neighbour, the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham), tonight. He will forgive me if I say he is not quite so attractive or elegant as my former neighbour and his predecessor. However, he is certainly making his mark in his constituency and, dare I say it, in my constituency as well.

I support new clauses 9, 18 and 19——

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): My hon. Friend must make a choice. Who does he prefer—Anna McCurley or my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham)?

Hon. Members: Answer.

Dr. Godman: I am trying to answer. That depends upon the criteria of selection. On some criteria my hon. Friend would win hands down, but not on others.

About 45 minutes ago I was informed by 10 Downing street that it is the Prime Minister's intention to visit Greenock tomorrow. In regard to new clause 9, I sincerely hope that the Prime Minister's visit to Greenock, or her stopover in Greenock, is not part of a whistle stop tour of Scotland. I believe that her tour is to include Erskine and Dundee. I have no doubt that the Prime Minister will bring some cheer to the people of my constituency with certain announcements that she will make, or announcements that she will hear tomorrow.

However, if the right hon. Lady were to meet the SSHA tenants and the district council tenant there would be no cheers for the right hon. Lady. If she were to speak to Helen Pyper and Donald MacDonald, the leading lights of the Inverclyde SSHA tenants association, they would not miss her and hit the wall with their views about the Bill. Along with many other SSHA tenants, they have expressed real fears and deep anxieties about the Bill. I believe that the Prime Minister would get a thorough dressing down about the Bill if she were to speak to my constituents who live in SSHA houses.

New clause 9 widens the choice for SSHA tenants in a way that would be perfectly reasonable even to Conservative Members. As the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) said, it provides a degree of freedom of choice which surely must be perfectly acceptable to all SSHA tenants irrespective of political perspective.

I believe that the legislation as amended by new clause 9 and new clauses 18 and 19 might diminish the deep anxieties of many SSHA tenants in my constituency and elsewhere in Scotland. The evidence which I have to present to the House is anecdotal. It is not based on some rigorous statistical analysis, but I can tell the Secretary of State — not that he will take any notice — that I have been assured by many SSHA tenants that they would prefer their homes to be transferred to the Inverclyde district council.

In response to the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) it is readily acknowledged by some Opposition Members that there are black spots in the history of the management of local housing. Many of those black spots were painted by central Government rather than local government, especially in terms of the architecture of housing and the council planning that went into the creation of many schemes in Scotland and elsewhere.

My hon. Friend the Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde was close to the heart of the matter when he said that Inverclyde district council is a reasonable manager of public housing in Greenock and Port Glasgow, and in Kilmacoln, Wemyss Bay and elsewhere in my hon. Friend's constituency. He was also right to speak about the fears of SSHA tenants about the Bill, especially about the formidable prospect of becoming private tenants. All the SSHA tenants with whom I have spoken—I have two more meetings later this week with SSHA tenants associations — have said that they never want to become private tenants.

The legislation, as amended by this clause and by new clauses 18 and 19, would help to meet some of the anxieties of those fine, decent and honourable people. That is what they are. They should be treated in a fine, decent and honourable way by this Government, but that is wishing for the moon. This Government, especially as represented by the present incumbents of the Scottish Office, give not a damn for the interests of ordinary people.

The leader of this Goverament is to visit Greenock tomorrow. For many of my constituents she must surely be, because of this legislation, the social fund and the other changes that are being made to the social security legislation, the most hated, feared and reviled Prime Minister of the 20th century.

Mr. Douglas: I support new clause 9. I shall also refer to new clauses 18 and 19. I ask the Secretary of State to

[Mr. Douglas]

reflect on his proposals. Sometimes he rightly castigates hon. Members for adopting frozen attitudes. All hon. Members have some frozen attitudes; sometimes they are frozen in the 1960s and sometimes they are frozen in the 1970s. We have to consider the challenges to Scotland and to Scottish housing towards the year 2000. I do not know what will happen in the medium term, but it is unlikely that major changes will be made to this legislation. An incoming Labour Government or a Scottish Assembly would want to alter it, but what will not alter dramatically is the pattern of our communities.

The Secretary of State proposes to allow communities, both large and small, such as Valleyfield, Oakleigh and Blairhall in my constituency, where there is a mixture of local authority, private and SSHA housing, to have a choice. The Secretary of State says that the SSHA houses are to go into Scottish Homes and that local authority houses can also go into Scottish Homes but that houses cannot come out of Scottish Homes. Whose attitude is frozen? The Secretary of State accuses the Opposition of having frozen attitudes, but his attitude is frozen because of his Government's and his personal repugnance of local authority housing ownership and local authority housing stock. That is not a fair assessment of people's needs.

The Secretary of State argues for a mix of ownership, which I support. There is a remarkable mixture of ownership in Dunfermline; a larger proportion of local authority and SSHA houses than in any other constituency have gone from the public into the private domain. If Scottish Homes is to be created, the Secretary of State should provide flexibility so that tenants are able to choose whether to live in Scottish Homes houses or whether it would be practicable and enhance a sense of community for them to move from Scottish Homes into the local authority sector.

The other new clauses also refer to the democratic element of choice. There is an implication in the new clauses that these things should not be done unless the tenants' consent is absolutely clear and I think that is fair. I know the difficulties of drafting, and the Secretary of State and those in his Department, with their legal minds, might say that the drafting is wrong, but I would ask him to accept that the intention behind the new clauses is to give some sense that these deals will not be imposed on the tenants.

I repeat what I said on Second Reading and referred to earlier in the debate. I have in my constituency a small village with a very deep sense of community. Some of the houses are owned by the MOD and some by the SSHA. Perhaps I am wrong in not trying to devise a new clause to cover the situation because there is nothing in the Bill, but it would have been very difficult to do it and highly unlikely that it would have been accepted. Here is a community where it would have been possible, with both housing sectors in the public domain, to allow the MOD houses to be transferred with the SSHA houses to Scottish Homes to keep the sense of community, but that, for doctrinal reasons, or perhaps Treasury reasons, is not being done.

If the Secretary of State points the finger at the Opposition Benches and talks about frozen attitudes, should he not consider whether he is also guilty of being frozen in his attitude by a doctrinal abhorrence of local authority housing? I ask him to act in the interest of what is good for Scottish housing and of keeping the sense of community not just for the 1980s but into the year 2000.

10.15 pm

Mr. Millan: The reason why SSHA tenants are so suspicious about, and indeed hostile to, this legislation is that it was clear that the Goverment's original intention was to hive off houses from the SSHA, presumably to the private sector. The Government have been moved from that position because of the hostile reaction of the SSHA tenants and are now saying that those tenants do not have to worry, because nothing is going to happen without their consent.

That assurance is all right as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. I want to ask the Minister how far that assurance goes and how long it lasts, because unless new clause 9 is inserted into the Bill the Opposition will take the view that the assurance will be very short-lived and that the Government will revert as soon as they possibly can to their original intention of hiving off these houses to the private sector. That would be wholly undemocratic and certainly against the wishes of the tenants.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I rise to lend my support, like my hon. Friends, to new clause 9, but first I must say that, like my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), I was informed this evening that the Prime Minister would be visiting my constituency. This may come as something of a surprise to Dundonians, who in the past nine years have never been graced by the presence of the Prime Minister. For her to choose this week of all weeks to visit Dundee does not bode well for the city.

Mr. Home Robertson: Well, what did it do to Churchill?

Mr. McAllion: Churchill was a Liberal in those days.

I would expect that the Prime Minister would bring some good news to Dundee in terms of jobs for certain groups of us, anyway. I hope very much that jobs will be announced in Dundee tomorrow. But it is a matter of some concern to hon. Members that the press in Dundee should have been informed five or six hours before the Member of Parliament for Dundee was informed. That, of course, is par for the course for the present Prime Minister, who treats hon. Members with utter contempt, no matter on which side of the House they sit.

Dr. Godman: My experience is exactly the same as my hon. Friend's. I might say, however, that the Prime Minister declined my invitation to visit Port Glasgow. She is visiting Greenock, not Port Glasgow, and that for me is a matter of deep regret.

Mr. McAllion: I can understand why the Prime Minister picks the places she visits in Scotland carefully; she would not receive a welcoming reception anywhere.

New clause 9 deals with extensions of tenants' rights, and I should have thought that all hon. Members would support it for that reason. The Government have long argued that they are in favour of widening choice for everyone in Britain and for tenants in particular. An important element of choice must be the ability to decide who one's landlord should be. The Government have recognised that in other parts of the Bill, with the new pick-a-landlord scheme; if people happen to be Scottish

Homes tenants or district council tenants, they have that right. The Minister must tell us why SSHA tenants are not being given the same right in the Bill.

It is almost feudal to transfer property from the SSHA to Scottish Homes, given that that involves transferring families who happen to be living in the properties, without giving them any say in the matter. That is to treat them like medieval serfs or chattels, and that is what the Government are doing by failing to support the new clause.

I want to take up the point made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan). The new Scottish Homes will be an uncertain type of landlord for the tenants transferred into its ownership. It will have a huge budget at its disposal for spending on housing, but we know from Committee that the Minister has been careful not to give it any sort of housing responsibility. Dampness, condensation, overcrowding and homelessness will not be the responsibility of Scottish Homes; that will remain with the district councils. Scottish Homes will spend its huge budget only on joint projects with the private sector on the sort of schemes that involve two or three pounds of private sector money for every one pound of public sector money. So it will not spend the money looking after its new tenants.

The tenants of Scottish Homes must wonder what the priorities of the new agency will be. They will certainly not be the tenants who come under its control. Bearing in mind the consultation document, we remember that this is only to be a transitional stage and that Scottish Homes will quickly dispose of the 83,000 tenants to some other form of tenure. That remains the secret, hidden agenda of Scottish Homes, even though the Government have been forced to back down on it. The people who run Scottish Homes will get rid of those tenants as a priority—some of them into the private sector—and it is that which gives rise to our fears.

Tenants earnestly desire the right to choose district councils as their landlords. The Minister came to Whitfield and met Mrs. Sandra Thomson, a leading activist there who has done a tremendous amount of work to organise tenants over the past few years. She has written a paper on the new Housing (Scotland) Bill, setting out her thoughts about it. In one part of the paper she speaks about the role of tenants' organisations and how they have been ignored by the Government:

"It appears that in the new Bill, no provision or thought has been given to Tenants Organisations already established within communities, or new ones wishing to set up into groups. Most organisations depend on local authorities to allocate a house to use as a meeting place and organise activities for children and adults. Primarily, they are set up to help upgrade their areas, but mainly to help alleviate feelings of depression and isolation, especially in areas of multiple deprivation.

Most tenants from all walks of life, have had no say nor has there been any consultation with them concerning the Bill.

If the Private Sector take over streets, this will leave tenants' groups with nothing, they will disintegrate to such an extent, that there will be no more community spirit left. The time it has taken to become involved will have all been wasted.

If the private sector do allow groups to stay, they would be unable to meet the cost of keeping their lounges open, because landlords will not give the same grant aid that local authorities do. If they are allowed to remain open, they would be accountable every move made, this has very significant implications, thus reduce the rights of the tenants."

That is the legitimate and genuine voice of tenants who are concerned that the measures in the Bill will drive them out of the public sector and away from local authorities. They make provision for their tenants and give them the right to come together and make demands on the landlord for the provision that they want. But a landlord's charter is included in the Bill, which will drive tenants into the private sector and denude them of their rights. The Minister should really be supporting new clause 9 to let the tenants decide what they want, rather than have the Government decide for them.

Mr. Dalyell: May we clarify the position? We must go back to the question that was asked by my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan). Let me put it specifically in another form. Much of the trouble in West Lothian stems from the fact that some senior housing councillors went to a conference and returned to tell us that Derek Mason had made it very clear that within two or three years many of the SSHA houses would be disposed of to the private sector.

My questions are simply, first, whether Derek Mason said that—to my satisfaction he undoubtedly did—and secondly, was he speaking with the authority of Ministers? Is that the intention of SSHA as it is now, Scottish Homes as it will be in the 1990s?

Mr. McFall: The Bill integrates the SSHA into the new agency called Scottish Homes. Commentators in Scotland have not seen any intrinsic merit in that proposal. Nothing that the Government have said has given us any sign that the scheme has any merit. I contend that the future policy should be dealt with separately, in conjunction with tenants, staff and the management of the SSHA.

I am at a loss to understand the housing policy that is behind the Government's creation of this super-quango. The Government talk about housing associations leading the way, but they account for only 2 per cent. of the housing stock in Scotland. In no way can one see them leading a major revival in the public sector. In fact, evidence from a study in England and Wales by the Priority Estates Project seems to contradict the appropriateness of divorcing the management of homes from the range of other local authority services. Certainly the tenants are against it.

A democratic case has been put time and again. The tenants whom I have met in my constituency have said to me that if one member, one vote is good enough for trade unions, as the Government say, it is good enough for tenants when deciding which landlord they want.

The Scottish Homes scheme has no proposals for decentralisation. There are no guarantees for tenants' representation on the board. As my hon. Friends have said, it is up to the Secretary of State alone to decide the composition of the SSHA board. The Government's solution to the problem of the peripheral estates is contrary to the years of evidence that have been built up in Scotland, as indeed is the case in England and Wales in relation to the Priority Estates Project.

We are putting the case to the Government tonight through tenants' eyes. That viewpoint has been missing from the Government's approach time and again. We on this side of the House have spoken to tenants in their hundreds and thousands and gone to meetings. This is the message that tenants give us. We are not making up a story. We are putting over the tenants' case and their fears. Tenants tell me and my hon. Friends that deregulation in the housing market will not create a new and stable investment for them in the private rented sector.

[Mr. McFall]

Elderly tenants in my constituency have told me that the private sector in Dumbarton 50 years ago meant that two thirds of the population of the town lived in two or three narrow streets. The average number of people in homes in the town—room and kitchens, as they were called—was six, seven or eight. The infant mortality rate was 15 to 20 times what it is today. That was when the private sector reigned supreme in Dumbarton, and that is why we speak against the Government's reintroduction of the private sector without any consideration whatever for tenants.

Time and again the Government tell us that the Bill is about consumer choice. The message that I have for the Government is that they are knocking consumer confidence on the head and consumers have no faith in the Government. They say that the Government are introducing this legislation for the sake of short-term speculation and that it will result in high-cost, low-quality housing.

10.30 pm

Mr. Paul Marland (Gloucestershire, West): What about jobs?

Mr. McFall: What about jobs? This debate is about Scottish housing and we do not need an ignorant comment from an hon. Gentleman who came in a few seconds ago. His comments have got nothing to do with the general debate.

Scottish Homes has no statutory duty to house the homeless, and homelessness in Scotland is a blot on the Scottish landscape. My constituents say to me that private finance can be attracted only on the basis of profit. For every pound that goes into the landlord's pocket, they say that there will be a pound less for repairs, for modernisation and for the provision of new housing stock.

The Government talk about

"meeting the housing needs through a variety of rent regimes."

In uncoded language, that means rent increases. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) said, no assurances are offered to tenants by the Government. Is the assurance for SSHA tenants the same as the assurance for people in assured tenancies? The Government say that the minimum period for assured tenancies is six months. That is the case the first time round, but thereafter they can be for two or three months. That means that under the legislation a person in an assured tenancy for 10 years may have no more than two or three months' notice to get out. Will that help tenants and stabilise housing in Scotland?

Opposition to the Government is widespread, and the Government have heard it not only from us but from tenants all over Scotland. The strength of dissatisfaction among local authority and SSHA tenants has been made known. I shall put my interpretation on what the Government are doing. They are paying no regard to Scottish housing, to Scotland or to the future need of the nation. In one fell swoop the Government are dismantling communities. That is at the core of this legislation and that is why it should be wholeheartedly opposed.

Mr. Canavan: I am rather bemused by all the talk by hon. Members about prime ministerial visits to constituencies. I have not been informed about any intended visit to my constituency, although perhaps the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State are keeping it a big secret. In the Prime Minister's interests a visit to my constituency would have to be very secretive. She would be assured of a very hot reception.

Mr. Bill Walker: One of the most disturbing things that I have heard in the debate was the announcement about what the Prime Minister is doing tomorrow. Do the hon. Gentleman and his hon. Friends not realise that one of the reasons for such information being kept a tight secret is the danger that its publication would impose on the Prime Minister and anyone else who happens to be in the vicinity?

Mr. Canavan: If what the hon. Gentleman says is true, it is a sad reflection on the type of society that the Prime Minister has helped to create in Britain. If Ministers, including the Prime Minister, cannot go on to the streets of this country in relative safety, they must take some of the responsibility for the hellish society that they have created.

When I say that the Prime Minister would be assured of a hot reception if she ever set foot in my constituency, I do not mean that in an intimidating and physical sense. I simply mean that her policies on housing and everything else are utterly despised by the vast majority of my constituents because she has foisted them on people against their wishes and with no mandate from the people of Scotland.

Mr. Graham: I have tonight received a letter informing me, as a matter of courtesy, that the Prime Minister will undertake an engagement in my constituency tomorrow. I was told by the local newspapers over a week ago that the Prime Minister was coming to my constituency and would be visiting Erskine, Port Glasgow and Greenock. I find it strange that I am told this tonight. The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) mentioned security reasons, but why tell other people and not me, as I was elected to represent my constituents?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I cannot find anything in the new clauses about the Prime Minister's visits to anywhere. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will now address himself to the new clauses.

Mr. Canavan: If or when the Prime Minister comes to my constituency, perhaps she could visit some Scottish Special Housing Association tenants who are affected by the Bill.

New clauses 9, 18 and 19 refer to SSHA tenants. I am informed by the association that, in my constituency, there are 217 such tenants in Camelon, 258 in Hall Glen, 539 in Denny and 85 in Stenhousemuir, giving a total of 1,099. When the Government published their consultation document prior to the publication of the White Paper and the Bill, I could not find an SSHA tenant in my constituency who was in favour of the proposals in the consultative paper. I could not find an SSHA tenant in my constituency who was in favour of the proposals in the White Paper. I still cannot find an SSHA tenant in my constituency who is in favour of the proposals in the Bill.

I have never maintained, and I do not think that any SSHA tenant would maintain, that the association is perfect. I and other Opposition Members have been critical of some aspects of the SSHA. The fact that it is an unelected quango means that there is less accountability to the people and particularly to tenants than there is in council schemes. For example, if council tenants have a complaint about housing policy in general or about how it applies to their housing association, they can go along to their local councillor and he can take the matter up with his colleagues, the other elected members of the council.

Some of us have argued a very strong case for tranferring all SSHA stock to local authorities. I am not for disbanding the SSHA completely. The SSHA, or Scottish Homes as it will become, should have a continuing role in building houses in areas of high growth or high need where the local authority cannot be expected to have the necessary resources to cope.

The Bill will make the SSHA's position worse instead of better. The SSHA is the second biggest landlord in Scotland, with Glasgow district council having a slightly larger housing stock. Scottish Homes will become the biggest landlord in Scotland. One quango will have been taken over by an even bigger quango. Again, there will be a lack of accountability to members, with a subsequent lack of accountability to tenants. It boils down to a lack of democracy. Basically, the patronage of the Secretary of State will decide the policy of Scottish Homes and those who will implement it.

When the consultative document was issued last year, there was almost 100 per cent. opposition to the proposals affecting SSHA tenants. I do not speak just on behalf of the SSHA tenants in my constituency. I have received letters from many housing associations all over Scotland which were trying to make a co-ordinated national effort to oppose the Bill. My correspondence and meetings led me to believe that there was almost 100 per cent. opposition by all SSHA tenants to the proposals, yet the Government have been determined to go ahead.

In Committee the Minister dealt with a matter on which he could perhaps now enlighten the House. A big meeting was held in a Glasgow hotel attended by delegates of many tenants' associations representing SSHA tenants throughout Scotland, including a delegation from the Ochiltree tenants association in my constituency. I had previously met those tenants, who were angry about the Minister's proposals. They came away from the meeting with some hope because they found that not only they but virtually everyone at the meeting opposed the Government's proposals, with the exception of the Minister. Perhaps the Under-Secretary could tell us what transpired at that meeting and whether he or his officials could give any assurances to the people who had travelled to it from all over Scotland. I believe from my correspondence and the representations made to us that there is still great dissatisfaction. That is why we have tabled the new clauses.

10.45 pm

New clause 9 gives SSHA tenants the right to have the ownership of their home transferred to the district or islands council in whose area it stands or to any approved landlord. We simply ask the Government to give tenants the right to choose. The Government claim to be great supporters of the individual's rights and freedoms, of tenants' rights and so on. Indeed, in the original consultation document, they seemed to be saying that what they are about is extending choice between and

[Mr. Canavan]

within the public and private sectors. But if the Government oppose the excellent new clause, as I suspect they will, they will be arguing against an extension of choice. All that we ask is that an SSHA tenant who wants to become a council tenant should have the right to do so.

The Minister and his buddies on the Front Bench are always praising the private landlord, who they say will come to the rescue and help to solve Scotland's housing crisis. According to the Government, large numbers of potential Tory landlords are skulking away, waiting for the Bill to reach the statute book, at which time they will come out of their hidey-holes and start to build houses and take them over to let to the homeless. That is codswallop. Anyone who has read the history of private landlords in Scotland will know that it is nothing to be proud of; as my hon. Friend the Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall) said, it is an absolute disgrace. We certainly do not want to turn the clock back to the exploitation of tenants, rotten housing conditions, high rents and evictions.

Having said that, I concede that there may be one or two decent, law-abiding, humane, good private landlords, or potential private landlords, around. If there are, and if an SSHA tenant wants to put his or her trust in such a private landlord, so be it. If the private landlord is approved — I understand that the definition of "approved" appears elsewhere in the Bill — the SSHA tenant has the right under the new clause to opt for the ownership of the house, and for his or her rights of tenancy to be transferred from Scottish Homes to that private landlord.

I should have thought that any reasonable Government and any reasonable Minister would realise that there is a straightforward tenants' rights argument at stake. I remember a previous piece of legislation that the Government had the audacity to call the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) (Amendment) Act, so they are at least paying lip service to tenants' rights. If they genuinely believe in the rights of the individual tenant, let them support new clause 9.

In making absurd claims that there is no demand for genuine political devolution in Scotland, the Government sometimes say, "But we are a Government of devolvers, because we devolve power from the state and from big organisations to individuals." If they really believe that absurd claim, let them act on it. A typical example of that concept of devolution would be to take power away from a big bureaucracy, such as Scottish Homes will become.

If the tenant wanted the ownership to be transferred to a local authority of more manageable size and with more local democratic accountability, the tenant would have that right. Similarly, in the event — in my constituency, it would be an unlikely event — of people wanting their house to be transferred to a private landlord, then, provided that that private landlord is approved under the Bill, the tenant would have that right. Therefore, if, as the Government claim, they are a Government of genuine devolution, they should support new clause 9.

New clauses 18 and 19 were tabled by me and my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), who also has a considerable number of SSHA tenants in his constituency. As I said, I have more than 1,000 such tenants. I do not think that he has as many, but we will not quibble about that. The fact is that every SSHA tenant has certain fears about the Bill.

When the consultation was complete, the Government produced a White Paper, which was the precursor to the Bill, the relevant section of which is headed "Tenants' rights". Paragraph 2.6 states:

"The position of tenants is the other aspect of the absorption of the SSHA within Scottish Homes which has caused concern."

It is an understatement to say that it has caused concern — I would say that it has caused fear and alarm.

The White Paper then states:

"There has been considerable misrepresentation of the Government's proposals in this respect".

I should be grateful if the Minister would enlighten us about that alleged misrepresentation of the Government's proposals because the White Paper refers to "unnecessary anxiety among SSHA tenants".

There is certainly anxiety among SSHA tenants, but I would not have the complacency to describe that anxiety as unnecessary. I await the Minister's reassurances on that point.

The White Paper also states:

"Scottish Homes will continue the existing role of the SSHA as a model landlord in relation to its own stock".

I do not know what the Minister means by a "model landlord" because, despite the good work that the SSHA has done since its inception over a century ago, very few SSHA tenants would say that it is a "model landlord" in every respect. There are genuine grievances against the SSHA as a landlord and fears that under the Bill tenants will become worse off rather than better off.

The kernel of my argument in favour of new clauses 18 and 19 is that in paragraph 2.8 of the White Paper, the Government state:

"Tenants will continue to enjoy the same rights with Scottish Homes as their landlord as they would have possessed as tenants of the SSHA".

If that is true, and if the Minister is absolutely confident of its truth, he should not speak against new clause 18. All that the new clause does is enshrine in statute what the White Paper states in paragraph 2.8.

I have looked through the Bill——

Mr Galloway: Is my hon. Friend aware of just how intensely the hon. Member for Lancaster (Dame E. Kellett-Bowman) is listening to his speech, and how interested she is?

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): I have heard every word of it, and I am bored stiff.

Mr. Canavan: I am very sorry for the hon. Lady, but she has my permission to go home to bed if she wishes. If she would like to intervene, I shall gladly give way, but if she continues to make rude seated interventions during this important debate——

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman: I did not raise the point; it was the facetious hon. Member opposite.

Hon. Members: Which one?

Mr. Canavan: I do not think that the hon. Lady is referring to me, so I shall ignore her remarks.

Now I have lost my train of thought — because of the Lancastrian interventions. I do not want to be sidetracked.

I remember now. I was saying to the Minister that if the commitment in the White Paper is genuine, he should support new clause 18. I cannot claim, like the Minister, to be legally trained — although, to be honest, that lack of training is sometimes an advantage rather than a disadvantage — but I have looked through the Bill, and

cannot find in any of its clauses a categorical statement that SSHA tenants will not suffer from a deprivation or diminution of their rights. If I am wrong, I shall gladly withdraw what I have said; I stand to be corrected by the Minister. But my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West and I tabled the new clause because of the fears of our constituents, which are shared by the constituents of many other hon. Members.

I do not think that the SSHA has any houses in Lancaster, but it certainly has houses in many Scottish constituencies, and new clause 18 would help to alleviate many of the present anxieties.

Under new clause 18, the tenant would have to agree to any change in conditions of tenancy. In the event of a disagreement about those conditions, or about security of tenure — and I suggest that rent levels be included as well — the tenant would have the right to appeal to the appropriate rent officer, or to the rent assessment committee.

At present, some SSHA tenants would argue that their rents are a bit too high. What I suppose was one of the SSHA's last circulars before it is wound up under the legislation was put out to tenants in my area — and presumably throughout Scotland — saying that rents would be increased by up to £150 a year. Under new clause 18, the SSHA or its successor organisation, Scottish Homes, would not be able to do that unilaterally. It would have to come up with proposals for rent increases and, if an individual tenant or group of tenants disagreed and thought that they had a fair case about a proposed rent increase or any other change in the tenancy agreement, they would have the right of appeal to the appropriate rent officer or the rent assessment committee. Perhaps the Minister could advise us what he thinks would be the best procedure — whether it should be an individual decision by the rent officer or a collective decision by the rent assessment committee.

11 pm

New clause 19 also stands in my name and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West. It refers to transfers

"to a private landlord or landlords of ownership of any house owned or administered by Scottish Homes."

We are saying that the transfer of ownership to a private landlord should not take place unless written consent has been obtained from the tenant of the house in question. I have confined the drafting of the new clause to cases where, at the time of the establishment of Scottish Homes, the person or persons were SSHA tenants. In other words, it would not apply to future tenancies but would apply only to tenancies in existence prior to the setting up of Scottish Homes. I should have thought that that would narrow the scope a little and make it easier for the Government to accept the new clause.

It comes down to the basic question of tenants' choice and tenants' rights. The Government claim that they are in favour of the rights of individual tenants, so surely it is not asking too much that the consent of the tenant ought to be obtained before the ownership of his or her house is transferred.

I tabled another new clause about having a ballot of all SSHA tenants, but that was not called, so I do not want to dwell on it. I believe that the matter was raised in Committee and was adequately dealt with then. I certainly do not want to go over ground that was raised in Committee.

The effect of new clause 19 is that, rather than the decision being made collectively by means of a ballot, it would, in the spirit of the concept of devolution proposed by the Government, devolve the decision to the individual tenant. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will give it sympathetic consideration.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am glad to respond. Like the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) I too represent SSHA tenants and am glad to have the opportunity to do so. I am well aware of their views. The hon. Gentleman is correct in saying that we do not want to turn the clock back. In fact, we want to turn the clock forward.

The hon. Member for Falkirk, West asked how rents will be set for SSHA tenants. They will be set on the same basis as at present and the rent assessment committee does not and will not play any part. They will be secured tenants as tenants of Scottish Homes.

The hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) asked whether agency arrangements would transfer. The answer is that all contractual agreements and formal liabilities that the SSHA has with local authorities or anybody else will transfer to Scottish Homes under the terms of clause 3

The hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) asked about Shetland tenants and the extent of consultation. Tenants have been fully consulted in the Shetlands and it is in the light of their response that the SSHA has decided not to cease being their landlord. The SSHA held public meetings to which tenants were free to come and offered to visit tenants individually in their homes. The fact that it was unable to make contact with some tenants cannot reasonably be held to be a criticism of its attempts at consultation. I should make it quite clear that the SSHA is not withdrawing from Shetland as a landlord.

The essence of new clause 9 is the Opposition's belief that local authorities should be encouraged to grow ever larger as landlords. That is in spite of the fact that they already own more than two out of every three rented houses in Scotland. It also ignores the fact that in some local authorities the council owns almost eight out of every 10 houses. Allowing for the fact that the other two houses include those which are owner-occupied, the local authority is virtually the only landlord available to anyone wishing to rent in those areas. However, the Opposition's response to that horrifying lack of choice and opportunity is to seek ways of making local authorities even greater monopoly landlords than they are now.

There is no point in the Opposition including a reference in this new clause to other types of landlord. That is a smokescreen. The tenants of Scottish Homes will have the rights available under tenants' choice provision as the Bill stands without any need for the relevant part of the new clause. It is well known that we are not opposed to Scottish Homes tenants having the choice of moving to another landlord. One of Scottish Homes' main tasks will be to offer its own tenants wider choice in relation to the way in which their houses are managed and by whom. We have always made that clear. I am glad that the Opposition now share our view that Scottish Homes tenants should be offered the option of transferring to approved landlords.

Mr. Wallace: The Minister has seen the response of the SSHA tenants in Shetland; 70 per cent. of those who responded wanted to be transferred to the local authority. Why should they be denied that choice?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The possibility of the transfer of the houses to Shetland islands council was suggested as a fallback for those SSHA tenants who under the original proposals were not willing to transfer to the local housing association. The transfer of those tenants' houses to the council would still have allowed the SSHA to withdraw completely from the Shetlands. I want to make it clear that there is no question of the SSHA withdrawing from the Shetlands in the present circumstances. Therefore, the situation described by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) does not arise.

Mr. Wallace: I have listened to the Minister refer to a letter sent to Shetland islands council. Will he answer this simple point? The tenants were asked which option they wanted to exercise and 70 per cent. said that they wished to become council tenants. Why are the Government denying them the right to exercise that choice?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Quite simply, because the SSHA is not withdrawing from the Shetlands. That situation would have arisen if the SSHA had withdrawn from the Shetlands. However, as I have made absolutely clear to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland, the SSHA is not withdrawing——

Mr. Wallace *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I have already given way to the hon. Gentleman. I am aware of his views. The SSHA is not withdrawing.

Mr. Wallace: If the Bill becomes an Act and Scottish Homes is created, the SSHA will no longer exist. Why at that point should 70 per cent. of SSHA tenants who replied that they wanted to become SIC tenants, not be allowed to do so?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The only difference is that Scottish Homes will take over all the rights and obligations. The tenants will have the same rights of tenure, the same people will be looking after their houses and they will have the same way of setting their rents. There is no reason for them to withdraw in those circumstances because the SSHA — like its successor, Scottish Homes — is not withdrawing from the scene.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North) *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Opposition seek to dress up their opposition to choice as it that was their own idea. The hon. Member for East Lothian made a speech recently at a housing conference, in which he said that the Opposition's alternative to the Government's policy would be to encourage co-operatives and housing associations. I find that a wonderfully novel twist, as those are the Government's policies. The Opposition are exchanging bankruptcy for theft.

The Opposition would have us believe that there can be no happier state imaginable than to be a local authority tenant and that local authorities cannot possibly dominate the lives of too many people. We suggest that the evidence is somewhat different. Alongside the well-built, well-maintained and well-managed houses which show the best of what local authorities can achieve, there are large numbers of rundown and poorly managed houses, in which tenants are subjected to an impoverished quality of life which is a travesty of the standards which public services should represent. Some local authorities are too large and remote and some of them have been regrettably complacent about their tenants, secure in the knowledge that those tenants have no other practical alternative to renting from them as things stand.

Mr. Wilson: Notwithstanding the flood of subjective opinions which the Minister offers about local authorities, and bearing in mind that he answered the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) purely in terms of the specific Shetland situation, does he accept that there is an absolute contradiction between the use of the words "freedom of choice", a principle that I can go a long way towards agreeing with, and the refusal of freedom of choice to anyone who dares to offend the Government by wanting to choose a local authority?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There is certainly an extension of choice and opportunity for tenants throughout Scotland. My view of local authorities is shared by the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) who, writing in *The Guardian* last Wednesday, said:

> "In the field of public services, particularly those provided by local authorities, the evidence does not suggest that efficiency ranks high in their reputation."

Nothing in the Bill prevents Scottish Homes from disposing of its houses to a local authority, with the consent of the Secretary of State for Scotland, if that makes sense in a particular set of local circumstances. It certainly does not in the case of the Shetlands, for the reasons that I have given.

Let me deal now with new clauses 18 and 19. I continue to be amazed at the capacity of Opposition Members to ignore the facts about SSHA tenants and Scottish Homes. Clause 3(2) preserves the position of SSHA tenants as secure tenants, with all the attendant rights, once they become tenants of Scottish Homes. We made our intentions absolutely clear even before the Bill was published. New clause 18 is therefore entirely unnecessary.

The Government gave public sector tenants rights, against deep opposition from the Labour party, including the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan), in the Tenants' Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980. Those rights included the right to buy, which over 107,000 tenants have now done, and also a wider range of other rights, including security of tenure, the right to a written lease and the right of succession. Those rights, so widely welcomed, will not be taken away by the Bill. The Bill adds to them. When SSHA tenants become tenants of Scottish Homes, they will be secure tenants.

We have discussed a new clause to ease restriction on the discount applying in the right to buy. The Bill gives public sector tenants the right to invite another landlord to take over their houses.

Mr. Canavan: The Minister said that new clause 18 was unnecessary, and I think that he is implying that new clause 19 is also unnecessary. But would he care to tell us which part of the Bill, or any legislation on the statute book, says precisely what new clause 18 says or gives tenants security of rights equivalent to those proposed in new clause 18? Can he give us chapter and verse?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is absolutely clear that there will be no compulsion against any SSHA

tenants. No solution will be forced on anyone against his or her will. There is not a word of compulsion for public sector tenants. For SSHA tenants who are satisfied with the management arrangements for their homes, little will change on the advent of Scottish Homes. The same staff and offices will be there to deal with them, and Scottish Homes will maintain the same high standards of management.

Mr. McAllion: The Minister mentioned three or four different rights which he claimed the Government had given tenants under the provisions of the Bill. Why, if a tenant uses the pick-a-landlord scheme to move into an assured tenancy, will each of those rights be taken away by the Government?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman is quite inaccurate. Under various Acts of Parliament, there are grounds for the eviction of council house tenants, just as there are for anyone else. The grounds may be slightly different, but the hon. Gentleman is quite incorrect.

The new organisation will of course develop a variety of alternative management arrangements for the houses it owns. These will be offered to tenants to take up if they wish, and tenants' views will be fully respected. New clause 19 is therefore entirely unnecessary. Clause 2(3)(b) of the Bill already prevents Scottish Homes from disposing of houses except in accordance with arrangements made by the Secetary of State. I must therefore ask the hon. Gentleman to withdraw new clause 19 or I shall advise my hon. Friends to vote against it.

11.15 pm

Mr. Home Robertson: The Minister was not terribly convincing. As my hon. Friend the Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) said, the Government may claim credit for creating certain rights for tenants, but the Bill takes away those rights. There is no way in which the Minister can wriggle out of that aspect of the Bill.

The only choice that will be available to people moving out of Scottish Homes tenure will be to move into any tenure other than local authority tenure. It has been made abundantly clear that a substantial number—probably the majority—of SSHA tenants, given the option, would prefer to transfer to the local authority. Who would be surprised at that? The hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) said that even if they want to, they should not be allowed to do so.

We have smoked out what the Government and the Tory party mean when they talk about tenants' choice. They are prepared to let tenants choose, so long as the tenants exercise the choice that the Government want them to make. If tenants have the temerity to want to transfer into local authority tenure, the Government will prevent them from doing so.

The Minister has pleaded guilty to that charge. Opposition Members want to establish genuine choice for tenants. We recognise the demands of SSHA tenants to be able to transfer to the local authority, but we would not stand in their way if they wanted to transfer to another sector. We believe in genuine choice. New clause 9 provides for that, and I urge my right hon. and hon. Friends to support it.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 189, Noes 252.

Division No. 230] **[11.18 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Henderson, Doug
Allen, Graham	Hinchliffe, David
Alton, David	Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Holland, Stuart
Armstrong, Hilary	Home Robertson, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Hood, Jimmy
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Barron, Kevin	Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Battle, John	Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Bermingham, Gerald	Illsley, Eric
Bray, Dr Jeremy	Ingram, Adam
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*	Janner, Greville
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*	John, Brynmor
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*	Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*	Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Buchan, Norman	Kennedy, Charles
Buckley, George J.	Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Callaghan, Jim	Kirkwood, Archy
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Lamond, James
Campbell-Savours, D. N.	Leadbitter, Ted
Canavan, Dennis	Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*	Lewis, Terry
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*	Litherland, Robert
Clay, Bob	Livingstone, Ken
Clelland, David	Livsey, Richard
Clwyd, Mrs Ann	Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Cohen, Harry	Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Coleman, Donald	Loyden, Eddie
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*	McAllion, John
Corbett, Robin	McAvoy, Thomas
Corbyn, Jeremy	Macdonald, Calum A.
Cousins, Jim	McFall, John
Cox, Tom	McLeish, Henry
Crowther, Stan	McNamara, Kevin
Cryer, Bob	McTaggart, Bob
Cummings, John	McWilliam, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence	Madden, Max
Dalyell, Tam	Marek, Dr John
Darling, Alistair	Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*	Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*	Maxton, John
Dewar, Donald	Meacher, Michael
Dixon, Don	Meale, Alan
Dobson, Frank	Michael, Alun
Doran, Frank	Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Douglas, Dick	Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Duffy, A. E. P.	Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Dunnachie, Jimmy	Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Eadie, Alexander	Moonie, Dr Lewis
Eastham, Ken	Morgan, Rhodri
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*	Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*	Mullin, Chris
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*	Murphy, Paul
Faulds, Andrew	Nellist, Dave
Fearn, Ronald	Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*	O'Brien, William
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*	O'Neill, Martin
Fisher, Mark	Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Flannery, Martin	Patchett, Terry
Flynn, Paul	Pike, Peter L.
Foster, Derek	Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Foulkes, George	Prescott, John
Fraser, John	Primarolo, Dawn
Galbraith, Sam	Quin, Ms Joyce
Galloway, George	Radice, Giles
George, Bruce	Randall, Stuart
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John	Redmond, Martin
Godman, Dr Norman A.	Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Golding, Mrs Llin	Richardson, Jo
Gordon, Mildred	Robertson, George
Graham, Thomas	Robinson, Geoffrey
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*	Rogers, Allan
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*	Rooker, Jeff
Hardy, Peter	Rowlands, Ted
Harman, Ms Harriet	Ruddock, Joan
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy	Salmond, Alex
Heffer, Eric S.	Sedgemore, Brian

Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Allen Adams.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Buck, Sir Antony
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayes, Jerry
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert *(Cornwall SE)*
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Howell, Ralph *(North Norfolk)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Major, Rt Hon John
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 11

APPLICATIONS SERVED ON NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS

"Where an application is served under this Part of this Act (Change of Landlord: Secure Tenants) by a local authority on

a new town development corporation in the circumstances provided for under section 54(2)(d) above, the provisions of sections 55(5) to (10), 56, 57, 58(1)(b) to (3), 59, 60 and 61 shall not apply and the conditions of sale shall be as directed by the Secretary of State.'.—*[Mr. Ingram.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Adam Ingram (East Kilbride): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 12—*Capital expenditure on houses acquired by district councils*—

'In so far as a District Council in terms of section 53(1)(b) above acquire houses from a Development Corporation the Secretary of State shall grant an additional amount of capital expenditure consent in the financial year in question, such additional amount to be not less than a sum equivalent to the aggregate amount payable by the District Council to the Development Corporation in respect of houses so acquired by the District Council under the powers conferred on them in terms of this Part of this Act.'.

New clause 13—*Assets of new town development corporation*—

'Where the Secretary of State for Scotland makes an Order under section 36(1) of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968 providing for the winding up and dissolution of a New Town Development Corporation—

(a) The New Town Development Corporation shall transfer to the Local Authority (being a local authority in whose administrative area the New Town or any part thereof is situated) the following assets:

All housing stock owned in whole or part by the New Town Development Corporation together with any property associated therewith or relating thereto (excluding housing held temporarily on land acquired by the development corporation for commercial or industrial development) together also with all rights, liabilities and obligations relating thereto, as defined in Schedule (new town property to be automatically transferred to local authorities) to this Act.'

(b) The new town development corporation may transfer to the local authority:

housing depots, office accommodation and nurseries and such other property as is defined in Schedule (new town property to be transferred subject to negotiation) to this Act.

Amendment No. 108, in clause 53, page 30, line 8, after 'effect', insert '(a)'.

Amendment No. 109, in page 30, line 14, at end insert '; and

(b) for the purpose of conferring on a District Council the right to acquire from a Development Corporation any house within the area of that District Council which on the relevant date is occupied by a qualifying tenant.'

Amendment No. 110, in page 30, line 31, leave out 'this Part of this Act' and insert 'subsection (1)(a) above'.

Amendment No. 111, in clause 54, page 31, line 39, leave out 'this Part' and insert

'subsection (1)(a) of section 53'.

Amendment No. 105, in page 31, line 43, after 'homes' insert

'and subject to subsection (2)(e) below'.

Amendment No. 112, in page 31, line 45, at end insert 'in terms of subsection (1)(a) of section 53.'.

Amendment No. 106, in page 32, line 7, at end insert—

'(e) in respect of any house owned by a new town development corporation, shall be deemed to be granted to the local authority, which is the public sector housing authority within whose administrative area the house is situated upon the winding-up and dissolution of the new town development corporation as provided for under section 36(1) of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968'.

Amendment No. 107, in page 32, line 8, after '(3)', insert—

'With the exception of a deemed approval under subsection (2)(e) above.'.

Amendment No. 113, in clause 55, page 32, line 11, leave out

'or, as the case may be, Scottish Homes'

and insert,

'Scottish Homes, or, as the case may be, the district council',

Amendment No. 114, in page 32, line 30, after 'served', insert 'by an approved person.'

Amendment No. 115, in page 33, line 22, at end insert—

'(11) Where an application is served under this section by a district council on a development corporation the provisions of subsections (5) to (10) above shall apply subject to the following amendments, namely—(a) the offer to sell notice shall state the lesser of the market value of the house determined in accordance with said provisions on the date of service of the application and determined by the District Valuer and the outstanding debt in the development corporation's accounts in respect of the house; and (b) the offer to sell served under this subsection shall be subject only to such conditions as are accepted to be reasonable by the district council.'.

Amendment No. 116, in page 33, line 23, after 'applicant', insert

'who is an approved person or as the case may be, Scottish Homes'.

Amendment No. 117, in page 34, line 1, after 'applicant,' insert

'being an approved person or Scottish Homes as the case may be.'.

Amendment No. 118, in clause 58, page 34, line 49, at end insert—

'(4) Where a landlord is a development corporation and the application has been served by a district council the development corporation may not dispute the applicant's right.'.

Amendment No. 119, in clause 60, page 35, line 20, after 'Homes', insert 'or a district council'.

Amendment No. 120, new schedule—*New town property to be automatically transferred to local authorities*—

'1. Development corporation rented housing (including housing used for other purposes and excluding agricultural properties acquired and held by the Development Corporation on a temporary basis, pending development).

2. Development corporation rented housing developments which are under construction or are undergoing major rehabilitation.

3. Garage and car spaces associated with housing defined in paragraph 1 above.

4. Open space and play areas associated with areas of development corporation housing.

5. Associated roads, accessways and underpasses which are the property of the development corporation and have not been transferred to the roads authority.

6. Television relay systems.

7. Land forming infill sites in areas of housing defined in paragraph 1 above.

8. Land which has been allocated for housing and is awaiting development as part of an existing housing development area.

9. Depots used wholly to serve housing defined in paragraph 1 above.

10. Nurseries used wholly for maintenance of landscape in housing areas.

11. Local housing offices.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

The following facilities shall be transferred to the local authority where they are situated in local or corner developments in housing areas, as opposed to neighbourhood centres:

12. Meeting halls and clubrooms.
13. Local and corner shops.
14. Garages, car parks and workshops.
15. Public houses and cafes.
16. Surgeries."

Amendment No. 121, new schedule — *New town property to be transferred subject to negotiation*

"1. Land zoned for future housing development.
2. Development corporation houses situated within commercial or industrial developments or in areas zoned for future development.
3. Central housing offices.
4. Hotels.
5. depots mainly serving housing.
6. Nurseries mainly for maintenance of landscape in housing areas.
7. Landlords' rights and interests in land leased in housing development areas for miscellaneous purposes.

The following properties where they are situated in neighbourhood centres.

8. Meeting halls.
9. Shops.
10. Garages, car parks and workshops.
11. Public houses and cafes.
12. Surgeries."

Mr. Ingram: There are two purposes behind the new clauses. They are designed to create the circumstances in which tenants may choose, on the dissolution of a new town development corporation, to have a local authority as a landlord. They also attempt to lay down the principles and basis of such a transfer, and they are consistent with the previously agreed position between local housing authorities and the Scottish Office. The Bill, as explained by the Minister in Committee, is a repudiation of previous Government assurances on new towns and destroys many months of work undertaken by Scottish Office officials in consultation with the five district councils within whose boundaries the new towns lie.

The present law on new town development corporations in Scotland, under section 36 of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968, provides for the transfer of new town district council housing stock to the relevant local authority. It is on that basis that assumptions have been made and assurances given by Ministers over recent years.

In July 1982, the Secretary of State made clear his intention to wind up the new town development corporations in Scotland. At that time he said that the rented housing stock owned by those bodies would be transferred to the relevant district councils. In early 1983 a working party was set up to examine the means by which that would be achieved. It comprised Scottish Office officials and representatives of district councils.

In August 1984 the working party reported. It set out the basis of the transfer on a no-profit, no-loss basis. More than a year's work went into arriving at that conclusion. The Minister took on board the working party's conclusions at the time, and in a ministerial statement confirmed yet again the Government's intention to transfer new town housing stock to local authorities. Therefore, the picture was clear to the 45,000 families who lived in new town corporation housing rented stock. Those families were secure in the knowledge that at some stage they would be transferred to responsible public sector landlords. That is no longer the case. New town tenants face a most uncertain future because of the Bill and the way in which it has been changed by Government amendments in Committee.

One thing that we shall be able to tell those 45,000 families with certainty is that they have been deliberately misled by a Minister who neither cares nor listens to their views. In Committee the Minister said that new town tenants would be consulted before they were compulsorily transferred to landlords other than district councils. Those 45,000 families know what that means. Views will be ignored, just as the views of the SSHA tenants have been ignored. We have heard more on that tonight from the Minister.

If the Minister intends to consult those tenants, I should place on record some consultation that has already taken place. That may save the Government time and money. Two councils with new towns within their boundaries have consulted their tenants in recent months in relation to this legislation. Cumbernauld and Kilsyth district council undertook a survey that was published on 29 February 1988. In an 11 per cent. sample of all new town tenants in Cumbernauld, 91·3 per cent. stated that they wished the district council to be one of the landlords from which they could choose on dissolution.

Cunninghame district council, which is responsible for Irvine new town, took an even larger sample of new town tenants, and achieved an 88 per cent. success rate amongst those tenants, who also stated that they wished the district council to be one of their options on dissolution.

I am sure that the Minister has been supplied with those findings. I shall be interested to hear what further consultation the Minister intends to offer in the immediate months for new town tenants which is relevant to those conclusions.

In Committee, the Opposition were accused of being premature in raising the very issues that are before us tonight in these new clauses. I must say that we were neither premature nor wrong in doing so. It is scandalous to treat the 45,000 families who live in new town district council houses in the way that they are being treated in the Bill. They have the right to know now whether they will be allowed the real choice that they clearly want — the district council. They have the right to know whether they will have a secure tenancy, with democratic control over rent levels in the future. Those are the choices on which they want to be consulted. They do not want to be told that the choice is limited and that the district council is no longer an option for them.

That clear message is coming not from Members of Parliament or district councils representing those areas, but from tenants. The Bill has provoked the tenants in new town areas to form tenants' associations. They are aware that they have a fight on their hands. They are going to fight to retain the very rights that were laid down in previous legislation — rights that they thought Ministers from 1982 onwards were declaring in terms of the choice open to them.

The Government have said that the new town tenants will have to wait until 1989-90 to find out what is going to happen to them. We have tabled these new clauses to reflect the wishes of each and every family living in a new town development corporation rented house. This provision also represents the views of many people who live in their own property. They want local authority

houses and local development corporation houses to be retained for the families which are being brought up in those new towns.

Mr. Robin Cook (Livingston): I am glad of this opportunity to change places with my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram), so enabling him to speak from the Opposition Front Bench and me to support the new clause from the Back Benches. At the outset, I wish to place on record, as the representative of a new town, my appreciation of the work that my hon. Friend did in Committee in exploring this issue and exposing the position of the Government.

It is regrettable that yet again such an important debate is to be answered by the Under-Secretary, who is not primarily responsible for housing in the new towns, and that the Minister of State who has that responsibility is absent.

When my hon. Friend raised this issue in Committee, he was told that in the next parliamentary Session the Government would introduce legislation to put into effect the proposals in their White Paper. Tenants in new towns are thereby left in a state of uncertainty and insecurity for the next year. We should resolve the issue tonight and we should do so in defence of tenants' rights.

This is a debate not about local authority rights but about tenants' rights. Local authorities have every reason to feel disgruntled about the Government's proposals. They have for long been encouraged to believe that the housing stock of the new towns would be transferred to them when the new towns were wound up. Indeed, they were encouraged to plan on that basis.

Only a few years ago, officials from those local authorities, as part of a working party, spent much time and effort planning how best to handle the transfer of that housing stock. Indeed, new clause 13 contains the overall view of that working party, which was organised, and at the time accepted, by the Scottish Office. It is par for the course under the present Government that all that work should now be thrown out without even the pretence of consultation with the local authorities which contributed to it.

Local authorities with new towns in their areas are now faced with the unpalatable prospect of being left with housing duties without the housing assets. In the context of Livingston, that will mean, for instance, a serious homelessness problem, because, although the local authority has few houses in the Livingston area, it will have to accept statutory responsibility for homeless families in the new town area. At present, the new town as a landlord co-operates voluntarily in discharging that duty. I see scant prospect of private landlords approved by Scottish Homes giving the same co-operation to the local authority in that important statutory function.

Although, for all those reasons, local authorities have every right to be dissatisfied with the Government's proposals, the really serious issue is the reduction in tenants' rights. As my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride said, nothing has so electrified opinion among tenants in Livingston new town as these proposals of the Government. In the last five years, we have not had a federation of tenants' associations, yet within two months of these proposals surfacing, we have an active federation, formed mainly around the determination of tenants to fight for the right to choose a landlord for themselves.

I stress that this is an issue of choosing the landlord. Once the Bill has become law, every public sector tenant with a local authority as the landlord will have the right to decide whether to remain in the public sector, and in particular whether to remain a local authority tenant. That choice apparently is to be denied new town tenants. They will not have the right to remain with their present landlord and will be denied the right to opt to become local authority tenants.

11.45 pm

We are not demanding that those tenants necessarily must become tenants of the local authority. The clause is framed so as to provide to those tenants the right to choose whether to become tenants of local authorities. They should be allowed that right and not denied it. I am confident that if the tenants of the new town and the tenants of Livingston are given that right to choose, most of them will choose to become local authority tenants. They will do that because as such tenants they will have greater security and a wider choice of transfers and will be likely to find their rents lower than the rents proposed by private landlords looking for an element of profit.

I may be wrong. It may well turn out that the majority of tenants in my constituency will prefer to have private landlords. That will at least establish that the Minister, in putting the Bill before the House and in floating the idea of Scottish Homes and registered private landlords, was right to expect that many tenants would opt for that form of tenure. I ask the Minister to at least have confidence in his own proposals and give tenants the choice. He should allow them to decide whether they want private landlords or wish to be tenants of a local authority.

The Government are fond of talking about choice. They commend the Bill by saying that it will give the tenant choice. Very well, let us give the new town tenants a choice as well. Let them decide whose tenants they wish to be, but let us make sure that all choices are made available to those tenants, including the opportunity and the right to become tenants of the local authority.

Mr. Henry McLeish (Fife, Central): The clause is designed to inject some sanity into a Bill that is characterised by all the hallmarks of the Government—indifference, arrogance and contempt. My hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) spoke about the plight of the new town. I represent the new town of Glenrothes which has excellent housing provision and a quality of environment that is second to none. While the problems of that new town have been exacerbated by the lack of cash resources from the Government, it has done an excellent job for its tenants. To the Government, these considerations seem to be irrelevant.

A few years ago in discussions with the new town corporation, the Government agreed that when they reached the winding-up period in the early 1990s it was anticipated that the housing assets of the new town would be transferred to district councils. At the Dispatch Box and elsewhere the Government offer no compliments to local authorities that are doing a difficult job in the hostile environment created by the Government.

The other appealing feature of the transfer of new town tenants and their assets to the district councils is that at a stroke there would have been democratisation of the new town housing function. That would have been welcomed by many Opposition Members because it would have not only provided a more sensible form of housing

[Mr. Henry McLeish]

management, but built on the good physical policies that new towns have pursued. The Government would have none of that; through blind political prejudice, they have gone out of their way to ensure that the choice they talk about is not effective choice. That is because one of the key options for new town tenants will be removed by the Bill.

It is a tragedy that district councils with major housing responsibilities have at a stroke been taken out of the serious housing debate in Scotland. Many council leaders view with increasing dismay the hostility focused upon them by the Government. The prospect of my tenants being faced with a choice between an approved private landlord or absorption in Scottish Homes fills them with dismay, bitterness and a great deal of anger.

The reason for that is quite simple. A few miles from the new town in my constituency are two areas of British Coal properties that were bought by a private landlord. The landlord's headquarters are in Newcastle. It is a frightening prospect to represent areas in which the landlord is so remote from the tenants that it becomes a nightmare for them to get repairs done and for Members of Parliament to try and make the landlord tackle his responsibilities seriously. It is a return to the 1930s for that group of British Coal tenants.

Why, in my constituency, do we see, on the one hand, the problems of private landlords and, on the other, a Government hell-bent on introducing an alien form of ownership to the new town, under which, by any objective measurement, the tenants will be much worse off?

I return to the question of choice. It is nauseating to listen to the Conservative Front Bench talking about choice day in and day out, when it is choice only on the Government's terms. The Minister must tonight explain why a major option of district council involvement has been removed. Where is the intellectual or practical justification for taking excellent quality housing and tenants, casting them to the four winds and putting them at the mercy of the unscrupulous private landlords or of the new bureaucracy of Scottish Homes, which will be remote from the needs and aspirations of the people whom I represent in Glenrothes?

What is more disappointing about the whole thrust of the Bill, especially in respect of new town policy, is the irrelevance of the proposals to the needs of the new town tenants. According to information supplied by Glenrothes development corporation, which administers the housing function, there are at present 552 families, 555 single persons and 226 senior citizens on the general waiting list of new applications. There are 580 families on the transfer waiting list. Almost 2,000 families are looking for decent accommodation in an environment which is sensitive to housing needs.

The Bill does nothing for those people. I am worried that the proposals will worsen the chances of those people being adequately accommodated in the latter part of the 20th century in a safe and decent home that they can call their own, whether they purchase or rent. Why, at every turn, do we have politics based on dogma rather than on the needs of the people whom the Government purport to serve and to whom they say they are offering extended choice?

The number of people on the waiting list is only one aspect of the challenge facing the Government, who are indifferent to real needs. What about the prospect of reduced cash for modernisation, repairs and maintenance? Is it not part of the Government's thinking to try to ease the burden on housing authorities, whether new towns or local authorities, which have tried to do a reasonable job in difficult circumstances? Is it not right that the Government should be providing in new towns allocation of cash for general needs? There has been a moratorium in Glenrothes since 1983. No housing has been built for general needs, despite a waiting list that now stands at almost 2,000 families.

The Government claim to care about people with special needs. Why, then, are the disabled, the elderly and the handicapped now part of a growing queue for decent housing?

It is heartbreaking to attend a surgery in my constituency — I am sure that this experience is shared by many of my hon. Friends — where elderly and disabled people seek assistance to obtain a property. The development corporation has many similiar families on the waiting lists and can do nothing to assist. I urge the Minister to take his responsibilities seriously, because the Bill is irrelevant to Scotland's housing needs and to the needs of the new town which I represent. Is it not time that the Government addressed the substantive issues that dominate my postbag and surgery and the needs of areas such as Glenrothes?

It is customary for the Opposition in debates with the Government to dwell on the alien philosophies that underpin most of the Government's practical policies, but those philosophies are outrageous and immoral when dealing with such sensitive issues as housing. We are facing another enemy of decent people — the housing benefit changes that have started to bite in the computer printouts that fall through the letterboxes of the people whom I represent.

I have catalogued growing demands for more repairs, more generous needs housing, more special needs housing and a fair deal for the disabled, the elderly and the handicapped. Will the Minister accept that the punitive element of housing benefit will only rub salt into their wounds? Will he accept that it is disgusting that an elderly person with a handicapped wife can have his housing benefit reduced so that he ends up paying perhaps £30 or £40 a month?

On behalf of the tenants whom I represent, I say to the Minister that the Government's policies not only are unwelcome but smack of an arrogance and contempt to which I thought Ministers would not be so low as to stoop.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am glad to confirm to the hon. Member for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) that the moratorium on general housing has ended and that development corporations are now building general needs houses.

The hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) raised these matters in Committee, and at that time I used the word "premature". I must do so again. The new clauses and amendments would give a district council the right compulsorily to acquire development corporation housing once an order for the winding up of the corporation had been made. The Opposition have ignored the reality that, under section 36 of the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968, the district council is already in effect the only possible inheritor of a new town housing undertaking when the development corporation is wound up. It would take fresh legislation amending the wind-up

provisions of the 1968 Act to change that. No such amendments are proposed in the Bill. We therefore have the curious prospect of a score of amendments proposing the very policy which is currently enshrined in statute.

That policy must come under question, however, because of the changes in the new towns over recent years. More than 21,000 new towns houses—over one third of the corporations' stock — have already been sold to tenants. The changes we have proposed to the discount restriction provisions in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 will mean that many more new town tenants will be entitled to buy their homes at full discount. The level of home ownership in the new towns has risen from 22 per cent. in 1980 to nearly 40 per cent. today.

We accept of course, that not all new town tenants want, or are able, to buy their homes. Under part III, they will be able, if they wish, to transfer the tenancy of their present home to a new landlord. Under clause 65, corporations, acting in full consultation with their tenants, will be able to sell groups of houses to alternative landlords. These measures are intended to introduce greater diversity into the pattern of ownership of housing in the towns. In particular, we see scope to develop community-based housing associations and co-operatives in the towns, providing a range of general as well as special needs housing.

I state quite clearly that no new towns tenant will be compelled, in advance of the winding up of the corporations, to transfer against his or her will to another landlord. If a tenant chooses to remain with the corporation, he or she will retain full security of tenure and statutory rights.

12 midnight

Against that background, it would be wholly inappropriate to adhere unquestioningly to the assumption that all remaining corporation housing should automatically transfer to local authorities at wind-up. That is not to say—in answer to the hon. Member for Fife, Central—that we have ruled out any possible role for local authorities. We have given a strong undertaking to review all the options, and to consult the district councils fully on them. Thereafter, we shall bring forward fresh proposals for amendments to the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968. Obviously, that would be done not in the context of this Bill but much later.

Mr. McLeish: From the documentation that I have read it appears that district councils have been ruled out as a possible landlord for new town tenants. Is the Minister now saying that the issue will be further discussed with district councils—especially in the post wind-up period?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We have not ruled out any possible role for local authorities, and there will be a full review and full consultations in due course.

Opposition Members seek in the new clauses and amendments to introduce prematurely a policy not of choice but of coercion. New clause 13 would require a development corporation to transfer to the local authority all the housing stock that it owns. What happens to those who do not wish to transfer to the local authority? It is not enough to say that they should have exercised their right to buy or right to transfer in advance of wind-up, because not every tenant will have been able to put his choice into practice in that way. The amendments are concerned purely with satisfying the local authorities' hunger for a guaranteed inheritance, and we believe that tenants' wishes should be taken into account more fully.

I remind hon. Members that no new town will begin to be wound up until 1990 at the earliest. Before then there will be consultation about the wind-up arrangements, including those for housing transfer, and there will be an opportunity for further debate in the House. The amendments would pre-empt that review and debate and would force upon new town tenants a solution that the Government regard as unacceptable.

Mr. Ingram: The Minister mentioned the moratorium. Let me give him some figures on which to ponder. In 1979, a total of 2,018 new houses were completed by the new towns; in 1986, the number was 157 and in 1987 —for the second quarter—it was only 15. That was at a time of growing homelessness, growing waiting lists and growing demand for new town public sector housing, as my hon. Friends the Members for Fife, Central (Mr. McLeish) and for Livingston (Mr. Cook) pointed out. The Minister has said again that the new clauses and amendments are premature. I cannot accept that. There is genuine fear and worry among new town tenants about the Government's intentions. The Minister said that no one will be compelled to transfer his tenancy before wind-up, but he did not rule out compulsion after wind-up, and that is what is worrying new town tenants. That is why they asked the new town MPs to table new clauses to the Bill.

If the Minister is genuinely concerned about giving the tenants in new town areas real choice, he should give them the option of choosing the district council on wind-up, as set out in the new clause. A refusal by the Government to accept the new clauses will give 45,000 families a clear message. They will never accept platitudes; they want clear and precise answers. I think that they have got such answers tonight. If the Government want to send out a different message and do something to the benefit of the new towns, they should accept the new clauses.

Question put and negatived.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move amendment No. 24, in page 1, line 19, after 'promoting', insert

'owner-occupation (especially by those seeking to purchase for the first time),'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss also the following: Amendment No. 135, in page 1, line 19, leave out from 'promoting' to end of line 20.

Government amendments Nos. 25 and 26.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: These amendments are in the nature of concessions. I undertook to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) to ensure that there were adequate provisions to enable Scottish Homes to develop schemes to assist first-time buyers. That has been done. Amendment No. 24 puts it beyond all doubt that that has happened.

In respect of amendment No. 135, I am happy to confirm that Scottish Homes will have a major role in the promotion of rented housing as well as in the various forms of owner-occupation.

In Committee, I made it clear to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths) that I would respond to his representations to give Scottish Homes a specific role in respect of ensuring that proper training is available in research and development. Although the spirit of those

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

amendments was in line with the White Paper, their form was not appropriate. We have therefore brought forward these amendments which arise out of Committee points made by hon. Members. I commend them to the House.

Mr. Home Robertson: I welcome these minor Government amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2

GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF SCOTTISH HOMES

Amendments made: No. 25, in page 2, line 39, at end insert—

'(pp) promote, provide or assist in the provision of, training in matters relating to housing;'.

No. 26, in page 2, line 39, at end insert—

'(ppp) carry out, commission or assist in the provision of, research and development;'.

Clause 12

ASSURED TENANCIES

Mr. Kirkwood: I beg to move amendment No. 127, in page 8, line 45, at end insert—

'(3) A tenancy is not an assured tenancy if the interest of the landlord belongs to a registered housing association, so long as the tenancy is not one which, by virtue of subsection (4) below can be an assured tenancy.

(4) A housing association tenancy is an assured tenancy when:—

(i) the circumstances in which the tenancy shall apply, and

(ii) the terms of the tenancy

have been determined by the Secretary of State by order.'

This is an important amendment and I would like to spend a moment or two putting to the Government the fact that they have now had some time since the Committee stage, when we went through a series of amendments of which this was one. I chose amendment No. 127 to provide a vehicle to allow the Government to let us know the outcome of their deliberations. When discussing clause 12 in Committee, this amendment and the cause behind it were supported by hon. Members of all parties. The hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) and the right hon. Member for Kincardine and Deeside (Mr. Buchanan-Smith) expressed support for at least part of the principle of the amendment.

The clause to which the amendment relates caused concern among the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations. It suggested a series of amendments that sought to give the Secretary of State the power to determine the terms and conditions of housing association assured tenancies. The matter was discussed in Committee.

I understand that to a certain extent the amendment has been overtaken by them. I understand that the Government have taken some decisions about what element of private funding taken into account in the joint financing structure can be held to be public or private. The definition of what is public or private has changed. Perhaps the Minister could say a word about that.

I am less concerned about the joint financing structure than I was in Committee. I am much more concerned with, and want to concentrate for a moment on, the change in the security of tenure that will flow from the Bill as it presently stands. This amendment is trying to press the Government to make changes and give us an assurance that the security of tenants in the housing association sector will be secure after the implementation of the Bill.

At present, under part III of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, housing association tenants are secure tenants and enjoy the same rights as local authority, SSHA and new town development corporation tenants. However, future housing association tenants will be assured tenants under part II of the Bill. That represents a substantial reduction in the rights of future housing association tenants.

The Government's stated aim in making the change is to encourage private investment in the funding of housing association projects. I stress that there is no objection on my part, or on that of the housing association movement in Scotland, to private finance being brought into the picture, as long as that is not done at the expense of the security and succession rights of housing association tenants.

We have discussed the way in which secured tenants would become assured tenants. That, of course, would involve substantial reductions in security of tenure. I understand that a series of amendments tabled by the Government would effectively relocate two existing mandatory grounds for possession as discretionary grounds. That is welcome as far as it goes, but we still feel that the Government's proposals, if left unamended, will lead to a substantial reduction in tenants' security of tenure and succession rights.

The Government's stated objective of diversification of tenure is bound to be struck at unless they accept at least the spirit of our amendments. People will not be encouraged to move from the public sector into housing associations and co-operative housing if the reductions in rights are left in the Bill. There are real worries about that.

There is still considerable confusion about the increases in rents in general, and about the definition of affordable rents in particular. It would be helpful if the Minister could clarify the matter.

As the Minister knows, this will be an important issue for housing association tenants in the future. It will affect the way that the housing association movement is able to work in Scotland within the framework of the Bill. I look forward to hearing from the Minister about his consultations with the housing associations since the Standing Committee proceedings. I hope that he has had a chance to change his mind, and to respond positively to the points put forward in Committee and this evening.

Mr. Home Robertson: Let me briefly associate the official Opposition with what has been said by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on behalf of housing associations in Scotland. We recognise the serious anxieties of those housing associations and their members at the prospect of their being compelled to become high-rent, low-security landlords. We find it extraordinary that the present Secretary of State for Scotland, who keeps claiming credit for establishing security of tenure for Scottish housing association tenants in 1980, should now be introducing a new regime that could seriously undermine that security. Certainly the legislation could undermine the principles and motivation of the housing association movement in Scotland.

The Minister should recognise that the members and committees of housing associations are, in effect, their

neighbours' landlords. Hitherto, a fundamentally co-operative principle has worked behind the housing association movement, but the Bill could change all that. It could tear the heart out of the movement. I am not surprised that the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations has made strong representations to all parties, and especially to the Government, appealing for amendments to the Bill to protect the status of housing associations and their tenants. I sincerely hope that the Minister will respond to those appeals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This is clearly an extremely important matter, and I made it clear in Committee that it would be given very thorough consideration. That consideration is continuing. The first step has taken place in the form of very full discussions with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, and these discussions have been extremely useful. We have been able to identify precisely what rights the SFHA wishes all future housing association tenants to have, and which existing rights it believes should not be continued.

The discussions have confirmed that there is a great deal of common ground between the housing association movement and the Government. One result has been that we have been able to bring forward some amendments, which we are to consider later. The amendments will retain the existing tenancy status for all housing association tenants who move from one house to another owned by the same housing association at any point in the future.

12.15 am

There are a range of options about the mechanics of securing the rights of new housing association tenants. We are still considering the options. The amendment proposes one set of mechanics, that central Government should determine a standard set of terms of tenancy for future housing association lettings. This would mean that housing associations would have no discretion at all to add to or take away from those terms. There are other options that involve variations both in the degree of statutory control and in the extent of the contract between housing associations and their future tenants, which either side should have discretion to seek to vary.

These questions of mechanics require careful thought. We expect to reach a final decision shortly, but for the present they remain under consideration. As I have said, we will reach that decision as quickly as possible.

Mr. Kirkwood: On the basis that the talks are real, will continue and will bear fruit, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 16

Security of tenure

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move amendment No. 28, in page 10, line 10, after 'any', insert '(i).'

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendments Nos. 29 and 122.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This group of amendments fulfils a commitment that we made in Committee. We wished to make it clear that if there was a reasonable formula for rent increases written into an assured tenancy agreement, that formula should continue to apply when a statutory assured tenancy arose on the termination of the contractual tenancy.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) was concerned that the amendment would let any agreements through the net which stipulated, for example, that rent increases would occur at the landlord's entire discretion. These amendments are the result of our reconsideration. They tighten up the kind of term relating to rent increases which will continue into a statutory assured tenancy. Only one which specifies a fixed sum or a percentage will qualify. I believe that the redrafted amendments achieve the desired purpose.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 29, in page 10, line 12, at end insert

'; or

(ii) which makes provision for an increase in rent (including provision whereby the rent for a particular period will or may be greater than that for an earlier period) otherwise than by an amount specified in that contract or by a percentage there specified of an amount or rent payable under the tenancy'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 17

Fixing of terms of statutory assured tenancy

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move amendment No. 30, in page 10, line 35, leave out 'one month' and insert 'three months'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendment No. 31.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Concern was expressed that one month allowed for an appeal was too short. We came to the conclusion that it would be reasonable to increase the period to three months.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 31, in page 10, line 40, leave out 'month' and insert 'period of three months'. —*[Lord*

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move amendment No. 136, in page 11, line 31, after 'above', insert

'if the tenancy has been brought to an end by order of the sheriff under this Part of this Act or.'

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider Government amendment No. 38.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: This amendment simply provides that a rent assessment committee need not continue with a determination of rent for a statutory assured tenancy if that tenancy has been ended.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18

Orders for possession

Amendment proposed: No. 32, in page 11, line 47, leave out '1' and insert '11A'. —*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following: Government amendments Nos. 33 to 35.

Amendment No. 152, in clause 20, page 13, line 40, leave out 'any of the grounds in' and insert 'Ground 1 of.'.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker]

Government amendments Nos. 36 and 78.

Amendment No. 10, in schedule 5, page 52, leave out lines 23 to 31.

Government amendments Nos. 79 and 81.

Amendment No. 12, in page 54, leave out lines 23 to 30.

Government amendments Nos. 82 to 86.

Amendment No. 133, in page 55, line 23, at end insert—

'Ground 18

Suitable alternative accommodation is available for the tenant or will be available for him when the order for possession takes effect.

Ground 19

The following conditions are fulfilled—

(a) the tenant has given a notice to quit which has expired; and

(b) the tenant has remained in possession of the whole or any part of the house; and

(c) proceedings for the recovery of possession have been begun not more than six months after the expiry of the notice to quit; and

(d) the tenant is not entitled to possession of the house by virtue of a new tenancy.

Ground 20

Both at the date of the service of the notice under section 19 of this Act relating to the proceedings for possession and at the date of the hearing, at least 3 months rent lawfully due from the tenant is in arrears.

Ground 21

Whether or not any rent is in arrears on the date on which proceedings for possession are begun, the tenant has persistently delayed paying rent which has become lawfully due.'.

Mr. Home Robertson: I am not surprised that the Minister does not want to say too much about this. The debate on this group of amendments gives the House an opportunity to discuss the extension of the threat of eviction that is inherent in the Bill. Amendment No. 32, as I understand it, simply introduces some minor concessions on the part of the Government to extend the discretion of the sheriff whether to grant a possession order against a tenant under the new assured tenancy system.

The Bill started life with 11 mandatory grounds and a further six discretionary grounds for eviction. The Minister has freely acknowledged that the undermining of tenants' security is a deliberate feature in the Bill, the objective being to encourage private landlords. Apparently the desire to evict tenants is one of the prime motivating forces for private landlords, and it is obviously a motive that the Government are happy to encourage. They clearly want to give them a free rein.

We highlighted the worst aspects of schedule 5 in Committee and secured undertakings from the Government to reconsider the threat of mandatory eviction for assured tenants on several grounds, which were wide open to abuse by unscrupulous landlords. Accordingly, we tabled a number of amendments which are in this group which was moved by the Minister.

Amendment No. 9, which subsequently became Government amendment No. 78 when the Secretary of State for Scotland added his name to it, provided for mandatory eviction where a landlord has made suitable alternative accommodation available for the tenant. Amendment No. 10 provided for discretionary rather than mandatory eviction if the tenant was evicted because the landlord defaulted on a loan secured on the house in question.

Amendment No. 11, which became Government amendment No. 81 when the Secretary of State for Scotland added his name to it, dealt with ground 7. Where the tenant had given notice, we felt that there should be certain circumstances in which that should be discretionary rather than mandatory.

Amendment No. 12 deals with grounds 10 and 11 concerning rent arrears. We felt that it would be deplorable that a minor lapse on the part of a tenant in paying his rent, which may have arisen as a result of delays in the payment of housing benefit, could lead to mandatory eviction by the sheriff because he would have no choice but to grant possession to the landlord.

All those mandatory grounds for possession should have been replaced by discretionary grounds for eviction if the sheriff thought that such action was justified. We believe that there should be the important exception of ground 10, because a tenant's security should not be subject to the whim of the landlord's creditors.

The Government amendments deal with some, but not all, of those points. In particular, Government amendment No. 79, relating to ground 3 of part 1 of schedule 5, is pitifully inadequate. Under that amendment, it will still be possible for a landlord's creditor to evict a tenant if the landlord defaults on a loan secured against the house. The amendment would mean that either notice was given in writing to the tenant not later than the start of a tenancy and that possession might be recovered on this ground, or the sheriff was satisfied that it is reasonable to dispense with the requirement of the notice.

In those circumstances, if that notice has been given, the sheriff will have absolutely no option but to evict the tenant. That is wide open to abuse. It will simply mean that some small print will be included in lease to make it very easy in certain circumstances for a tenant to be evicted. That is particularly open to abuse in connection with the landlord's right to acquire public sector property under part III of the Bill.

I want to give an example of what might happen. A landlord could acquire a property at a low valuation and the tenant would therefore lose his secure tenancy. The landlord might have financed that transaction with a loan from another speculator company secured against the property. Indeed, that might be done under the business expansion scheme, heralded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Budget. The other speculator company might be very closely associated with the institution or individual who is the private sector landlord. The landlord would simply have to default on the loan to allow the other institution—perhaps closely associated with the landlord—to spring the trap and secure mandatory eviction of the tenant and thus obtain vacant possession and a substantial increase in the value of the investment.

That is a serious possibility and the Government's amendments make no attempt to block such an abuse of the system. Small print in the lease will be no consolation for the tenants who have to face the risk. Indeed, I suspect that the small print could easily turn into a standard part of the drafting of leases under the new system of assured tenancies.

The Government's proposals for so-called assured tenancies give very little assurance to the tenants. They are specifically intended to undermine the security of the tenants in Scotland today and to increase the threat of eviction. This spectre of dispossession and homelessness will coincide with a dramatic reduction in the availability

of public sector rented housing, which might be available, to come to the aid of the homeless in Scotland. The Government's concessions fall considerably short of what Scottish tenants should be entitled to expect from the House.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: Amendment No. 152, standing in my name, seeks to leave out

"any of the grounds in"

and insert 'Ground 1 of".

One of the great concerns about the Bill is its failure to address the growing problems of homelessness in Scotland. Amendment No. 152 seeks to ensure that there will be no evictions unless suitable accommodation is available, thus avoiding the problem of homelessness or adding to it. The amendment deletes the words

"any of the grounds in part 1 of schedule 5 to the Act,"

and inserts

"Ground 1 of part 1 of schedule 5 to the Act."

Schedule 5 provides for the adjournment of proceedings, or sisting or suspension of a court order for possession or postponement of the date of possession. However, it does not apply such an adjournment where the grounds for seeking possession are any of those in part I of schedule 5. In other words, it ensures that alternative accommodation will be available.

Since district councils, under section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, have a duty to provide accommodation for persons with a priority need, the amendment seeks to ensure that only where alternative accommodation is assured will immediate possession be granted by the sheriff, thus removing an undue burden from district councils in providing priority need housing where any grounds stated in part I of schedule 5 would apply.

By concentrating on ground 1, the amendment really says that there must be no eviction if no council house or other accommodation is available, and that should be seen as part of my other amendment relating to the plight of the homeless. It insists that possession can be taken only when alternative accommodation, either public or private, is available. Eviction can only take place when those evicted can be housed.

The amendment seeks to guarantee some form of social conscience and responsibility on the part of landlords, since the onus would shift towards proving that alternative accommodation exists rather than creating homelessness and thereby causing another problem for local authorities which may not have suitable accommodation or resources.

The court order would not be made unless suitable accommodation was available. That should mean that accommodation was truly available, not just in theory. For example, the alternative housing should be adequate, suitable and affordable for the people involved. There is no sense in claiming that a family could move to other premises if the cost would be beyond their means or the premises were clearly inadequate for their needs.

The amendment seeks to stop people being thrown on to the street by unscrupulous landlords. It would give protection to the poorest and most vulnerable families and ensure fairness in allowing them the right to suitable housing without overburdening local authorities.

Homelessness is obviously a growing problem throughout Scotland. I understand that last year an estimated 26,000 Scottish families were made homeless. That does not include the single homeless and it masks the chronic overcrowded conditions endured by 1,250,000 people in Scotland. Waiting lists in the district and islands councils of Scotland are growing and house building numbers are falling. All those are factors in the increasing problem of homelessness, especially when one adds changing demographic and social customs and the rising numbers of the young single homeless as a category.

All those factors will exacerbate homelessness. The amendment is an attempt to do something to meet that problem and assist local authorities in so doing. Surely the object of housing policy is simply to house people, not to make them homeless without a reasonable expectation of being rehoused.

The Government have turned down amendment after amendment, but I hope that they will look seriously at my attempts to help the homeless. I hope that the Government will accept the amendment and ensure that the courts are used to protect vulnerable families, to house those most in need and not throw yet another impossible burden on to the shoulders of local authorities.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government amendments arise out of a commitment that I gave in Committee in response to representations. I promised to consider whether an element of discretion should be introduced to any of the mandatory grounds for possession in schedule 5. I said at that time that I thought the best case for such discretion related to grounds 1 and 11—those that provide for repossession when suitable alternative accommodation is available or when the tenant is persistently in arrears with his rent.

My consideration has confirmed me in the view that those grounds should be discretionary, but it has also convinced me that ground 7—where a tenant issues a notice to quit but does not act on it—should also become discretionary. All the Government amendments relate to the transfer of those three grounds to the discretionary category.

Amendments Nos. 79 and 82 also arise from commitments that I entered into in Committee—that the notice to be served on a tenant under ground 3 must be served at or before the beginning of the tenancy, and that ground 10 should be amended to make it clear that it applies only when a full three months' rent is in arrears.

12.30 am

Perhaps I could also refer briefly to the Opposition amendments which would make one more ground discretionary—when three months' rent is in arrears. In this case, I remain convinced that there should be a mandatory right to repossession. If a tenant is three months in arrears, both when the landlord serves notice and when court proceedings start, he must be deliberately withholding rent, and the landlord should not be expected to carry such a loss indefinitely. If a tenant has no money, presumably he would be entitled to housing benefit.

Opposition amendment No. 10 would prevent ground 3 from being a ground for possession. So if a landlord defaulted on his mortgage payments, his creditor would be prevented from selling the house to obtain payment, whatever the circumstances. I appreciate that that is a matter of considerable concern, but it would be unreasonable. It would mean that there would be no lenders on the security of rented property, which is the reverse of what we want to see—greater private investment in such property which would help the homeless, directly or indirectly.

Amendment No. 152 is unacceptable, because it is at variance with the intention behind having mandatory

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

grounds for possession in part I of schedule 2 to the Bill. That intention is that, in the interests of fairness, there should be grounds on which the landlord must be certain of getting possession, and of getting possession within a reasonable time.

If a landlord has established to the court's satisfaction that he is entitled to possession on one of the mandatory grounds, it is unfair that he might be denied that repossession indefinitely, until the tenant has found somewhere else to live. That could mean, for example, that a tenant with an out-of-season holiday let might not actually have to leave until the holiday season was over. In my view, that would not be an appropriate outcome. There needs to be certainty of possession under the mandatory grounds, and the amendment would destroy that certainty. I therefore resist the Opposition amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made: No. 33, in page 12, line 4, leave out 'or Ground 11'.

No. 34, in page 12, line 6, after 'than', insert

'Ground 11A or Ground 11B or'. — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Mr. Andrew Welsh: I beg to move amendment No. 150, in page 12, line 8, at end insert

'; and

(c) where a defender in an action would, in the event of an order for possession being put into effect, become a person with a priority need in terms of section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, notice of the proceedings has been served on the District Council within whose area the house is.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to discuss the following amendments: No. 151, in clause 18, page 12, line 14, at end insert—

'(8) Where notice has been given in terms of subsection (6)(c) above, the sheriff shall not make an order for possession unless he is satisfied that the district council on whom a duty is placed by section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 can provide suitable alternative accommodation.'.

No. 153, in clause 30, page 17, line 29, at end insert—

'and—

(d) that the defender in any action for possession would not become a person requiring accommodation to be provided as priority need accommodation in terms of section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.'.

No. 154, in page 17, line 40, at end insert—

'(4) Where a case of priority need in terms of section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 would arise in respect of any tenant against whom recovery of possession is sought in terms of this section, the sheriff may, on the making of an order for possession of a house—

(a) sist or suspend execution of the order, or

(b) postpone the date of possession, for such period or periods as the Court thinks fit.'.

Mr. Welsh: The amendments deal generally with homelessness, but the clause lays down preliminary procedures regarding grounds for possession in circumstances where local authorities, as the authorities responsible for provision of accommodation for homeless persons in priority need, should have reasonably early notice of the possibility of a demand being placed on their services. The amendment should be read in conjunction with the additional amendment adding a further clause 8 which would ensure that local authorities had reasonable notice and would be given the opportunity to be heard when they had an interest as authorities responsible for the provision of such housing.

The amendments are about notifying district councils of homeless persons or persons likely to become homeless. District councils have a statutory duty to house the homeless. Therefore, it would be absolutely stupid to allow court proceedings to put people on to the streets without letting the local district or islands council know about potential homelessness as an automatic part of any legal proceedings.

No delay should be caused by such statutory notification if the landlord does his or her job properly. The amendment should ensure a speedier system in helping to prevent homelessness. No tenant should ever be put onto the streets. The amendment would put the onus on the landlord to notify the district or islands council about possible homelessness. The sheriff will not be able to give an order in favour of the landlord unless such notification has been given.

It adds one more reasonable stage to the eviction process, positively to prevent unnecessary homelessness, prudently avoiding a very avoidable situation. If councils know the dates involved in the legal proceedings, they can provide for the smooth transfer to accommodation of otherwise homeless persons.

The amendment is designed to help people and to help councils create a smooth transition out of legal proceedings and conflict. It should prevent the risk of sudden or unexpected increases in homelessness from the private sector. It should help people and councils to plan ahead.

Amendment No. 151 has to be read in conjunction with subsection (6)(c) and lays on the sheriff a duty to consider the circumstances in which homelessness might arise. Section 29 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 lays a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation in cases where there is a priority need. It is reasonable that the sheriff should be entitled to be informed whether the provision of such accommodation would lay an undue burden on a local authority. Ground 1 of schedule 5 provides a mandatory ground for a possession order: that suitable accommodation should be provided.

Amendment No. 153 provides for mandatory orders for repossession, which may lead to requests for priority need housing being made on the district council. Taken together with amendment No. 154, a duty would be imposed on the landlord to provide a certificate of alternative accommodation in such circumstances, or to assure the court that suitable alternative accommodation exists. That would avoid an unfair burden being placed on district councils as housing authorities which would require them to meet demands for rehousing, where short tenancies could be created as a means of priority entry to local authority housing lists.

The amendment would prevent eviction unless alternative accommmodation is proved to be available, and it would protect the handicapped, families and the elderly. It is a last-resort amendment if the other amendments that I have moved fail. It is the minimum possible that should be done to protect those who are most vulnerable.

When the Bill becomes law, it is crucial that the most vulnerable members of the community should be protected. To a buyer, housing will be cheap with a sitting tenant, because the district valuer's price will apply. Large

profits could be made if the sitting tenant were chucked out. Profit will be a very powerful motive for unscrupulous landlords to evict. The amendment is designed to protect tenants in such circumstances. It offers a measure of protection through the courts, because it would prevent exploitation.

Amendment No. 154 would bring the powers to be exercised by the sheriff into line with those given in clause 20 and would enable the sheriff to take into account other circumstances when cases of priority need arise. The amendment would allow time in which solutions could be found if there were no immediately available alternative accommodation. The courts would step in to protect citizens who otherwise would be vulnerable to unscrupulous, uncaring landlords.

Housing policy should be about housing people. The amendments would prevent homelessness and would place the onus on both central and local government to solve problems, not simply avoid them. I regret that the Minister said earlier that he is protecting the landlord by means of making people homeless, thus creating a major problem for the district and islands councils. The amendments would do what the Bill in general does not do. They would provide protection for the most vulnerable members of society and would prevent homelessness.

Mr. Home Robertson: We have already debated at length the evil of homelessness, and we have tried to impress on the Minister our belief that the Government have a duty to protect people in Scotland from homelessness. The amendments provide some protection for people who face homelessness. It would ensure proper consideration of their needs by central Government, local authorities and the sheriffs. I hope that the Minister will respond positively to the amendments, but I am afraid that his track record is not very good.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I listened with great care to the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson). Certainly, top priority should be given to reducing the number of homeless in Scotland, but the statutory obligation is on local authorities.

Amendment No. 150 would prevent a sheriff from making an order for possession if the defender would become a person with a priority need unless notice of proceedings had been served on the district council. I believe that the amendment is unnecessary.

Persons threatened with homelessness are able to apply for assistance from their local authority. They do not have to wait until they are actually homeless before placing their case before the authority. In my view, defenders in actions for repossession will make their circumstances known to the local authority at an early point in the proceedings and there is therefore no need to make provision on the face of the Bill for authorities to receive formal notification of repossession actions.

I feel that amendment No. 151 is defective. It refers to the duty of the district council to provide suitable alternative accommodation. The duty, of course, is to secure that accommodation is made available. To some this may seem a small point of difference — the difference between providing and securing — but we should not forget that authorities are expected to fulfil an enabling role, rather than necessarily act as providers.

The amendment refers to section 29 of the 1987 Act. This section relates to the interim duty of an authority to secure accommodation in cases of apparent priority need while it carries out inquiries to establish the applicant's position. The amendment seeks to prevent the sheriff from making an order for possession unless he is satisfied that the district council can provide suitable accommodation. As I have said, the duty placed on the authority by section 29 is to secure that accommodation is made available. Should it fail to discharge that duty the authority would run the risk of an action for default. This is also generally the case as regards its duties to persons found to be homeless through no fault of their own and in priority need. In short, the authority cannot avoid its obligations to homeless persons.

I do not believe that either amendment No. 150 or amendment No. 151 is necessary, and I ask that they be rejected.

Amendment Nos. 153 and 154 seek to cover similar cases in short assured tenancies, but are even less acceptable. The whole purpose of the short assured tenancy option is to allow landlords to let property for a limited period with the knowledge that they will be certain to get it back at a certain time. Amendments Nos. 153 and 154 would work entirely against that principle. Since, as I have explained, local authorities have a duty to arrange for the provision of accommodation for those who are homeless and in priority need, these two amendments are also unnecessary.

For those reasons, I hope that the House will not accept the amendments.

Mr Canavan: Can the Minister explain to us exactly what is meant by "sist"? What is the difference between sisting and suspending?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are a number of lawyers all round me who would be only too happy to correct me if I am wrong. To sist proceedings is to have a break in the proceedings. It means to bring them to an end for a period, at any rate. That is my understanding of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: (Mr. Harold Walker): I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not insist and persist; otherwise, the Minister will doubtless desist and resist.

Mr. Welsh: The hour is late and I shall not prolong the proceedings, but I deeply regret the Government's response to these amendments. They are reasonable amendments which meet a very acute problem that local authorities will face if and when the Bill becomes law. They are reasonable amendments designed to protect tenants and at the same time allow local authorities to perform their statutory duties. Local authorities will have to face the practical reality of persons made homeless thanks to this legislation and will be given no extra resources so to do. These amendments would allow at least extra warning and reasonable time for them to adjust and to perform their statutory duties.

I regret that the Minister has not been able to accept the amendment, and I wish to press it to a Division.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 86, Noes 194.

Division No. 240] **[12.43 am**

AYES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Barron, Kevin
Alton, David	Battle, John
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Beggs, Roy
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*

Buchan, Norman
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cryer, Bob
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Fisher, Mark
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Galbraith, Sam
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Haynes, Frank
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McLeish, Henry
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Maxton, John
Michael, Alun
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Nellist, Dave
Pike, Peter L.
Primarolo, Dawn
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wareing, Robert N.
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Andrew Welsh and
Mr. Archy Kirkwood.

NOES

Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon *(Bury St E')*
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsmouth N)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, A. *(B'ham H'll Gr')*
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Hawkins, Christopher
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howell, Rt Hon David *(G'dford)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Jack, Michael
Jackson, Robert
Janman, Tim
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kirkhope, Timothy
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Major, Rt Hon John
Mans, Keith
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mates, Michael
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mills, Iain
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. David Lightbown and
Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 19

NOTICE OF PROCEEDINGS FOR POSSESSION

Mr. Home Robertson: I beg to move amendment No. 22, in page 12, leave out lines 35 to 38 and insert 'two months'.

Subsection (4) provides for eviction with as little as two weeks' notice on certain grounds. The amendment would extend that to a minimum of two months, which would allow at least some scope for a family to find another

home. Two weeks is surely grossly unreasonable and inadequate, and I hope the Minister will give this issue some thought.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We have given careful consideration to this matter following the debate in Committee, and we are not persuaded to change the clause. Here, as elsewhere in part II of the Bill, it is important to strike the right balance between the interests of those concerned. The landlord should be able to regain possession of his property without undue delay, provided he can establish his claim to possession, while the tenant expects to be give reasonable notice of proceedings.

These interests are not easily reconciled, and we take the view that the notice of proceedings should be longer in some cases than in others. That is why clause 19 specifies two minimum periods: two months for one set of grounds for possession and two weeks for the other set. The grounds, which will be subject to a minimum notice of two weeks, are grounds on which the landlord is, in our view, entitled to obtain quicker repossession. These grounds are, broadly speaking, where the tenant is at fault.

A two-week notice of proceedings for possession will seldom lead to eviction in two weeks. In the first place, there will usually be a delay between the expiry of the notice and the court hearing. Then, if the sheriff decides to grant possession on one of the discretionary grounds —which, with the amendments which the House has just accepted, will be all but three of the grounds to which the two-week limit applies—he can delay the date of possession as he sees fit. So the Government are not convinced that the change proposed should be made.

Mr. Home Robertson: The Minister has enunciated the rather alarming principle that always, if in doubt, back the landlord, even if that involves putting a tenant out of his house with only two weeks' notice.

Amendment negatived.

Amendment made: No. 35, in page 12, line 35, leave out '1 to 3, 6, 8, 9' and insert '2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11A'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 22

PAYMENT OF REMOVAL EXPENSES IN CERTAIN CASES

Amendment made: No. 36, in page 14, line 19, leave out '1 or Ground 8' and insert '8 or Ground 11A'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 24

INCREASES OF RENT UNDER ASSURED TENANCIES

Amendment made: No. 122, in page 15, line 15, at end insert—

'(5) Nothing in this section affects the operation of any term of a tenancy which makes provision for an increase in rent (including provision whereby the rent for a particular period will or may be greater than that for an earlier period) by an amount specified in the tenancy contract or by a percentage there specified of an amount of rent payable under the tenancy.'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 25

DETERMINATION OF RENT BY RENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Amendment made: No. 38, in page 16, line 2, after 'house', insert

'if the tenancy has been brought to an end by order of the sheriff under this Part of this Act or'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 29

SHORT ASSURED TENANCIES

Amendment made: No. 39, in page 17, line 14, after 'landlord', insert

'or, where there are joint landlords, any of them'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 30

RECOVERY OF POSSESSION ON TERMINATION OF A SHORT ASSURED TENANCY

Amendments made: No. 40, in page 17, line 24, at end insert—

'(aa) that tacit relocation is not operating;'.

No. 41, in page 17, line 28, leave out 'two months'.

No. 42, in page 17, line 29, at end insert—

'( ) The period of notice to be given under subsection (1)(c) above shall be—

(i) if the terms of the tenancy provide, in relation to such notice, for a period of more than two months, that period;

(ii) in any other case, two months'.

No. 43, in page 17, line 31, leave out from 'relates' to end of line 36.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 31

REFERENCE OF EXCESSIVE RENTS TO RENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Amendment made: No. 44, in page 17, line 41 leave out from 'below' to 'may' in line 44 and insert—

'the tenant under a short assured tenancy'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 33

DAMAGES FOR UNLAWFUL EVICTION

Amendment made: No. 45, in page 19, line 48 leave out paragraph (c)—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]*

Clause 35

FURTHER OFFENCE OF HARASSMENT

Amendments made: No. 46, in page 20, line 36 leave out 'a residential occupier' and insert 'any premises'.

No. 47, in page 21, leave out lines 5 to 12.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 37

CASES EXCLUDED FROM SECTIONS 23 AND 24 OF RENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

Amendments made: No. 48, in page 21 line 35 leave out 'this Part ' and insert 'section 23 or 24'.

No. 49, in page 21, line 42, leave out from 'and' to end of line and insert

'at all times since then'.

No. 50, in page 21, line 43 leave out 'or a member of his family'.

No. 51, in page 22, line 15 leave out '(2)' and insert '(1)'.

No. 52, in page 22 line 17 leave out 'this Part' and insert 'section' 23 or 24'.

No. 53, in page 22, line 24 leave out 'this Part' and insert 'section 23 or 24'.

No. 54, in page 22, line 28 leave out 'this Part' and insert 'section' 23 or 24'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 39

NEW PROTECTED TENANCIES RESTRICTED TO SPECIAL CASES

Amendment made: No. 55, in page 23, line 38 leave out from first 'same' to 'or' in line 39 and insert 'landlord'.

No. 56, in page 23, line 46 after 'available)', insert

'or on it appearing to the court, under section 48(2)*(b)* or *(c)* of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, that other suitable accommodation was available'.

No. 57, in page 24, line 3 after 'satisfied', insert

'or as the case may be, the other suitable accommodation which appeared to the court to be available'.

No. 58, in page 24, line 5, at end insert

'; or

(d) it is granted in compliance with a direction under section 51(2)(ii) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (power of sheriff to direct that tenant of wrongfully repossessed house be given suitable alternative accommodation) or in pursuance of section 282(3)(b) of that Act (grant of tenancy upon acquisition by public sector authority of defective dwelling)'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 40

REMOVAL OF SPECIAL REGIMES FOR TENANCIES OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS ETC.

Amendments made: No. 59, in page 24, line 32, leave out from first 'same' to 'or' in line 33 and insert 'landlord'.

No. 137, in page 25, line 20, leave out from 'same' to 'or' in line 21 and insert 'landlord'. — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 43

STATUTORY TENANTS: SUCCESSION

Amendment made: No. 60, in page 27, line 20, after 'amendments in', insert 'Part I of'.

No. 61, in page 27, line 30, at end add—

'(5) If and so long as a house is subject to an assured tenancy to which a person has become entitled by succession, section 18 of and Schedule 5 to this Act shall have effect subject to the modifications in Part II of Schedule 6 to this Act.'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 46

INFORMATION AS TO DETERMINATION OF RENTS

Amendment made: No. 62, in page 28, line 17, leave out from '(1)' to end of line.

No. 63, in page 28, line 19, leave out 'the order' and insert

'an order made by the Secretary of State'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 53

RIGHT CONFERRED BY PART III

Amendments made: No. 64, in page 30, line 10, after 'house', insert '(a)'.

No. 65, in page 30, line 11, after 'tenant', insert—

'; and

(b) of which, on that date, the landlord is heritable proprietor'.

No. 66, in page 30, line 12, after 'property', insert—

'of which, on that date, the landlord is heritable proprietor and'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

1 am

Mr. David Steel (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): I beg to move amendment No. 129, in page 31, line 10, leave out 'one-third' and insert 'one-fifth'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following amendments: No. 130, in page 31, line 13, leave out 'and' and insert 'or'.

No. 131, in page 31, line 13, leave out

'and the Secretary of State is satisfied that an unreasonable proportion'

and insert 'or one-tenth'.

Mr. Steel: I realise that at this hour of the morning the House will not wish to have a long debate on the problems of housing in rural areas. If the Government had followed their logic correctly, part III of the Bill would not have applied to the district councils covering the rural areas. The Government have said all along that part III is aimed principally at the large inner city and peripheral housing schemes. Nevertheless, in drafting the Bill, the Government accepted that some special provision should be made for the smaller local authorities in the rural areas.

When the Bill was first published it contained provision that if a rural housing authority lost one third of its housing stock through council house sales and/or tenancy transfers, the Secretary of State could place before Parliament an order forbidding any future sales or transfers in that district or islands area. Our criticism was that it was left to the Secretary of State to define a rural area and there was no certainty that he would act once the one third threshold had been reached.

I understand that in Committee my hon. Friend the Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), to whose industry in Committee I pay deserved tribute, moved amendments that sought to define a rural area more precisely or, alternatively, would have obliged the Secretary of State to lay an order as soon as the threshold was reached.

The Government rejected both amendments as being arbitrary and restrictive. The Committee accepted a Government amendment which, it was claimed, would allow an order to be placed sooner if "an unreasonable proportion" of the transferred houses ceased to become principal residences—for instance by becoming holiday

homes. In other words, these houses would be removed from the figure for the total original district council stock used to calculate the one third threshold.

The problem with that Government amendment is that on closer examination it becomes clear that, however conciliatory the Government were trying to be, the effect of the amendment was to tighten rather than loosen the conditions for the banning of further transfers or sales. That is because the use of the word "and" in line 13, clause 53(6) means that only when the one-third threshold has been reached and an unreasonable proportion of houses have changed usage will an order be possible. If, for example, one third of the authority's housing stock has changed hands but not very many houses have become, for instance, holiday homes, there would be no order. Therefore, a bad clause has been made worse.

The purpose of amendment No. 130, which I hope that the Minister will accept, is to replace the word "and" by the word "or" so creating an additional possibility for granting an order to prevent further transfers or sales. This would bring the clause in line with the Government's intention as stated in Committee.

On amendment No. 129, small local authorities are those that can least afford the loss of houses from their council stock, because there is often a paucity of provision in those areas. The one-third threshold is considered to be too high, even though it is a concession not granted to most local authorities. Amendment No. 129 seeks to replace the one-third requirement by a less damaging one-fifth limit. There is at least some prospect that that limit might be reached and some protection given to these authorities.

The Ettrick and Lauderdale district council has argued with me that by the time the one-third limit was reached, a council's housing capabilities would be too severely weakened for proper provision to continue. I hope that the Minister will accept that a one-fifth statemen: in the Bill would be much more realistic.

On amendment No. 131, the Secretary of State's powers under the Bill are extensive, and an example of that is his right to define what is meant by an unreasonable proportion of houses being resold and ceasing to be used as principal places of residence. Our amendment takes out that phrase and sets one tenth as the level at which the Secretary of State must lay an order to prevent further house transfers in rural areas. That also follows the argument that I used in support of amendment No. 130.

I hope that, taken together, these three amendments will appeal to the Minister as being reasonable to meet the strong objection of the housing authorities in rural areas and will be closer to meeting the Government's intentions than was their original drafting in Committee.

Mr. Home Robertson: We take the view that part III of the Bill is a totally unwarranted and unbalanced interference in housing legislation, which is simply designed by the Government to enable private landlords to acquire chunks of potentially lucrative and valuable property at a knockdown price from local authorities.

The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) is right to draw attention to the fact that the measure could have a particularly disruptive effect on rural communities in Scotland, many of which have already seen the loss and depletion of a significant amount of their public sector rented housing stock, which makes it far too difficult for local people in those neighbourhoods to rent housing. They find that the housing stock has all been bought up or sold off to holidaymakers.

The right hon. Gentleman rightly said that this may not be the most appropriate time of night to be discussing the matter. We intend to return to the generality of part III when the debate resumes, but I certainly support the principle behind the point that he makes.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I listened with care to the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), who put his case persuasively, and I hope that I shall be able to reassure him.

Two procedures must be followed before the Secretary of State can designate an area as a rural area and exempt houses from the tenants' choice provisions in part III. First, as the right hon. Gentleman said, it is a necessary condition that one third of the total public sector housing stock in the area before the right to buy came into effect should have been sold, either under the right to buy or under tenants' choice or otherwise. Amendment No. 129 suggests that the figure should be reduced to one fifth. Secondly, the Secretary of State must consider whether, in his view, an unreasonable proportion of the houses sold have been resold and are being used as holiday homes.

I know that strong views have been expressed that it would be so difficult to satisfy both those criteria that, in practice, no designation orders will be made. Ettrick and Lauderdale district council was good enough to send the Scottish Development Department a copy of the notes that it made available to the right hon. Gentleman. The provisions in clause 53 and in the right-to-buy provisions in the 1987 Act are more flexible than the right hon. Gentleman or the district council concerned may realise. As I said in Committee on 25 February, the word "area" in line 44, page 30 of the Bill, is not defined. That is deliberate. The intention is that "area" can mean, for example, the full area of a particular district council, such as Ettrick and Lauderdale, or a parish, town or village.

The first criterion that must be met before a designation order can be made—that one third of the houses in the area have been sold — prevents much less difficulty, given that the area in which the threshold must be reached can be flexibly defined.

The provisions are reasonably and workable and I give the right hon. Gentleman my assurance that my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and I will consider carefully any applications received from local authorities for the areas to be designated under the provisions. Each application will be considered on its merits. With that assurance, I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not press the amendment.

Amendment negatived.

Further consideration of the Bill adjourned.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be further considered this day.

Televising of Proceedings

Mr. Speaker: I have selected amendments (a), (b), (d) and (e).

1.9 am

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I beg to move,

That a Select Committee of not more than twenty-one Members be appointed to consider the implementation of the Resolution of the House of 9th February in favour of the holding of an experiment in the public broadcasting of its proceedings by television and to make recommendations.

That seven be the Quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records; to sit notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House; to adjourn from place to place; and to report from time to time.

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference.

That Mr. Graham Bright, Mr. Frank Dobson, Mr. Don Dixon, Miss Janet Fookes, Mr. Roger Gale, Sir Philip Goodhart, Mr. Alastair Goodlad, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr. Bruce Grocott, Mr. David Harris, Mr. Robert G. Hughes, Mr. David Hunt, Mr. Eric Illsley, Mr. Charles Kennedy, Mr. Anthony Nelson, Mr. Merlyn Rees, Joan Ruddock, Mr. Richard Tracey, Mr. John Wakeham and Mr. Brian Wilson be members of the Committee.

The House will know already from the almost weekly progress reports which I have been making at business questions since our debate on 9 February that this is not an easy subject. Since the House's decision that in principle it wished to carry out an experiment in the public broadcasting by television of our proceedings and to establish a Select Committee to make recommendations on the implementation of that experiment, there have been extensive discussions about the setting up and membership of that Committee. Although the proposals I have made have received a broad measure of support, it is clear from the amendments that they are not universally acceptable.

One point on which I hope the whole House agrees is the establishment of the Select Committee, following the resolution of the House of 9 February. The House decided then to hold an experiment in televising, and I am sure that no hon. Member would seek to use this debate as an opportunity to reopen that discussion. The time to consider again the experiment is when the Select Committee has reported. Tonight we are concerned just with setting up that Committee.

The first part of the motion in my name would establish a Select Committee of not more than 21 members, with the customary powers of Select Committees to send for persons, papers and records. In addition, the Select Committee would be able to travel, to make reports and to appoint specialist advisers. The second part of the motion nominates 20 members to serve on the Committee. I have put these names forward, having in mind the need not only to balance the parties, as on any Committee of the House, but to take account of the majority in favour of a televising experiment. I believe that all those nominated will do their best to carry out the will of the House, whatever views they may have expressed during the debate, and I am pleased that these nominations do not seem to be disputed by the House.

The original motion in my name, as hon. Members will have realised, provides for the possibility of one more place on the Committee than the number of those it nominates. Under the conventions of the House for allocating Committee places between parties, this place should go to a member of a minor party. Indeed, a Committee of 21 was put forward with the intention of enabling two members from minor parties to serve. As I said in our debate on 9 February, in response to the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing), although I could not discuss the exact composition of the Select Committee, I envisaged that it would have as wide a representation as possible of all shades of opinion in all parties in the House, but I made it clear that I could not give the absolute undertaking for which she asked.

Mr. Dafydd Wigley (Caernarfon): If the right hon. Gentleman will refer to *Hansard*, he will see that he said: "all parties in the House?"—[*Official Report*, 9 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. 207.]

It is there in black and white.

Mr. Wakeham: I also said that there would be representatives of opinion and that I could give no undertaking. The proposition that the Committee should include eight representatives from the minor parties would pretty well need a Committee of the whole House to achieve it.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Why?

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Lady will allow me, I shall do my best to explain why I believe that this is the best way forward.

I had hoped that the two minor party members of the Select Committee would serve as representatives of all the minor parties since, despite their differences on policy, as I believe they recognise, they have some similar interests in this matter. I think that I speak for both the larger parties in the House when I say that we had hoped that the minor parties would be able to agree their representatives among themselves.

As the House knows, that was not the case. On the very day that the motion appeared on the Order Paper—10 March—there also appeared an amendment from the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) and his hon. Friend the Member for Londonderry, East (Mr. Ross) nominating their colleague the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor), and an amendment from the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) and others adding to the Committee the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley).

The discussions at least produced agreement in one respect. The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley and the hon. Member for Angus, East and their colleagues joined together to propose an amendment that would allow the Select Committee to have 22 members. That amendment appeared on the same day as the amendment from my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow), which would reduce the size of the Committee to 20—the number nominated in the original motion.

The intention of the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley and the hon. Member for Angus, East in seeking to increase the size of the Committee to 22 is, I understand, to provide places for three Members of minor parties to serve on the Committee. As I said during business questions last week, that is not what it would do. The conventions governing the allocation of places between parties would give that 22nd place to one of my right hon.

or hon. Friends. We would need a Committee of at least 35 for the conventional formula to produce a third place for minor parties.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that, if my hon. Friend the Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) and the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) were appointed, the balance of the House in the context of how the vote was cast on 9 February would not be altered in any way? Why, therefore, must we observe the conventions of the House?

Mr. Wakeham: It is for the House to decide whether to abide by the conventions of the House. Those conventions are long-standing. I believe that the Committee should be set up on that basis, which would produce two members for the minor parties.

As I said, I do not believe that an amendment that produces a deviation from the formula and requires either the Government or the Opposition to give up a place on the Committee would be generally acceptable to the House. I shall therefore vote against the amendment. If the amendment is not approved by the House, it will not be possible for the House to approve as additional members of the Committee both the right hon. Member for Strangford and the hon. Member for Caernarfon. Hon. Members would have to choose between them. I am sure that either Member would be an unexceptional member of the Select Committee, and the House might well not wish to argue their personal merits or claims across the Floor. Certainly, I would not consider it appropriate for members of the Government to favour one above the other. In those circumstances, in my view, the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking offers the most useful way forward by reducing the maximum size of the Committee to 20 and we would obviate the need to distinguish between two Members, which many hon. Members might find distasteful.

In saying that, I should like to make it clear that I have consistently recognised that minor parties have a specific view as regards the televising of our proceedings and that we must ensure that there is an opportunity for that properly to be taken into account. I note also that there are particular considerations to be taken into account in the coverage of our proceedings in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. But there is certainly more than one way of achieving that. It could be done by having a second representative on the Select Committee, but there is no reason to suppose that submitting formal evidence to the Select Committee would not also be an effective method. For my part, as Leader of the House, I undertake to ensure that parties not represented on the Committee are properly kept in touch with its work.

I know that there is considerable interest in the debate, Mr. Speaker, so I shall draw my remarks to a close. I am sorry that it has not proved possible to reach a generally acceptable arrangement for minor party representation on the Select Committee——

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): Would the Leader of the House be so kind as to give the House his views on why both sides have got together to make a composition of this Committee of a quite appallingly flaccid collection of right hon. and hon. Members because they think that, if they do that, they will get this ridiculous and damaging imposition on the House of cameras operating and observing the House in action? Would the right hon. Gentleman care to comment on the unsuitability of the composition; and what can be done to change it before it is too late?

Mr. Wakeham: I brought this upon myself because when the hon. Gentleman made an almost identical point at business questions a week or so ago I said that I wondered whether he would be here late at night to repeat it. He is here, and my answer is the same. I believe that those nominated by me represent an excellent cross-section of hon. Members, who will do a first-class job. I shall invite the House to approve my nominations in a minute.

I am genuinely sorry that it has not been possible to reach a generally acceptable arrangement for minor party representation on the Select Committee. I am especially sorry if the minor party place, which was intended to be helpful, should become a source of discord. As it is, it seems to me that our priority must be to set up the Committee with as little personal rancour as possible so that it can start its work. For that reason, in addition to the motion standing in my name, I shall support the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Woking and I urge the House to do likewise.

Mr. Speaker: Before I call Back-Bench Members, I think that it would be for the convenience of the House if we had a general debate on this matter. I will put the amendments at the end, when I will ask the right hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) to put his amendment first.

1.20 am

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): I beg to move amendment (a) to the motion, leave out 'twenty-one' and insert 'twenty'.

I am much obliged to you, Mr. Speaker, for that proposition which I am sure will meet with the approval of the House. I do not want to make a long speech or to enter into personalities because the purpose of my amendment is simply to cut the Gordian knot and let us get on with it. It is undesirable that we should be detained late at night splitting hairs about which minor party has the greater say, or about the personalities who should serve on the Committee. What we really want to do is to get on with setting up the Committee so that it can get on with its work.

I understand that it is desirable that that should be started before Easter and I do not suppose that anyone, whichever point of view they take on the general question of the merits of televising, would dissent from the proposition that we should get on with it.

I very much hope that the minor parties will not feel that in some way they are being snubbed or downgraded. If their experience of this House, which they should value, is as great as I think it is, they will not be denied the opportunity to give evidence. I am fairly certain that they will all come to give evidence to the Committee and will not in the least be inhibited by the fact that they are not members of it. They may be encouraged by that, as may other hon. Members who may have valid views to put, without necessarily having the disadvantage of being members of a minor party because the Committee will no doubt be eager to take evidence from all Members of the House, even from the representatives of the professional actors in our midst.

It is a simple proposition. My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has examined the mathematics and

[Mr. Cranley Onslow]

the conventions that bind us. It is quite clear that it would be objectionable to establish a Committee of 22; it appears impossible to establish a Committee of 21; so let us establish a Committee of 20 and let them get on with it without hanging about any more.

1.22 am

Mr. James Molyneaux (Lagan Valley): I beg to move amendment (b), to leave out 'twenty-one' and insert 'twenty-two'.

Tonight, unfortunately, we have an example of the House of Commons making a mockery of its claim to being the protector of minorities and of democracy. We are being invited to set up a Select Committee to consider televising the proceedings of the House.

The motion and the first amendment seek to ensure that only two of the four parts of the United Kingdom shall be represented on the Select Committee. Wales and Northern Ireland are to be deprived of places because they are minorities that can be disregarded. Despite its reputation, the House dislikes minorities. They are inconvenient and different, which is not surprising since Parliament continually legislates to make them different.

The affront to parliamentary democracy arises from another phenomenon. This may help the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds), who raised a point earlier. I refer to the cosy relationship between the two Front Benches. England has to be favoured because it provides the elected majority for the Government, and Scotland must be thrown a bone or two because it provides a solid block of Labour sets. For those reasons, the Front Benches do a deal, and consequently democracy bites the dust.

You will remember, Mr. Speaker, that on 9 February, only a few minutes after the House voted for the proceedings to be televised, my right hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) raised a point of order, pointing out that the broadcasting authorities in Northern Ireland had banned the sound broadcasting of our proceedings. He asked for Northern Ireland representation on the Select Committee.

I shall not be so unfair, Mr. Speaker, as to misinterpret your words: they are there in *Hansard*. You said:

"I am sure that that request will have been heard by those responsible." — [*Official Report*, 9 February; Vol. 127, c. 288.]

I do not doubt that it was heard, but it has not been heeded. Nor, I fear, will many of our representations and submissions be heeded, any more than representations on many an issue from the Unionists, SNP and Welsh Nationalist Benches have been heeded in past months and years.

I wrote to the Leader of the House nominating my right hon. Friend the Member for Strangford. My request, as we see, has been brushed aside. Not only have the two Front Benches declined to nominate him for a place, but, to make doubly sure, they are now removing the place.

This point must exercise all our minds, and I hope that someone will clear the matter up before the end of the debate. I feel that the Leader of the House has the ability and the capacity to so so. If the subject of the debate were a Bill of vital importance to the Government we would understand and accept the need for the Government to be assured of a majority on the Committee. This Committee, however, results from a free vote on an issue that cannot possibly affect the standing or authority of Her Majesty's Government. Why, then, do the Government insist on adherence to convention and the ratio on Committees? The divide on the Committee will be between those who are for and those who are against television, not between those for and those against the Government. Even the for-and-against balance would not be upset by a membership of 22. As I understand it, the two hon. Members whose names appear in the later amendments would be on opposite sides of the question. They can confirm that.

On behalf of all three parties, I beg the Government to rid themselves of this obsession with dominating the House of Commons and its Committees. To Her Majesty's Opposition, I say that both they and the Government will lose nothing by displaying a little generosity and a little flexibility.

1.27 am

Mr. Anthony Nelson (Chichester): The right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) has spoken with conviction, and I think that the House will understand his reasons for wishing to press the claim for the representation of his party, and Northern Ireland, on the Committee. As a proponent of the principle of broadcasting, however — the only one to speak in the debate so far—I feel that it is important that I, at last, should state my wholehearted support for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

I do not go along with the right hon. Gentleman's view that this should be essentially a Back-Bench and non-partisan, or non-governmental, issue. I believe first that the Government have a legitimate interest in the considerations of the Select Committee and their eventual outcome, and secondly that the way in which such affairs are managed in the House involves the usual channels and a certain amount of organisation and understanding — which, I think, has brought us to the point at which we find ourselves tonight.

While the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) would undoubtedly make an objective and able contributor to the Select Committee's proceedings, he was an opponent of televising, as were the signatories to the amendment proposing him for membership. That would undoubtedly upset the proposed balance of nine to 11.

The House should reflect on the fact that the minority parties have been given an opportunity in the construction of the amendment to get their act together and bring forward a member in addition to the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) to represent the minority parties. The answer was in their hands. I regret that there will not be a representative in addition to the hon. Member for Ross Cromarty and Skye, because there are special considerations in Northern Ireland and, I say to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley), there are particular considerations in Wales. Those considerations are important and should be drawn to the attention of the Select Committee. However, it is a failure of the minority parties, rather than the failure of the House, in not getting their act together and enabling themselves to be put on the Select Committee since the opportunity was generously provided by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House by facilitating that provision in the terms of his motion.

Rev. Martin Smyth (Belfast, South): I voted in favour of the motion and my right hon. Friend the Member for

Strangford (Mr. Taylor) voted against it. Therefore, it would be wrong to draw a red herring and say that my right hon. Friend would be speaking against televising, thereby upsetting the balance because the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) takes entirely the other position. We are saying that on the Select Committee there should be a representative from Wales and a representative from Northern Ireland, because, as the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) said, there are particular issues affecting those areas.

Mr. Nelson: I understand the point made by the hon. Gentleman. I believe that whether they be proponents or opponents of the principle, all hon. Members whose names have been considered for inclusion on the Committee will do a workmanlike job within the remit that the House has set and will wish to present a report that will command the respect and authority of the House. However, the complexion of the Committee is important in terms of the respect it can command, not only within the House but outside. Regard has to be given to whether Members voted for or against the principle.

Mr. John D. Taylor (Strangford): I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that, if the two hon. Members who have been proposed were appointed to the Committee and it had 22 members, there would still not be an anti-Government majority. Since each of the two Members proposed holds a different view on televising the House, it would not change the overall attitude of the Committee.

Mr. Nelson: I understand the point made by the right hon. Gentleman, but I do not accept it for two reasons. First, the House has to decide what is a reasonable working size for a Select Committee.—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] That is my view. I have to say that 21 members is a considerable size and, of course, 22 would be larger. Secondly, with respect to the right hon. Member for Strangford, I do not accept the argument that the balance will not be altered. The representation of 11 proponents and nine opponents on a Select Committee will almost exactly reflect the proportions voting when the motion was brought before the House. If the representation were to be increased significantly, the balance would be changed and the House should have regard to that.

For those reasons, I believe that the House would do well to take the advice of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. He has had an exceedingly difficult task in trying to strike the right balance and in seeking to take into account the views of all minority parties, the Opposition and opponents and proponents. Therefore, I hope that the House will support his motion.

1.34 am

Mr. Andrew Faulds (Warley, East): We are discussing tonight the setting up of the Committee that is to examine the intention to introduce the cameras to observe what goes on in House of Commons and to convey to the public outside an immediate impression of how we conduct our business. It is really disgraceful that this issue, which is going to involve a change in the procedures of the House and which will affect very gravely the conduct of hon. Members in the House, should be discussed at this time of night. We started this debate at four minutes past 1 in the morning. Instead of a full House to discuss this issue, we have the payroll vote. That is not much in evidence at the moment, but after midnight when the Government need it, the payroll vote comes out like worms from the wainscotting, and undoubtedly they will be here when the vote is called.

Of course, we have on our side a collection of the inexperienced, the young Members, who really have not yet learned how the House conducts its business, and many of whom do not frequently utter in the House. They —eager beavers— have turned up tonight either out of their own keenness or because it is a good idea to keep in cahoots with the present leadership of the party because the present leadership of the party thinks that this would be a healthy introduction. These young Members, with their lack of experience, think they are all going to become national stars overnight. With most of their performances, there is not a hope in hell.

I have to say to my very distinguished leader, for whom I have great affection, that if he thinks he is going to become a star overnight he has an unhappy realisation coming to him, as does the Prime Minister, that that camera moving in closely on them is going to expose them in the cruellest fashion for the public to observe how they behave, both of them, in this small, confined Chamber of ours.

We have got to discuss this issue at this time of night because the expectation of the usual get-together of the two Front Benches is that at this time of night there will be less opposition, Members who would want to speak will not be here because they will be in bed—they have got more sense than to be here at this time of night—and of course because most of them who are going to be here are going to be those who will support the introduction of the cameras.

These timings of debates do not happen by accident. We have very subtle operators in the Government Whips Office. We have somewhat less subtle operators in the Opposition Whips Office. They are more easily—I must not use the word "conned", as it may be unparliamentary —they have a predisposition to have the wool pulled over their eyes, and we have suffered the effects of that since last June. There may be, of course, changes in the future. I am not putting myself forward for that sort of job, not with this crowd.

We have to discuss the composition of this Committee, and I think it is quite insulting that the Government and of course the Opposition Whips and the shadow Leader should decide that we discuss it at this time. But I think what is particularly insulting is that two very distinguished members of the minor parties are going to be excluded by the intention of the Government and with the connivance of the Opposition. May I say the inclusion of those two particular hon. Members would much improve the calibre of the suggested membership of this Committee. They have got more backbone than most of the rest of the collection put together.

I did describe very accurately the intended members of this Committee as a flaccid bunch. I do not retract either word, except I can think of a worse one than bunch. But we had, when we went through the farce of the vote about this matter, a 6:1 majority on our side of the House—in the PPL — for the introduction of the cameras. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Hear, hear."] I hear one lone voice at this time of night. Excellent. We have this disproportion of votes, six to one, for the introduction because pressures had been brought to bear on the young and inexperienced. *[Interruption.]* We do not always get visitations in the Tea Room, as we did 24 hours and 48 hours before this matter

[Mr. Andrew Faulds]

was discussed. But, fairly, the parliamentary Labour party decided that we would have the same proportion on the Committee. Therefore, we have the six Members for and I shall try to be charitable and not mention even their constituencies, let alone their names.

I do not wish to be insulting to one of my young colleagues. Before I make any comment I want to make it clear that whatever I say does not reflect in any way on my admirable young colleague. But, for the shadow Leader to decide, in a clever trick, that he would lessen the opposition, not by choosing my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), who does know something about the procedures of the House and has some experience, to oppose this, or even my admirable hon. Friend the Member for Worthington, who is a procedural specialist—[HON. MEMBERS: "Workington."] He has been a pain in your neck, Mr. Speaker, for many years.

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): Is that "Worthington" as in, "Don't put your daughter on the stage, Mrs. Worthington"?

Mr. Faulds: I am sorry, I did not hear what my hon. Friend said because this loquacious windbag at my side, my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), never stops talking, so I cannot reply. I am sorry, my hand slipped and my Order Paper has hit him on the head. Oh, sorry, I have done it again.

Instead of choosing even a tired old warhorse like the hon. Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) who does have some knowledge of the procedures of the House, who has been here for quite a long time and who knows the tricks of the media men, that hon. Gentleman must be kept off the Committee. Because any one of those three might have been effective in the arguments in Committee, not in opposing the introduction of the cameras but in seeing that proper restraints were laid; seeing that proper regard was given to the House controlling what was done with our proceedings.

What does the clever shadow Leader of the House do? He plays what I can only describe—I have sent him a copy of a letter that I have written to one of his hon. Friends — as a shabby little trick. He has not only cheated the Committee of a proper membership that could have made effective arguments about safeguards, but he has made life very difficult for a young colleague of ours who should not have been treated with such scant disregard. That young hon. Member will know what I mean in a few months' time when he has had to live through the proceedings of the Committee.

Now I shall finish my speech—*[Interruption.]* I have sat up a long time and I shall finish my speech, however much I may be interrupted by my hon. Friends who want to oppose my ideas.

We should have an effective membership in the composition of the Committee because what will be decided by the Committee will affect massively, much more than most of the unthinking Members on both sides of the House have considered, the conduct of Members.

We in the Labour party have a new procedure whereby one has to be reselected. My goodness, won't some of our young lads be eager to prove themselves in this Chamber. With reselection coming up, what better could an hon. Member do than mount a demonstration of his virility or macho-ness as a Member? What will happen to those hon. Members who usually have slight regard for the disciplines of the Chair? Will they be well behaved, better behaved or worse behaved when the cameras come in? We all know the answer to that. The answer is that they will be much worse behaved. We have all been guilty of it, even those sitting near and dear to me.

We shall also find that the effect of the introduction of the cameras will inevitably alter the procedures of the House.

Mr. Wilson: Good.

Mr. Faulds: "Good", some young fellow shouts. The traditions of the House and the experience of the many hundreds of Members over many, many years have produced the procedures of the House. Some young whippersnapper says, "Good", when there is a comment about changing the procedures of the House. The procedures of the House are going to be changed to the damage of the conduct of its business. If most of my hon. Friends on both sides of the House have not considered that, they should start doing so pretty quickly.

Finally, I have to make a comment about you, Mr. Speaker. Your life and your work in the House will be made insufferable. You will be inundated with exercises of display, Standing Order No. 20 applications, and demonstrations such as we had from an ill-judged young Scot the other day. The life of the Speaker in the Chamber and his problems with discipline will be enormously magnified.

When we introduce this—no doubt the Government and our Front Bench will carry this business—when it is introduced, let me give a little advice to the House. The intention of the Committee is probably that we shall have a short-lived experiment. Please, please, do not have a short-lived experiment.

Television cameras are in the House of Lords, recording and reporting what the Peers do and say. The media boys have conducted that experiment with considerable control and responsibility. Once the cameras come in here on a six-month experiment, we will have the same soft-glove responsible treatment. We shall then vote for the introduction of this ghastly innovation. What will happen? The media men will then be off. We shall have let them off the leash. They will do what they want with what goes on in this Chamber. It will not be just the responsible ITN people. It will not be just the responsible BBC people. Satellite, cable and God knows what will have a right to report what goes on in this place. How will they report it?

I urge my colleagues that if the cameras come in here for an experimental period, make it at least a year. Make it preferably a year and a half or two years because in that time those irresponsible people up there who want this place for entertainment and not for information to the public will have managed to forget the restraints that they think will help them to get the experiment carried. We will then see how they will treat this place. Give them their head, let us have a one-and-a-half year experiment. I will take any money with any of my right hon. and hon. Friends that after that long period every single hon. Member in the House will want to get the damn things out again.

1.47 am

Mrs. Margaret Ewing (Moray): Not having the theatrical training of the hon. Member for Warley, East

(Mr. Faulds), I shall not try to emulate him, but I shall make two comments on his speech. First, in arguing against the advance of television into this place, he could apply those arguments equally to the use of the written word, and I disagree fundamentally with him. Secondly, I thank the hon. Gentleman for the very strong compliments that he paid to the hon. Members whom we should like to see taking their places on the Select Committee on the televising of the House.

In the light of the remarks of the Leader of the House, I make it clear that no SNP Member opposes the experiment of televising the House. Indeed, we are the only group in the House to record a 100 per cent. vote for the televising of the House. One of the reasons why we were willing to participate in that debate and to advance the cause of televising the House was recorded in the words of the Leader of the House on 9 February in column 207 of *Hansard* when he gave a very strong indication that the rights of minorities in the House would be observed.

It was interesting that the right hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) said that the exclusion of minority parties from the Committee would not deny us our democratic rights. I suggest that there is clearly a distinct difference between participating in the discussions of the Committee and presenting evidence. If the right hon. Member for Woking thinks about it, he will recognise that clear distinction. Why should minority parties be denied the fundamental right to participate in this Committee which is to consider what is to happen in this place not just at the end of the 20th century but in the 21st century?

The comments of the hon. Member for Chichester (Mr. Nelson) defy logic. He said that the minority parties should get their act together and that they must not upset the balance of the Committee, but the right hon. Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) and I have already pointed out that the appointment of my hon. Friend the Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) and the right hon. Member for Strangford would in no way upset the balance of the Committee. The hon. Member for Chichester said that the House must decide the size of the Committee—the 20, 21 or 22 issue. The House must take account of the views of hon. Members. The hon. Gentleman said that 11 proponents and nine opponents is more acceptable than 12 proponents and 10 opponents, but I do not agree. Perhaps it is my Scottish education, but I cannot understand the difference between 11 and nine and 12 and 10.

The televising of the House is a new concept, and we should therefore adopt a new approach. The convention is that there should be a Government majority on Committees, but this is not a Government Committee. It is a Committee of the House of Commons. It is a question of democracy because the decision was taken after a free vote in this place.

Mr. Onslow: If the hon. Lady is saying that the Government party is not entitled to be represented in accordance with its numerical strength, why does she assert so loudly her claim, as a member of a minority party and on behalf of the other minority parties, to greater pre-eminence?

Mrs. Ewing: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstands me. I said that there was a free vote in the House of Commons. Individual Members decided how to vote according to their conscience, not according to their party Whip. Therefore the Committee should reflect the views of individual Members.

Mr. Allan Rogers (Rhondda): If the hon. Lady follows the logic of her argument, does she not accept that if the vote was on an individual basis there are 630 hon. Members who cannot serve on the Committee? How can she possibly argue for representation according to party when she says that the matter was decided on a free vote? If a Welsh Member were to sit on the Committee, it would probably be a member of the Labour party rather than a member of a minority party.

Mrs. Ewing: I intend to pursue that argument. If the hon. Gentleman had wished a Labour Member of Parliament with a Welsh constituency to serve on the Committee, he should have pursued it through the usual channels, which the minority parties cannot usually use.

I believe that the rights of minority parties are fundamental. Any democracy is judged by how it treats minorities. We may dislike minorities and we may disagree with them. On many occasions I have disagreed with the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux), but I respect his right and that of his party to express their point of view.

There should be 22 seats on the Committee. That would allow three minority representatives to serve on it. We ignore the rights and the aspirations of minorities at our peril. History shows us what happens when the rights of minorities are ignored.

It is said that it is a convention of the House that all its rules and regulations should be observed. It has been argued that it is a convention of the House to nominate a Committee. In this case the agreement was that there should be a Committee of 21 members. Yet the Committee of Selection refused to nominate 21. That, I understand, defies the normal convention of the House. It indicates to me that the Committee of Selection was not prepared to bite the bullet. It was not prepared to decide as between the minorities within the House of Commons who should be nominated to the Committee. It seems wrong to use the argument of convention to defend the Government and then attack us because we are looking for a place on that Committee to support our rights.

Mr. Wakeham: To be fair to my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Sir M. Fox) and the Committee of Selection, the nominations came from me, not from that Committee, which did not consider these names at all.

Mrs. Ewing: In that case, I make it clear that the Leader of the House was not prepared to bite the bullet and decide which Member should serve on the Committee.

It may surprise hon. Members to learn that one of the suggestions that was passed on to my hon. Friends and the hon. Members on the Bench behind me was that we should toss a coin to decide which Member should be on the Committee. That is a travesty of democracy and justice, and denies the rights of all hon. Members.

I urge all hon. Members to remember the rights of minorities and of individuals, if they are genuinely concerned to make the Committee work so that we can reach the right conclusions on how the experiment should be conducted. There is no way in which the appointment of the right hon. Member for Strangford and my hon. Friend the Member for Caernarfon could adversely affect the balance of the Committee.

[Mrs. Ewing]

I urge hon. Members most sincerely to search their consciences. Do they believe in the rights of minorities or do they not? Democracy is based on the rights of minorities and individuals and that is what our joint amendment is about. I ask the House to support the suggestion that there be a Committee of 22 to take account of all views in the House.

1.57 am

Mr. Robert G. Hughes (Harrow, West): I have listened carefully to what the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) has just said. She accused my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of failing to bite the bullet, but in reality it is the minor parties who have failed to bite the bullet. They were given the opportunity, along with the hon. Members from the Ulster Unionist party, to have a representative on the Committee. Between them they could have reached a decision as to who should represent their interests. They had a responsibility to the people who elected them to ensure that they were represented on the Committee. They have failed; they have not even tried to reach a decision.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Ulster Unionist Members did reach a conclusion—that we both have an equal right to serve on the Committee. Does the hon. Gentleman not believe in equality?

Mr. Hughes: I think, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. Lady gives away her point in response to what I said. A decision had to be made. There is such a thing as the mathematics of the composition of the House. We have rights, too. We have a substantial majority of Members. Therefore, we want to be represented. I refer not just to Members who, like me, voted in favour of televising, but those of my hon. Friends who voted against as well. They have rights, too, and they are entitled to representation.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones (Ynys Môn): The hon. Gentleman talks about rights. Is it right that these parties should have been totally excluded? There will be many Conservative members, there will be members from the Labour party, but there will be no members of Plaid Cymru or the SNP or the Ulster Unionists.

Mr. Hughes: The hon. Gentleman is quite right. It is not right that those parties should not be represented on the Committee, but it is entirely their own fault and they have only themselves to blame. They should be ashamed of themselves for wasting the time of the House at this hour and for holding up the establishment of this important Select Committee.

Mr. John D. Taylor: Is it entirely the fault of the two minority parties involved in this debate that Wales and Northern Ireland are excluded from the Committee?

Mr. Hughes: All they had to do was to nominate someone to serve. That hon. Member would have been on the Committee already, we would not be having this debate and the establishment of the Select Committee would not have been held up for so long.

I have one more point to make. Members of Opposition parties have said on several occasions that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House gave a commitment that all parties would be represented. *Hansard* shows that he did not make that commitment. What he said has been misrepresented by hon. Members. I shall quote what was said:

> "**Mrs. Margaret Ewing** (Moray): Would the Leader of the House expect such a Select Committee to have adequate representation from all parties?
>
> **Mr. Wakeham:** . . . I envisage that it would have as wide a representation of all shades of opinion in all parties in the House, but I cannot give the absolute undertaking for which the hon. Lady asks." —[*Official Report*, 9 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. 207.]

No one reading that could believe that my right hon. Friend was saying that all parties would be represented.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that there are eight minority parties in the House of Commons? Does he believe that one in eight is adequate representation for those minorities' views?

Mr. Hughes: The minority parties have tried the patience of the House on this matter. They must understand that it is their fault if they are under-represented. They have failed their electorate and the House.

2.3 am

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): First, I take issue with my hon. Friend the Member for Warley, East (Mr. Faulds) on his comments about my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Illsley), who is on the Committee on the basis of interest and merit and who certainly does not deserve to be showered with sour grapes by the old thespian himself before the Committee has even been established.

Mr. Faulds: My hon. Friend must really not take on an old timer with such rubbish. I checked: my young colleague, for whom I have great respect, was asked, and did not volunteer, to sit on the Committee.

Mr. Eric Illsley (Barnsley, Central): As the hon. Member in question, may I make it clear that I was not asked to serve on the said Committee?

Mr. Faulds: In that case, I withdraw my observation. That was my misunderstanding.

Mr. Wilson: I am pleased to have been able to perform a conciliatory act.

Some time ago, the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) began the racial myth that has run through the entire debate. He said that bones were thrown to Scots Labour Members because of their predominance on the Opposition Benches. That is patently untrue. A proportionate representation on the Committee would put three or four Labour Scots Members on it—but there is only one, and that is me. I am on it not because I am a Scot, but because I take an intelligent interest in broadcasting and journalism.

Mr. Faulds: An inexperienced interest.

Mr. Wilson: The real nonsense of the selective use of the words "protecting minorities" comes from the Ulster Unionists, who suddenly appear as one splendid, united force to put forward their nominee. As I understand it, at any other time in the House, they do not even sit all on one side of the House. There are popular Unionists and unpopular Unionists; democratic Unionists and undemocratic Unionists—*[Interruption.]*

For the right hon. Member for Lagan Valley to stand up as the standard bearer of Unionism and say that his purpose in life is to defend minorities is stretching credibility.

Mr. Molyneaux: I appreciate the hon. Gentleman giving way. I hope that his knowledge of Ulster Unionism is not a reflection of his understanding of television and broadcasting, because then he will not serve very well on the Select Committee.

The Ulster Unionists sit on this side of the House and we are united. If the hon. Gentleman had listened to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Strangford (Mr. Taylor) on Saturday, he would have realised that my right hon. Friend has defended the rights of minorities not only tonight but on other occasions.

Mr. Wilson: The right hon. Gentleman merely demonstrates the point. If he is speaking only for the Unionists who usually sit on the Opposition Benches—[HON. MEMBERS: "Always."]—he then does not speak for the Unionists who usually sit on the Government side of the House. The hon. Member for Antrim, North (Rev. Ian Paisley), who leads the Democratic Unionists, does so.

I am very interested in this sudden outbreak of unity. I assume that in the European Parliament they would all sit with Monsieur Le Pen, if they were all that united, because that is where the nominee put forward tonight usually sits.

There are eight minority parties in the House. There is not a member of the Social Democratic and Labour party in the Chamber tonight. The idea that there is a voice for Northern Ireland that would speak in the Select Committee for Northern Ireland strikes me as preposterous. Equally, I believe that the outbreak of unity——

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Will the hon. Gentleman give way on that point?

Mr. Wilson: No, I will not. [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] No, the hon. Lady has had her chance. I am trying to debate.

Equally, the unity of Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National party on this issue rings less than true. I am sure that the hon. Member for Moray (Mrs. Ewing) does not need reminding that if she and the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) had not defied the wishes of Plaid Cymru in 1979, they might be a big party instead of a small party—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] I believe that there is a strong case for the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) to take his place on the Select Committee because I believe that there is a case for linguistic minorities, apart from anything else, being represented on the Select Committee. But he and other hon. Members on that side do no good for the argument by lumping themselves together as a united party of convenience in order to try to divide the Committee along racial lines rather than along the lines of genuine interest within the debate and along the sides of the House.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Will the hon. Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Wilson) not accept that his jibe about racism was really very unworthy of him, and that in Northern Ireland and Wales, which he has accepted in terms of a linguistic problem, very different issues come into play with regard to television and broadcasting? It is not a racist matter at all. It is a different issue.

Mr. Wilson: I very strongly deny that I said anything about racism.

Mrs. Ewing: You did! This is ridiculous.

Mr. Wilson: What I said, as I am sure *Hansard* will show, is "along racial lines" or lines of national identity. That is not what the Select Committee is about.

Mr. Wallace: It does involve it.

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) says that that issue is involved. But the precise point is that, because 12 hon. Members come from Northern Ireland, the idea that on an issue like this they speak with one voice—[HON. MEMBERS: "There are 17."]—or that 17 hon. Members from Northern Ireland speak with one voice for Northern Ireland on an issue like this is nonsense. I do not think that the House should fall for that tonight.

This Committee should be formed in the way suggested, and while it would be better if there were two minority party places, if they cannot agree among themselves, let there be one minority party place. There will be plenty of other Committees on which all eight minority parties will be able to fight for the right to have a place.

2.10 am

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): I welcome the fact that we are having this debate, albeit at such a late hour. I welcome the proposal to establish the Committee and I welcome its membership as suggested by the Leader of the House. I recognise that there are eight minority parties in the House and that not all of them can be represented on the Committee. It will be necessary, therefore, to establish the sort of machinery—and make sure it works—about which the Leader of the House spoke so that the interests of the various countries and regions are properly represented, bearing in mind the different ways in which their broadcasting authorities are organised and work. I pledge that we shall do our level best, whatever the outcome of the voting tonight, to ensure that all parts of the United Kingdom are properly dealt with.

It is equally important that the full range of opinion in the Hoise is reflected on the Committee, for that spread of opinion varies from those who do not want televising at any price to some who would have it at almost any price, with the whole spectrum of views between the two, and I hope that the Committee will represent them all. If those on this side who are not directly represented wish to make representations through Committee Members, they will be welcome to do so, and I have no doubt that the Leader of the House will make provision for that to happen on the Government Benches.

For all those reasons, I welcome the proposal and hope that we will get on quickly so that the cameras can be introduced in October.

2.12 am

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Hon. Members in all parts of the House want the Select Committee to report rapidly. To that end, it is to be hoped that its members will not find it necessary to travel here, there and everywhere. For example, there should be no need for them to visit New Zealand to view television there. My fear is that if they went that far they could obtain a world class ticket that would enable them to stop off anywhere en route.

[Mr. Bob Cryer]

I hope that the Committee will not find it necessary to watch television in Italy, like the members of the Home Affairs Select Committee, or to visit Boston, Philadelphia and other American cities to view television, as the Employment Select Committee Members have done, spending several hundred thousand pounds in the process.

I urge all the members of the Committee to recognise that the issue concerns this House and no other. They should tackle the matter with urgency and resist the temptation — to which virtually every other Select Committee, apart from the Statutory Instruments Committee, has given way—to join the travel club.

Mr. Dobson: I think that it will be unnecessary for this Committee to go abroad. It will have the advantage, over all other Select Committees, of having videos of the televising of other chambers, and they can be seen in this building.

Before my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) comes over too virtuous, I urge him to recall a recent meeting of the House of Commons Commission at which we agreed to vote considerable funds to permit him to entertain foreign visitors, under the aegis of the Statutory Instruments Select Committee.

Question put, That amendment (a) be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 153, Noes 35.

Division No. 241] **[2.15 am**

AYES

Amess, David
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Batiste, Spencer
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon Alan *(Plym'th S'n)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Darling, Alistair
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Durant, Tony
Eastham, Ken
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Fisher, Mark
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Freeman, Roger
Galbraith, Sam
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Golding, Mrs Llin
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Graham, Thomas
Greenway, John *(Ryedale)*
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Grist, Ian
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hanley, Jeremy
Harris, David
Haynes, Frank
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Home Robertson, John
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Jackson, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lewis, Terry
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLeish, Henry
McLoughlin, Patrick
Madden, Max
Major, Rt Hon John
Maples, John
Mates, Michael
Maxton, John
Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Michael, Alun
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
O'Neill, Martin
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Patten, John *(Oxford W)*
Portillo, Michael
Prescott, John
Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rogers, Allan
Ruddock, Joan
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Soley, Clive
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Ward, John
Wareing, Robert N.
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilson, Brian
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Sir Anthony Grant and
Mr. Anthony Nelson.

NOES

Beggs, Roy
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Cryer, Bob
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Faulds, Andrew
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Gale, Roger
Janman, Tim
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Ieuan *(Ynys Môn)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kennedy, Charles
Livsey, Richard
McCusker, Harold
Maginnis, Ken
Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Nellist, Dave
Primarolo, Dawn
Salmond, Alex
Sims, Roger
Skinner, Dennis
Smyth, Rev Martin *(Belfast S)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Tracey, Richard
Walker, A. Cecil *(Belfast N)*
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. William Ross and
Mr. Andrew Welsh.

Question accordingly agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That a Select Committee of not more than twenty Members be appointed to consider the implementation of the Resolution of the House of 9th February in favour of the holding of an experiment in the public broadcasting of its proceedings by television and to make recommendations.

That seven be the Quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers and records; to sit notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House; to adjourn from place to place; and to report from time to time.

That the Committee have power to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's order of reference.

That Mr. Graham Bright, Mr. Frank Dobson, Mr. Don Dixon, Miss Janet Fookes, Mr. Roger Gale, Sir Philip Goodhart, Mr. Alastair Goodlad, Sir Anthony Grant, Mr.

Bruce Grocott, Mr. David Harris, Mr. Robert G. Hughes, Mr. David Hunt, Mr. Eric Illsley, Mr. Charles Kennedy, Mr. Anthony Nelson, Mr. Merlyn Rees, Ms. Joan Ruddock, Mr. Richard Tracey, Mr. John Wakeham and Mr. Brian Wilson be members of the Committee.

PETITION

Health and Safety Executive (Dundee Office)

2.24 am

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I have a petition from the citizens of Dundee and elsewhere in Scotland. It has been organised through the tremendous efforts of one of my constituents, Miss Margaret Malcolm, who has gathered more than 3,000 signatures to date, with more to follow. The petition opposes the closure of the Dundee office of the Health and Safety Executive and calls upon the House to use its influence to persuade the HSE to stop that closure and to retain the office to maintain health and safety standards at work in Dundee and elsewhere in the east of Scotland. I commend the petition to the House.

To lie upon the Table.

Tin Mining (Cornwall)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

2.26 am

Mr. Matthew Taylor (Truro): I welcome this opportunity to discuss a matter of great importance to all of us who live in Cornwall, but especially to the families who rely on the employment that the tin mines provide in Cornwall. As a relatively recently elected Member, this is my first opportunity to raise the issue of tin mining in Cornwall, and I regret that it should be in such circumstances.

As I look back at past debates, I am impressed by the all-party effort to save what is recognised as a community lifestyle and a tradition in Cornwall that must not be lost. I regret the absence of the hon. Member for Falmouth and Camborne (Mr. Mudd), who, I understand, is unwell and unable to attend. Although he may not agree with everything that I shall say, I am sure that he would join me in regretting the loss of 200 jobs and in seeking assurances for the future of a valued Cornish asset.

Some may question how far the Government are responsible, and perhaps I can enlighten them a little. We are not here to discuss the efficiency of the work force or of the management. If we were, we would hear nothing but praise. Equally, the internal dynamics of the tin market are not the immediate problem. The expectations of 1986 have been largely fulfilled. I understand that the investment programme and productivity and cost-cutting are on target and, although the dollar price remains low, that is not out of line with the projections on which the 1986 package was put together. I hope that the Minister can confirm all that.

Mr. David Harris (St. Ives): Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the price of tin is much lower than most people forecast at the time of the crisis? The price is down to £3,755 a tonne, which is way below what many thought it might be at this stage. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that that is the dilemma facing Rio Tinto Zinc and the tin industry in Cornwall?

Mr. Taylor: If the hon. Gentleman will allow me, I shall answer that point later. The hon. Gentleman has highlighted the fact that something has gone astray. The cause, as I believe that the Minister can confirm, is essentially the exchange rate between the dollar and the pound for a commodity priced in dollars. The Prime Minister's commitment to a free market exchange rate has dramatically increased the company's losses. With the costs wholly in sterling, but with tin traded at dollar prices it is almost wholly that element of the calculations which has gone wrong. There is nothing that the work force or the management could have been asked to do.

The central problem is the Government's decision to allow the pound to appreciate significantly. The Minister will know that the world price of tin is set in dollars, so the effect of the Government's exchange rate policy has been to force RTZ to sell Cornish tin at artificially deflated sterling prices. Equally, the Minister will be aware of the disagreement within the Government about exchange rate strategy.

Even given all that, obvious questions arise. Did the Department of Trade and Industry project exchange rate values in 1986? If so, what were the projections on which

[Mr. Taylor]

the package was based and—crucial to the future of the mine—on what projections is the new package based? Does the current rescue operation assume that exchange rates will stay at present levels, that they will rise or that they will fall? On what basis is there a prospect of exchange rates allowing continued viable tin mining? If the Minister answers nothing else, I hope that he will put that essential piece of the jigsaw into place.

Whatever the answers, one thing seems clear: RTZ's difficulties and the prospective loss of 200 jobs are due not to inefficient labour, restrictive practices or incompetent management but to exchange rate policy. Had the Government followed our advice and joined the European monetary system this might not have happened. I cannot say that definitely would not have happened, but the stability of the EMS and lower exchange rates would have been of considerable help to the mine. The reality is that the experiment in free market exchange rates policy has affected the viability of the mine. As I understand it from all sides involved in the agreement, that is the key difficulty that has arisen.

I regret that it is not possible, in the early hours of the morning, to get a response direct from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. I always welcome the opportunity to hear from the Under-Secretary of State, as I did in my last Adjournment debate, but the agreement has been negotiated line by line by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and it would obviously help if he could respond to my comments. However, he is not here, so perhaps the Minister can help the miners in one particular respect, which concerns consultation.

The miners who are about to lose their jobs have a great deal to be angry and uncertain about, and I ask the Government, RTZ and the new management to make every effort now to make amends for the lack of consultation. The work force has not created insurmountable difficulties; it has not brought about a breakdown in negotiations. In fact, at a meeting tonight, the work force again held back from any action that might put the rescue in jeopardy. Cornwall is renowned for its good industrial relations, but there are limits even to the patience of our Cornish miners.

A wage freeze, followed by redundancies, followed by an 8 per cent. reduction in salaries for the remaining work force would in many other parts of the country be a sure-fire recipe for industrial chaos and discontent in subsequent months, yet the Cornish miners have reacted with restraint. Tonight I was telephoned by a miner who was obviously distressed by what he has been told he has to accept, on which he has not been consulted. He has been offered a redundancy package of £3,300. In 1986 he was offered £4,500 and other miners who have dedicated more years to mining are likely to lose £5,000 to £6,000 as a result of not accepting redundancy when they were fighting for the survival of the mine. If that is what is necessary, so be it, but at least the details could be spelt out, to explain to the work force why it is necessary.

The miners clearly worked hard to save their industry in 1986. They approached the European Community and agreed a freeze in their salaries. They were involved throughout with management, the DTI and their MPs. They feel let down and left out in the cold on this occasion.

In his announcement the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said:

"Over the past few weeks, I have had several discussions with RTZ and my officials have been holding detailed talks with RTZ and the management of Carnon Consolidated Ltd."—[*Official Report*, 22 March 1988; Vol. 130, c. *63*.]

There is no mention of discussion with the work force or the unions. They were not even told the scale of the problem that was being faced.

While one can understand some of the industrial logic, one must also recognise its impact and the difficulties that it will cause the workers their distress and the feeling that they have been let down, given their past record.

The work force and indeed, most of Cornwall were aware of rumours regarding their future employment, even before the management had talked to them, but even then it was not open to negotiation. There was no consultation at any point with them. The work force should now be reassured—and I hope that they can now be reassured—that there will be negotiations in the future and, more immediately, told just how much room for negotiation they have before the April deadline for agreement.

In particular, we have been told that this is a management and employee buy-out. I ask the Minister to give details in his reply of the 20 per cent. interest to be purchased on behalf of the employees. What rights will the employees have over those shares? Will that give them voting rights in the future running of the company?

I understand that the shares will be held in a trust. As I am sure the Minister knows, the Liberal party has long supported employee share ownership. I should like to be convinced—I am sure that the workers would like to be convinced—that that is what we will see at Carnon Consolidated, but we do not even know the details of the package.

What of those details? Where are they and can the Minister elaborate on them? Also what of the future and the 200 jobs that are likely to go? Is it the case that a total of 200 jobs must be lost, and if that is so, are there no alternative ways of making the cost savings that the job losses are meant to produce? If we are to accept job losses on something approaching that scale, what special efforts will the Government direct to helping those unemployed people? In London 200 job losses may not sound a lot, but in an area of rural deprivation, with opportunities that are few and—quite literally—far between, 200 job losses are a major blow. As the Minister well knows, for every job that goes directly in mining, one or perhaps two more are lost in associated areas, from corner shops to commercial suppliers of the miners.

This afternoon I asked the Minister of State, Department of Employment what special help was being directed to areas of rural unemployment, compared to the sums being poured into areas of urban deprivation as the Prime Minister frequently repeats. He answered:

"my Department is playing its part with other interested Departments".

Later, the Secretary of State for Scotland came forward with yet more special proposals for urban areas. There is a stark contrast between the special proposals for the urban areas, and not much more than good words for the rural areas. The true answer, I fear, is that there is precious little directed specifically to rural areas of deprivation by comparison.

However, it is possible to remedy that, and a start could be made by reviewing the assisted area status boundaries. The Minister will recall that this is the point I raised in our previous debate. I do not propose to reopen the question for the whole of Truro and St. Austell, but I do make a

special plea for the area around the mines, and especially in relation to the United Downs industrial site which was on the verge of success with council backing when the grants were withdrawn. This seems an opportune moment for reassessing that.

It is the luck of the draw that that industrial estate is on the wrong side of the boundary. I hope that the Minister will be prepared to pursue the possibility of reviewing that anomaly, as the Minister of State said earlier that he will look into the matter with his colleagues. Proceeding with such a change would show that the Government are concerned not only for those who continue at the mine, but for the future of those who may lose their jobs. The cost to the Government would be tiny compared to the recent tax cuts or privatisation of Rover or, I greatly suspect, compared to the money that has already been put into the mine.

While the Minister considers his response, perhaps he will tell me whether the Government made any approach to Europe at any stage to establish whether any help might be available from the Community. Surely there may be European funds available both to help the mine and to help those who may lose their jobs. I hope that the Minister can confirm that he has pursued all possibilities and what the response has been.

Above all, I hope that the Minister can elaborate on the Government's long-term view of the future for tin production in this country. Specifically, do they stand by their view in 1986, that tin mining in this country is of strategic importance, and, of course, vital to jobs in my county? I hope that the Minister will reaffirm the Government's commitment to, and long-term interest in, the future of Cornish tin mining.

The Minister may be inclined to respond with a list of previous investments in tin mining, and to tell us that this is not a cut but a saving in jobs. Or he may be inclined to do what he did in the last Adjournment debate to which he responded, and reel off figures for national unemployment and so forth. That is not what we are looking for, or what the work force is looking for. We want specific answers, clarifying what are still many mysteries. The point was made repeatedly tonight at the meeting of the unions.

The fact remains that the joint Government-RTZ agreement for a five-year programme has been stopped short. The exchange rate policy has proved too great a burden. Many angry miners met tonight to ask, why, after their co-operation and acceptance with minimal negotiation, and their struggle to stick to an agreement for a full five-year programme — which they have done — the Government have apparently sold them short in that long-term commitment.

2.40 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs (Mr. John Butcher): It is customary to congratulate an hon. Member who has secured an Adjournment debate, and who has had the good fortune to do so through winning a ballot. Tonight, I congratulate the hon. Member for Truro (Mr. Taylor) not only on his success in securing the debate, but on being able to follow up so quickly last week's announcement of the management buyout of RTZ's Cornish tin-mining operations.

As the hon. Gentleman rightly said, this has been an all-party issue from the outset. The representations made to the Department of Trade and Industry — some two years ago, when the original question became a crisis, and subsequently — have been carried forward by members of all parties. Few individual industrial issues have been addressed with such intensity — in terms of time, commitment and concern, and in terms of hard cash — by the present ministerial team at the DTI, and indeed by their predecessors when the crisis came to a head. The hon. Gentleman referred to several of the matters that he identified in his application to you, Mr. Speaker, on 23 March for a debate under Standing Order No. 20, and in his early-day motion 879.

Before I turn to the specific points raised by the hon. Gentleman about the new arrangements, I should like to recall briefly the arrangements made in 1986, which form a backdrop to the current position.

The collapse of the International Tin Council's buffer stock operations in October 1985 led to a rapid drop in the price of tin. Tin-mining companies around the world were faced with some very difficult decisions, and within the United Kingdom Cornish tin operations were curtailed. Several approaches were made to the Department of Trade and Industry for financial assistance to enable companies concerned to see their way through the period of difficulty before tin prices recovered. Attention was focused on capital projects that would reduce unit costs. After careful consideration of several proposals which companies put to the Department, it became clear that only the proposals by RTZ's subsidiary Carnon Consolidated Ltd. offered an acceptable prospect of long-term success.

That was the background against which the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, my right hon. Friend the Member for Southend, West, Mr. Channon, now Secretary of State for Transport announced on 8 August 1986 a package to assist Carnon with a capital programme aimed at the reduction of its production costs. That programme was estimated to cost £31 million over a period of five years.

I ask the hon. Gentleman to keep that figure in mind when he talks about the number of jobs that have been preserved, and the number of jobs that we hope will still be preserved. It is an immensely generous settlement, in recognition of the very special conditions of Cornwall and the tin mines, and also in recognition of the all-party support, not least for the strong social reasons put forward.

I think that I can say that Cornishmen have a good friend in the Government, and that our generosity, while not necessarily unprecedented — that would be too strong a word — was certainly considerable.

Mr. Harris: As one who took part in the consultations leading up to that offer, and as the person who arranged the meeting with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, will my hon. Friend accept from me that without that help there would be no mining of tin in Cornwall today? That is an undoubted fact. Talk about the Government having sold the miners of Cornwall down the river does not stand up to examination.

Mr. Butcher: I agree with my hon. Friend. We start tonight's debate against a figure of 700 jobs. I am sure that the hon. Member for Truro and my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris) regret the potential loss of 200 jobs. However, we would not have had those 700 jobs to consider tonight had we not been so immensely

[Mr. Butcher]

generous with the package of measures that was put together with considerable support from the predecessor of the hon. Member for Truro, from my hon. Friend the Member for St. Ives, and from our colleagues representing Cornish seats.

The assistance was to be provided in the form of an interest-free loan of up to £15 million, together with Government guarantees of commercial loans of up to £10 million. The commercial loans and the Government loan were to be repaid from the profits to be generated by Carnon Consolidated Ltd. if the project proved successful.

When the scheme was announced, redundancy notices had been issued to the 760 employees who remained at the two mines out of 1,000 or so employed at the start of the tin crisis. The assistance was expected to secure the employment of at least 640 people. In fact employment has continued at a higher level—some 720 in recent weeks.

Both RTZ Corporation and the Department have been watching closely the development of the project and the course of the tin price. The hon. Member for Truro was right to focus on that as a major factor. The capital works envisaged in 1986 have progressed and, as a result, there has been progress towards achieving the necessary cost reductions incorporated in the 1986 project.

The critical factor for the long-term future of the operations has always been the balance between costs and the price at which the mines are able to sell their tin. Regrettably, the sterling tin price has not shown a sustained recovery from the low level of £3,420 per tonne, which it reached in 1986. Having recovered to £4,670 per tonne in December 1986, the price has since fallen back and is currently below £3,800. I have to say that currency changes are on the margin of the totality of that movement. As the hon. Gentleman will appreciate, that has put the business under considerable pressure.

Mr. Matthew Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Butcher: I am hoping to reply to all the hon. Gentleman's points. I will give way to a brief intervention.

Mr. Taylor: The Minister has explained the fluctuations in the price, but can he elaborate on what the expectations of price were in dollar and sterling terms? Is it not the case that, compared with the projections on which the proposals in 1986 were accepted, the only sanction that is out of line in a major way is as a result of the exchange rate?

Mr. Butcher: I hope to come to that point and to look at the question of stocks and the effect that they have had on the price. I shall do my best to make my own informed hunch—I put it no stronger—on what the pundits are saying might be the expected movement of the price in the immediate future.

As the hon. Gentleman will know, tin ores are found in a number of countries around the world. Some of the deposits are exploited by alluvial methods, which tend to be relatively low cost. Others are found in hard rock and have to be worked by mining methods that are relatively high cost. The Cornish tin deposits are of that kind.

The currency factors flow from the fact that tin is widely traded in dollar terms. The sterling tin price has fallen latterly in response to movements in the dollar-pound exchange rate. In the longer term a significant recovery in the tin price, both dollars and pounds, is widely expected. The timing remains uncertain.

It is against such a background of tin prices that RTZ has reassessed Carnon's prospects. Moreover, from RTZ's standpoint, Carnon is a small mining operation which has required considerable senior management attention, without showing the potential rewards to merit the continuation of this degree of attention. This led RTZ to the view that the best chance for the long-term survival of Carnon is to be found in the management buy-out proposal.

Both RTZ and Carnon saw clearly that there had to be changes in the scope of the capital programme put forward in 1986 and that steps should be taken to reduce the costs of the operation. This perception led to a period of intensive discussions between RTZ, the DTI and the Carnon management in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster took a direct part and committed a lot of hours, personal effort and attention. The outcome had been the arrangements announced last week for a management buy-out. I must make it clear to the hon. Gentleman that cost reductions, including wage reductions, are a necessary part of the project.

The hon. Gentleman has expressed his dismay at Carnon's announcement of the loss of some 200 of the 720 jobs at two mines. We all share his regret at those losses. I hope that he will give proper recognition to the fact that the alternative, had the mines remained in RTZ's ownership, was complete closure with the loss of all the jobs.

The hon. Gentleman also commented on the shareholding arrangements negotiated by the new owners with RTZ. Senior managers of the company, led by its present managing director, are to hold among them 80 per cent. of the shares of a company that is being formed to acquire the present group. The other 20 per cent. of the shares will be held on behalf of employees. At this stage the details remain to be worked out fully, but I understand that the present intention is that the shares will be held by a trust through which, in due course, the employees of the company will be able to share in its prosperity. Meanwhile, it is essential for the company to reduce its own costs of production. To that end the management team has announced that it is cutting its pay by 17·5 per cent., and consultations have begun with a view to a significant reduction in the pay of the continuing work force.

That brings me to the support that is being provided by the Government and RTZ to help the new company on its way. RTZ will contribute £10 million in the form of interest-free loan repayable out of future profits. For our part, we are leaving in place the £15 million loan agreed in 1986. In addition, the guarantees of commercial loans of up to £10 million, which were also part of our 1986 package, are being converted into interest-free loans. Both the Government loans and the RTZ loan are repayable out of the future profits of the business. Our money will be released to the company by reference to capital expenditure incurred. Under the 1986 project Carnon embarked on a capital programme costing £31 million over the five years to 1990. In the new situation there is some rephasing of work and some changes in the detailed content of the programme. Expenditure to 1990 is now

estimated at £24 million. The programme will continue after 1990 and the total is estimated to reach £27 million during 1992.

I should make it clear to the hon. Gentleman and the Cornish community that the changes to our 1986 package are subject to review by the Commission of the European Communities. The hon. Gentleman will understand that in our exchanges tonight we must be aware of this subsequent examination and so be aware of what we say.

I am sure the House will realise from what I have said that this is a high risk venture. The Government have decided, in recognition of the importance of tin mining and the associated employment, especially in Cornwall, that it is right to make their support available in a different way from that adopted in 1986. If tin prices do not come up to expectations, and I have given my informed hunch of current expectations, and if cost reductions are not secured, the long-term prospect for the new venture is bound to be difficult. I cannot see that there could be any scope for yet further Government assistance in that situation.

That is a rather cautionary note on which to end my reply to the hon. Gentleman, but the realities of the situation cannot be escaped. I am sure that the hon. Member and the House as a whole would wish——

Mr. Matthew Taylor *rose*——

Mr. Butcher: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to finish. I have two minutes left.

The realities of the situation cannot be escaped, I am sure that hon. Members and the House as a whole would want to join me in extending their good wishes to management and work force as they embark on this new stage in their company's history. The Government are convinced that Carnon can win through — that is why we have continued our support — but it will require considerable — and I emphasise "considerable" — efforts by all those concerned with the company. I feel sure that this effort will be forthcoming.

Mr. Matthew Taylor: The Minister of State, Department of Employment has said that, with his colleagues, he will look again at the area status. Will the Under-Secretary of State for Industry and Consumer Affairs make the same commitment for the sake of those who now look likely to lose their jobs?

Mr. Butcher: The hon. Gentleman will be aware from earlier exchanges that the Department of Trade and Industry does not have immediate plans to review the boundaries or the travel-to-work areas affected or covered by assisted area status. However, I shall ask my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry, who has responsibility for the map and regional policy, to look carefully at our earlier exchanges to see whether they contain anything that is consistent with the DTI's policy on regions and travel-to-work areas. If there is anything that we can refer back to the hon. Gentleman about, I am sure that my hon. Friend will write to him.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at five minutes to Three o'clock.

House of Commons

Wednesday 30 March 1988

The House met at half-past Two o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

PRIVATE BUSINESS

SAINT BENNET FINK BURIAL GROUND (CITY OF LONDON) BILL *[Lords]*
Read a Second time, and committed.

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming adjourned debate on Question [10 December], That the Bill be now considered.
Debate further adjourned till Thursday 14 April.

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*

CARDIFF BAY BARRAGE BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF LONDON (SPITALFIELDS MARKET) BILL *(By Order)*

FALMOUTH CONTAINER TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

NORTH KILLINGHOLME CARGO TERMINAL BILL *(By Order)*

ST. GEORGE'S HILL, WEYBRIDGE, ESTATE BILL *(By Order)*

SOUTHERN WATER AUTHORITY BILL *(By Order)*
Orders for Second reading read.
To be read a Second time upon Thursday 14 April.

BRITISH RAILWAYS (NO. 2) BILL *(By Order)*
Order read for resuming debate on Question [15 March], That the Bill be now read a Second time.
Debate to be resumed upon Thursday 14 April.

BRITISH RAILWAYS ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
Read the Third time, and passed.

Oral Answers to Questions

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Iran-Iraq War

1. **Mr. Temple-Morris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the current situation at the United Nations concerning his efforts to secure action to help bring the Iran-Iraq war to an end; and what representations have been received on this subject by *(a)* the Secretary-General of the United Nations and *(b)* Her Majesty's Government from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Howe): The recent deplorable escalation in the Iran-Iraq conflict, involving missile and chemical weapon attacks on civilians, has made the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 598 all the more essential. We keep in touch with both parties in New York and elsewhere, and welcome the Secretary-General's latest efforts to bring them together. Meanwhile, it is vital that work should continue on possible enforcement measures.

Mr. Temple-Morris: I applaud any efforts by my right hon. and learned Friend and the Government to bring this deplorable war to an end, but is he aware that Western policy, whatever its intentions, is not seen to be even-handed? One result is that it has given Iraq the chance to escalate the war, sometimes in the most ghastly circumstances. The Iranian Government, as my right hon. and learned Friend knows, have made responses to the Secretary-General on Security Council resolution 598. What consideration has been given to those responses, what test has been put upon them, and, if necessary, has any opportunity been given to call the bluff, if there be a bluff?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I assure my hon. Friend that British policy in this matter is unchanged and strictly impartial. We want the earliest possible negotiated settlement of the conflict. Iraq has said that it accepts and will implement Security Council resolution 598 if the Iranians do so. Iraq wants a sequence to be followed. Iran has neither accepted nor rejected the resolution, but has engaged in delaying tactics. Since then both sides have taken actions that have contributed to an escalation of the conflict. In those circumstances, the Secretary-General has been seeking contact with representatives of both sides in New York. The only way of trying to bring the matter to a conclusion is by pressing ahead with an even hand to secure enforcement of the resolution as it stands.

Dr. Thomas: In view of the most appalling atrocity committed against the civilian population in the Kurdish regions, is it not time for the Government to initiate further action, at European Community level, too, to ensure that no material that could be used in chemical warfare is supplied directly or indirectly from Europe for either side in this appalling conflict?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sure that the whole House will sympathise with the hon. Gentleman's point. We have read with the greatest concern reports of Iraqi use of chemical weapons against villages in Kurdistan. If

confirmed—I have no reason to suppose that they will not be—they represent a significant increase in the use of these abhorrent and inhuman weapons. We have repeatedly made clear our condemnation of them and made representations specifically to the Iraqis by my hon. and learned Friend, the Minister of State, on his visit to Baghdad at the end of February, by myself in a conversation with the Iraqi Foreign Minister on 15 March and to the Iraqi ambassador in the Foreign Office only yesterday. Beyond that, we have worked within the European Community—we initiated this—to impose strict export controls on chemical weapons and on civil chemicals that might be used to produce them. The hon. Gentleman is right to draw attention to that matter. I think that the whole House will share my sense of abhorrence at the use of these weapons in any circumstances in this or any other conflict.

Mr. Budgen: What are British interests in relation to this war, and how do they differ from the American interests in that area?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: This conflict is almost the only issue in international affairs which I discuss with representatives of almost every nation and find an instant response to the proposition that this bloody conflict must be brought to an end. That is Britain's interest and it is the interest of every nation.

Mr. Hardy: If the Foreign Office or any Government with whom we are in association learns or knows of the origin of chemical material, does the Foreign Secretary accept that that information should be made public?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I am sure that that matter should certainly be given the most serious consideration, because we have worked tenaciously to secure a comprehensive, verifiable worldwide ban on chemical weapons, specifically in this context, and have energetically taken up any cases that have been reported.

Central America

2. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a settlement of the outstanding conflicts in Central America.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): We believe that the Guatemala peace agreement remains the best framework in which to seek progress towards a peaceful settlement of the outstanding conflicts in Central America.

Mr. Smith: Will the Minister join me in congratulating the Nicaraguan Government on the commendable steps that they have taken towards the implementation of the Central American peace plan? In the light of that progress, will the Government now make representations to President Reagan that it is high time that full and direct talks were opened between the Government of the United States and the Nicaraguan Government on matters of mutual security? Would it not be a wonderful Easter message to the Nicaraguan people if, after seven years of war and 50,000 deaths, they could at least know that steps were being taken towards implementing direct talks to bring an end to that conflict?

Mr. Eggar: As the hon. Gentleman knows, our policy has long been that we welcome peaceful, not military, solutions to the problems of Central America. We have warmly welcomed the peace agreement and we urge everybody to implement it fully. A 60-day truce was recently agreed at talks on 21-23 March. Together with our European partners, we issued a statement in support of that on 28 March and we hope that the second round, planned for 6 April, will bring a substantive ceasefire and progress towards democracy. We shall be looking to the Nicaraguan Government to fulfil their pledges on the democratic front.

Mr. Jacques Arnold: Will my hon. Friend join me in welcoming the release of 1,000 political prisoners in Nicaragua and the reopening of the opposition press there? Does he share my fear that this is only window dressing and that what we really wish to see in Nicaragua is a proper, pluralist democracy?

Mr. Eggar: I completely agree with my hon. Friend, and add that it is deplorable that political prisoners were held by the Nicaraguan regime.

Mr. Foulkes: Before the Minister loses his voice completely, can he not bring himself, for once, to congratulate the Government of Nicaragua on the excellent progress that they have made towards implementing the peace plan? Does he recognise that the Esquipulas peace plan applies not just to Nicaragua, but to Honduras, Guatemala and, above all, to El Salvador? What are the Government doing to ensure that President Duarte restarts talks with the FLMN/FDR and to stop the massacre of innocent civilians in that country?

Mr. Eggar: Despite the hon. Gentleman's attempt at winning ways and imploring hands, I would respect his balance in this matter rather more if he condemned the invasion of Honduran territory by Nicaraguan troops. Of course we welcome further moves towards peace in Central America. We have been doing that for a considerable time, and will continue to do so.

Mr. Wells: What steps can my hon. Friend take to make certain that the Nicaraguan Government improve still further on the efforts that they have made in respect of their negotiations with the Contras and begin to establish the pluralist democracy of which my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) spoke?

Mr. Eggar: It is clear that the Nicaraguan Government, for their part, need to establish a real pluralist democracy and to end their support of subversion in neighbouring states. One of the results of the San José IV meeting in Hamburg was that the European Community undertook to give support to the Central American Parliament, which is part of the overall progress in the region towards democracy.

Austria

3. **Mr. Janner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the present state of relations between the United Kingdom and Austria.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Relations between the United Kingdom and Austria are good, reflecting the common interests of our Governments and peoples.

Mr. Janner: Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell the House when he expects to conclude the inquiry into

the alleged involvement of President Kurt Waldheim in the deaths of British commandos taken prisoners of war? Is the inquiry taking evidence from Captain Bill Blythe, who survived torture by Waldheim's own interrogation unit? Meanwhile, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman assure the House that there will be no contact between representatives of Her Majesty's Government in Austria and this mendacious and wicked man?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. and learned Gentleman must not make a reflection of that kind about the Head of a friendly state. Will he please withdraw his last remark?

Mr. Janner: I withdraw my last remark, but if the commission of inquiry comes to the expected conclusion, I shall reserve the right to make it again.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I think that the last exchange between you, Mr. Speaker, and the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) indicates that it certainly would not be appropriate for me today to comment on or prejudge in any way the outcome of the review that is under way. It is being undertaken by the Ministry of Defence. The commission is carrying forward its work as expeditiously as possible and the matter will be reported to the House as soon as the review is complete.

Mr. Janner: When?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The matter will be reported when the review is finished. The hon. and learned Gentleman wants the review to be thorough, and it will have to be thorough. The people conducting the review will take account of any evidence that may become available to them, including the observation made in the earlier part of the hon. and learned Gentleman's question. It is for them to decide the matter. The Ministry of Defence will report the outcome to the House as soon as the review is complete.

So far as the latter part of the hon. and learned Gentleman's question is concerned, representatives of Her Majesty's Government will behave appropriately, as they should.

Mr. John D. Taylor: What is the attitude of Her Majesty's Government towards the recent statement in Vienna by the French Prime Minister, Mr. Chirac, that Austria would be a welcome member of the European Community?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I listen with interest to the observations of Prime Ministers of member states of the European Community, just as the hon. Gentleman no doubt does.

Mr. John Marshall: Although relations between this country and Austria may be good, they will be much better when the results of the inquiry are known. Therefore, may I press upon my right hon. and learned Friend that the inquiry be expeditious? It is unfortunate that the amnesia of the President of Austria is the cause of the inquiry in the first place.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall not add my own observations to those at the end of my hon. Friend's question, but I entirely share his view, as I said in my original answer, that it is in everyone's interest for the review to be completed as expeditiously as possible. The review is being undertaken with that in mind.

Kampuchea

4. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on recent developments in Kampuchea.

Mr. Eggar: We shall continue to urge the withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and to work for a settlement which allows the Cambodian people to determine their own future through free and fair elections and without outside interference.

Mrs. Clwyd: Why do the Government continue to support the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot through the coalition of the United Nations? When will they withdraw their support for that murderous regime? Why will they not reconvene the 1954 Geneva conference, which they co-chaired with the Soviet Union when discussing the future of Indo-China, if they are serious about ending the diplomatic isolation of Cambodia over the past nine years?

Mr. Eggar: Not for the first time, the hon. Lady is misinformed. The United Kingdom withdrew all recognition of the Pol Pot regime in December 1979. We have no intention of contributing to its re-establishment. We believe that free and fair elections based on United Nations precedents offer the best guarantee that the Khmer Rouge does not dominate after a political settlement has been found.

With regard to the chance of a United Kingdom initiative on Cambodia, we have long supported the efforts of Cambodia's friends in the Association of the South East Asian Nations to bring about a satisfactory solution to the Cambodian problem, but there is no new British initiative.

Mr. Wilkinson: Does my hon. Friend agree that the withdrawal of foreign — that is, Vietnamese — troops from Cambodia is the touchstone, not only for security, peace and progress in the region, but for improvement in East-West relations? Is there any sign yet of the Soviet Union putting pressure on its Vietnamese allies to withdraw their forces from Cambodia?

Mr. Eggar: I agree with my hon. Friend. The key ingredient is the withdrawal of occupying Vietnamese forces. With regard to the latter part of his question, the Soviet Union has told us that it endorses the regime's proposals for a solution, including an international conference. However, it has not yet gone further than that.

Mr. Lawrence: Do I understand from my hon. Friend's answer to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) that until 1979 the Pol Pot regime was recognised by the Labour Government, notwithstanding the massacres perpetrated on the Cambodian people? If that is right, is that not another example of the hypocrisy of the Labour party?

Mr. Eggar: As ever, my hon. and learned Friend is right. I thought it best to be charitable on this occasion and not remind the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) of the rather unfortunate fact of the recognition of the Pol Pot regime by the Labour Government in 1976.

Chemical Weapons

5. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards the conclusion of a treaty dealing with the manufacture, deployment and use of chemical weapons; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. David Mellor): Encouraging progress has been made at the chemical weapons negotiations in Geneva. However, complex issues remain to be dealt with, particularly on verification and arrangements for an international inspectorate, if we are to achieve an effective convention. I met Mr. Karpov, chief Soviet arms negotiator, on Monday and discussed this issue.

Mr. Wallace: After the impetus to try to secure a treaty in the past two years, is it not regrettable that there has now been a slow-down? Given the reports of the atrocities in the Iran-Iraq war, is it not more important to stem the dangers of proliferation than to pursue perfection in verification? What is the attitude of Her Majesty's Government to the verification proposals in the draft United States treaty?

Mr. Mellor: Verification between East and West is important because of the complexities involved in the interrelationship between military complexes and the civil chemical industry. As the hon. Gentleman will know, we have been taking a lead in Geneva in tabling proposals on verification. The hon. Gentleman is right to say that it is a matter not just between East and West, but one that concerns a number of other countries,; and the lamentable use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war makes it clear to all of us that we should try to achieve a global ban. That is what we are working for. I cannot pretend that there are not difficulties that will be overcome only after a long time.

Mr. Couchman: Will my hon. and learned Friend assure the House that, in the councils of the world, when we discuss chemical warfare we make it clear that we disapprove of the transfer of technology, materials and weapons to grossly irresponsible nations, such as those involved in the Iran-Iraq war, and that we shall do our best to ensure that neither side — East nor West — supplies those sorts of countries with such weapons?

Mr. Mellor: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Corbyn: Everyone would welcome any progress that can be made towards a ban on chemical and biological weapons. Does the Minister agree, however, that although he is right to condemn the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in Iraq, one problem has been that the British Government have maintained diplomatic relationships with both Iran and Iraq, and not very long ago extended a £200 million credit to the Government of Iraq, enabling them to prop up their economy and continue the prosecution of the war? Would it not be better if we withdrew all trade, aid and credits to both Iran and Iraq as a way of bringing to an end the war and the use of chemical weapons in the region?

Mr. Mellor: I think that that would be an entirely self-defeating exercise. The fact that we have diplomatic relations with Iraq, for example, has made possible a wide range of contacts, to the mutual benefit of both countries, and enabled us to play a constructive part in the efforts of the United Nations to try to bring the Gulf war to an end. As recently as yesterday it enabled a deputy under-secretary at the Foreign Office to see the Iraqi ambassador, to protest in strong terms about the use of chemical weapons, and to ask that his protest be reported back at the highest level in Baghdad. Without diplomatic relations, such exchanges would not be possible. The best way to stop the use of chemical weapons is to continue to protest through the channels available to us, as well as maintaining the present embargo to try to prevent any materials from Britain getting through that could be used in making such weapons.

Mr. Soames: The Government have done exceptional work in the chemical weapons talks in Geneva. Nevertheless, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that it would be a great mistake to allow the chemical weapons talks to be sidetracked by other, seemingly more important, talks? Bearing in mind the importance of dealing with these appalling weapons, it is essential that we get a meaningful treaty as soon as possible.

Mr. Mellor: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. The NATO priorities embrace four sets of talks, and the chemical weapons talks are among them. We would all agree — especially as chemical weapons represent a worldwide problem and not one confined to East-West relations—that the sooner we make progress, the better.

Mr. Robertson: Does not the foot-dragging of the super-powers on talks aimed at a chemical weapons treaty lead inexorably towards further proliferation of these obscene weapons? Last week we saw evidence of mass deaths caused by cyanide gas in Iraqi Kurdistan—away from all the television cameras and lights that we are so used to in other parts of the world. That is an outrage, not only against humanity, but one that reflects the complacent inactivity of the great powers of the world. Why are we not so moved by the atrocities—as we are by so many others that appear on our television screens — that we take the great leap of political will which alone will free the world from these atrocious and horrifying weapons?

Mr. Mellor: I certainly agree with the thrust of the hon. Gentleman's remarks, but I have some comments to make to him. It now seems clear that chemical weapons were used by Iraq against its own Kurdish population and the Iranian invaders. That use was contrary to international obligations entered into by Iraq, so we must not be too simplistic about the matter. Much as I would welcome a convention, the mere fact of its existence would not necessarily mean that countries such as Iraq would sign it; and, even if they signed it, they would not necessarily adhere to it.

On the hon. Gentleman's point about the super-powers, I assure the House that we do not wish there to be foot-dragging and we do not believe that there is any. Every year we table a number of papers designed in a non-propagandist way to make progress. We must not underestimate the number of genuine issues that need to be resolved, such as the number of chemical weapons, the possibility of inspection, and the need to contain the prospect of a breakout, which could come through concealed work in the civil chemical industry. All these are genuine and substantive matters that cannot be wished away and will, I am afraid, take time to sort out.

East Germany

6. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the East German Government; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Mellor: I visited the German Democratic Republic and East Berlin from 12 to 16 March and met several Ministers and other officials, principally Deputy Foreign Minister Nier. We discussed a wide range of topics.

Mr. King: I thank my hon. and learned Friend for that reply. Can he tell the House, following the recent Leipzig affair, what prospects there are for this country to increase its export opportunities in East Germany? Is it true that there are opportunities for British manufacturers of machine tools and food and chemical processing equipment? What steps would he advise manufacturers to take to bring about those exports?

Mr. Mellor: There are good prospects for British trade. I was glad to see that there were more than 140 British exhibitors at the Leipzig fair. That is more than ever before, and 66 British companies have the gold medal for regular attendance at the fair. As Mr. Wilson used to say, exporting is fun. The East German authorities have announced a substantial boost to their investment in all the areas that my hon. Friend identified. I believe that there are great opportunities for British companies which try to build up our trade. At the moment there is a heavy deficit in East Germany's favour, which we want to redress soon.

Mr. James Lamond: Did the Minister discuss the GDR's proposal, which arises out of an initiative made by the late Olaf Palmé, for a nuclear weapons-free corridor in Europe, including the whole of the GDR, part of the Federal Republic and designed eventually to link up with the Scandinavian nuclear-free area and the Balkan nuclear-free area, which, sadly has been closed, leading eventually to a nuclear weapons-free Europe?

Mr. Mellor: I took the opportunity of a friendly and pleasant visit to say that I considered that proposal emptily propagandist. It sounded emptily propagandist when it fell from the lips of my East German colleagues, and it sounds even more emptily propagandist when it falls from the hon. Gentleman's lips.

The futility of nuclear-free zones is well known to most hon. Members. There is nothing to stop weapons outside such zones being targeted on places inside it, and there is nothing to stop mobile weapons, which the Warsaw pact has in abundance, from being brought into a so-called nuclear-free zone when the need arises. If we are to make progress in East-West relations, we should have less propaganda and more substantial and sensible proposals to discuss.

Palestine

7. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's policy towards the current United States initiative to restore peace in Palestine.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We welcome the re-engagement of the United States in the peace process and support its efforts to help the parties reach agreement on a way forward.

Mr. Atkinson: In view of the four wars that have taken place in its 40 years of existence and the continuing threats to Israel's security, does my right hon. and learned Friend have sympathy with and support for Israel's insistence on the maintenance of a defence line along the River Jordan as part of any solution? If Israel says no to the Shultz peace proposals, must it not come forward with its own proposals, which respect the right of self-determination of the Palestinians in the occupied territories, to bring the present intolerable situation there to a halt as soon as possible?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: What my hon. Friend says underlines what is very clear—that the status quo is in nobody's interests and that the continuation of deadlock only encourages extremists on both sides. That is why I have already welcomed the re-engagement of the United States in the peace process and why I am sure that the whole House will wish Secretary of State Shultz success on his next visit to the region. A way forward has to be found on the basis of the two principles which have been enunciated so often. They are the right of Israel and other states in the area to secure existence within recognised boundaries—I make no comment on my hon. Friend's point—and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Mr. Archer: While he does not condone the policy of settlement and all that has followed from it, will the Secretary of State recognise the obvious fact that Israel has a strategic problem because of the narrowness of the country? Will he press at least for a demilitarised zone on the West Bank?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Israel clearly has a security problem. That is why every approach to the solution of the problem emphasises the need for recognition of Israel's right to exist within secure boundaries. It is equally important for the other side of the matter to be emphasised, namely, that unless Israel is prepared quite explicitly to recognise the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to proceed on the footing of the vital principle of territory for peace, there is no prospect of a way forward being found.

Mr. Walters: Bearing in mind that over the years every American peace initiative in the middle east has collapsed in the face of Isreali rejection, what hope does my right hon. and learned Friend hold out for the Shultz initiative? Bearing in mind the continuing and appalling acts of repression by Israel on the West Bank, will Her Majesty's Government and the EEC this time intervene to try to give some muscle to bolster the American initiative?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The position of the European Community and its member countries, including the United Kingdom, has been clearly and powerfully expressed in support of the principles that I have enunciated. It would be wrong to dismiss in advance the chances of success of the latest initiative being taken by the American Secretary of State. Of course, we should not underestimate the difficulties, but it remains vital to continue every effort to bring the parties together and we welcome it on that basis.

It is quite right that the conduct of Israel in relation to the occupied territories is an important feature that has to be put right as part of the process of finding a way forward.

Mr. Kaufman: Is not the useful initiative by Mr. Shultz seriously undermined by the comfort that President Reagan foolishly gave to Mr. Shamir when Mr. Shamir visited Washington recently? Is it not a fact that the

escalating repression in the occupied territories has demonstrated, by what is happening today, including the shooting of a woman on the West Bank and the closing down of the Palestine press service, that the problem will not be solved by repression or force but only by a conference, and that the obstacle to that conference is Mr. Shamir?

Is it not essential that we put pressure on Mr. Shamir, and recommend the Americans to do so too, because we will not get an end to the conflict without a conference, and we will not get a conference until Mr. Shamir is budged?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I think that the right hon. Gentleman's analysis is very close to the truth. The House must regret that the opportunity was not taken during Mr. Shamir's recent visit to Washington to confirm Israel's commitment to the current peace efforts being undertaken by Secretary of State Shultz. The right hon. Gentleman is right to say that the continuing escalation of violence is a measure of the urgency of making headway in that direction, above all in the cause of Israel. The policies being pursued by Prime Minister Shamir cannot assure Israel of a secure future. Israel needs peace as much as anyone, and that peace can come about only through real negotiations.

It is entirely right for the House to urge Israel to join the almost universal consensus in support of negotiations on the basis of land for peace through the framework of an international conference. It is equally important for the Arab side to recognise that it cannot afford to miss another chance as it has an equally urgent need for peace. I urge it to work with the plan put forward by the United States.

Gibraltar

8. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to meet the First Minister of Gibraltar.

The Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker): My right hon. and learned Friend has invited the new Chief Minister to visit London for talks as soon as he is able to do so.

Mr. Taylor: I thank my right hon. Friend for that reply. Does she not think that the new Chief Minister's stated opposition to the Brussels agreement might blight progress on the future of Gibraltar and discussions with the Spaniards?

Mrs. Chalker: I sincerely hope that that will not happen. Her Majesty's Government are committed to respect the wishes of the Gibraltarians on the question of sovereignity. They have shown their wishes in the recent democratic elections there. I believe that the Brussels agreement, to which Her Majesty's Government remain committed, is the only way forward to rebuild confidence between Gibraltar and Spain. Practical co-operation is to the benefit of both sides. I am sure that the new Chief Minister will take account of that.

Mr. Cryer: Will the Minister assure the new Chief Minister of Gibraltar that any conduct by members of our police or armed forces on that island will conform to normal standards of conduct in relation to suspected criminals who are under surveillance? Will he confirm that they will not be subject to the sort of brutality that we saw in Gibraltar recently?

Mrs. Chalker: The hon. Gentleman does not know his geography, does he? In addition, he cannot even recognise the facts when they are put before him. I have nothing to add to what my right hon. and learned Friend said on 7 March. The hon. Gentleman should re-read columns 21 and 22.

Mr. Colvin: Does my right hon. Friend acknowledge that there is a different perception of the Brussels agreement, as seen through British, Spanish or Gibraltarian eyes? Whereas a meeting with the new Chief Minister in London will be very useful, will my right hon. Friend consider an early trip to Gibraltar to see at first hand the anxieties of the Gibraltar people and to reassure them that the Brussels agreement is in their best interests, that it will in no way undermine the sovereignty that is enshrined in their constitution and that that cannot be altered without the wholehearted consent of the Gibraltar people?

Mrs. Chalker: There is no danger of any damage to the sovereignty of Gibraltar. Both my right hon. and learned Friend and I would certainly consider a visit to Gibraltar if the new Chief Minister invited one of us to go there. We must get round the table with the Gibraltarians to ensure that there is no return to the sort of confrontations that we saw in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mr. Beggs: When the meeting with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar takes place, will every effort be made to convey the very real concerns of my constituents who have invested substantial sums of money in International Investments Ltd. of Gibraltar so as to ensure that those who absconded with, or misappropriated, those funds are brought to justice and that at least some of those funds are returned to those who invested their life savings, in good faith, in Gibraltar?

Mrs. Chalker: I shall certainly look into what the hon. Gentleman has said and bring it to the attention of the law enforcement agencies in Gibraltar.

Sir Eldon Griffiths: Could my right hon. Friend confirm the dates of the visit to Gibraltar of His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester? When she meets Mr. Bassano, will she encourage him to continue the policy of supporting the efforts of the friends of Gibraltar in this country and of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust on the Rock to refurbish the monuments and artefacts of Gibraltar and thereby encourage the tourist trade?

Mrs. Chalker: I am sure that his royal highness will go to Gilbraltar, as he has been invited to do. I welcome the setting up of the trust. We believe that it is very important to protect Gibraltar's historic monuments and I hope that the new Chief Minister will encourage everybody to do what they can in that direction.

South Africa

9. **Mr. Fearn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the use on 7 March of the British veto on a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for sanctions against South Africa.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We vetoed the draft resolution because it included a call for mandatory economic sanctions.

Mr. Fearn: Is the Foreign Secretary aware that the recent laws passed in South Africa will now prevent funds going to South Africa from organisations such as Oxfam that collect in this country? Has he any advice to give to those charities that are providing funds for that country? Is this not the time to consider effective sanctions against South Africa?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We have made it plain that we condemn many of the restrictions recently imposed by the South African Government. We believe that they suppress legitimate political activity and that they will promote conflict and a move in exactly the wrong direction. It is too early to conclude that they will necessarily interfere with all forms of humanitarian relief. As for the hon. Gentleman's second point, our position remains the same. We totally condemn apartheid, but we do not think that its ending will be brought about by any step in the direction of mandatory economic sanctions.

Sir Peter Blaker: Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the Government were absolutely right to use the veto on this occasion? Is he also aware that such people as the late Percy Qoboza, the late Steve Biko, Alan Paton and Helen Suzman, while being vigorously opposed to apartheid, have also been strongly opposed to economic sanctions being imposed on South Africa?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: My right hon. Friend makes a very telling point, drawing on arguments that have appealed to people with deep experience of South Africa. I entirely agree with him. The whole of our experience since the imposition by other countries of punitive sanctions demonstrates that they do not make the situation better. They make a bad situation worse.

Mr. Winnick: Has it not been the case in recent weeks that, far from accommodating the point of view of the Western democracies and the United Nations, the South African Government have been much more concerned with those to the right of themselves, and the electoral successes in by-elections of the Conservative party?

Will the Foreign Secretary consult as quickly as possible with his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to ensure that ANC representatives in this country are given adequate police protection, in view of the assassination yesterday of an ANC representative in France and the clear fact that the South African authorities are operating murder squads to ensure that their opponents are put to death?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Let me answer the hon. Gentleman's substantive question first. Obviously, the whole House will condemn the murder in Paris of Miss September, because we are implacably opposed to violence and terrorism from any quarter. It is far too soon, however, to offer any view on who was responsible for her death.

In answer to the first part of the hon. Gentleman's question, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary is considering representations on the safety of ANC personnel in London. I understand that members of the office were on an earlier occasion given advice by the police about their personal security.

Mr. John Carlisle: My right hon. and learned Friend enjoys considerable support on these Benches and throughout the country for his robust opposition to economic sanctions. Will he now consider following the same policy in regard to sporting links with South Africa? Will he give the House an undertaking that no extreme political pressure will be put on any British rugby players who may consider touring that country in the future?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: Our position on that is as stated by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in the House yesterday, when she clearly reaffirmed our support for the Gleneagles agreement, under which we try to discourage sporting contacts with South Africa. My hon. Friend will know that the English Rugby Football Union has already stated that it will try to dissuade England players from going to South Africa. We do not yet know whether the other rugby unions will follow suit.

Mr. Pike: Does the Foreign Secretary not recognise that, despite the Government's oft-stated opposition to apartheid, the blacks in South Africa still have the feeling that the Government are soft on the issue? Will the Foreign Secretary at least give an undertaking that the Government will look positively at making existing sanctions work? Is it not possible for them to go one stage further and at least stop direct flights, which will have no effect on the black population of South Africa?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I shall not accept the hon. Gentleman's advice on any extension of measures against South Africa of the kind that he has described. However, I would welcome his help if he would join me—and many others—in making plain to the people of South Africa that the Government have formed their opinion on the wisdom or unwisdom of sanctions on the basis of a conclusion on the best way of bringing apartheid to an end. There should be no doubt in his mind, or in anyone else's, about the vigour and firmness with which the Government condemn apartheid.

Mr. Watts: Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there is no such thing as effective economic sanctions and that, in particular, the disinvestment by overseas companies has achieved nothing but the transfer of businesses, at knock-down prices, into South African ownership, which has made them more insular than they would otherwise have been?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. Punitive sanctions would merely make a bad situation worse. We continue to follow a realistic policy of pressure, persuasion, advocacy and firmness. There is no justification for any belief that sanctions in the more extreme form would have any effect.

Mr. Kaufman: Is it not a fact that the Government use words to condemn apartheid, but, when action is required, do nothing whatever? Their actions therefore belie their words and make them sound empty. That applies both in the Security Council and to sport.

Will the Foreign Secretary take this opportunity not to echo the empty formula that the Prime Minister carefully devised yesterday, but to say clearly and without equivocation that the Government are totally opposed to British rugby players taking part in the "rest of the world" tour in South Africa?

Sir Geoffrey Howe: I repeat what I have already said and what my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said

yesterday. We remain committed to the Gleneagles agreement and we shall continue to seek to discourage sporting contacts with South Africa.

On the earlier question, the hon. Gentleman must understand our view, which is upheld by many of the witnesses cited by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackpool, South (Sir P. Blaker), that comprehensive mandatory sanctions would be an ineffective means of ending apartheid. They would hurt those whom we seek to help and they would prolong conflict. Punitive sanctions of that kind imposed by other countries have already failed to speed up reform, reduced external influence and strengthened Right-wing politicians in South Africa. The experiment has been seen to fail, and it is for that reason that we adhere to our view.

USSR (Postal Deliveries)

10. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the response he has received from the Soviet authorities concerning abrogations by their postal authorities of international regulations over the delivery of mail from Britain to Soviet citizens, and on the practice of providing signatures other than those of the addressees on advice of receipt cards.

Mr. Mellor: No clear Soviet response has yet been received.

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the need for closer observation of the spirit of international agreements at the CSCE review meeting in Vienna.

Rev. Martin Smyth: Does the Minister accept that there is a sense of disappointment that nothing positive has been done? Will he acknowledge that so long as a Government or postal authority give tacit recognition to signatures of people other than those to whom the mail is addressed they will be conniving at misappropriation of property and even downright robbery?

Mr. Mellor: I agree with the hon. Gentleman and I am glad that he has returned to this important point. I remind the House that on 18 February we tabled a proposal calling upon all nations to agree that only the addressee or agent appointed by the addressee should be able to bear witness that a package had been delivered. At the moment, anyone appointed by the Government can do that. We look to the Eastern bloc countries to agree to that proposal as a practical way of showing that they are prepared to improve their practices on matters which should not be fundamental to their security but which are basic human rights in terms of the exchange of correspondence across national boundaries.

Mr. Ian Taylor: Will my hon. and learned Friend note that the continued breach of human rights and of the Helsinki agreement by the Soviet Union makes it extremely difficult for us to continue to negotiate on other matters? Will he urge General Secretary Gorbachev to change that policy and ensure that we can forward relations on a better basis?

Mr. Mellor: There is no doubt that the fundamental problem in East-West relations is the lack of trust and confidence, which more often than not is based on judgments of the nature of Eastern society and breaches of human rights, which lead people to distrust the basic and fundamental impulses of Eastern bloc Governments. Until those things are changed, the level of progress that we want will be difficult to achieve.

Middle East

11. **Mr. Adley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on moves towards a middle east peace conference.

Mr. Mellor: We support current efforts to promote the convening of an international conference as a framework for negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israel conflict. We hope that all the parties concerned will avoid action which could stifle progress towards a settlement.

Mr. Adley: Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that his phrase about the avoidance of action should apply to the current repression carried out by the Israelis against the Palestinians, which is reminiscent of the tactics used by their South African allies against the non-white population there?

Following the question by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), does my hon. and learned Friend think that it would be sensible to discuss with our EEC allies some form of action relating Israel's willingness to move towards peace with a willingness on the part of the EEC to grant concessions to Israeli exports?

Mr. Mellor: There is no doubt that there has been a sharp and regrettable deterioration in conditions within the occupied territories in recent days. Seven people were killed over the weekend, a 50-year-old woman was shot dead today and in the past 10 days several hundred and perhaps more than a thousand people have been detained in circumstances which fall short of proper judicial standards. I should have thought that it would be self-evident to the Government of Israel by now that the Palestinian problem will have to be met by some means other than repression. The opportunity exists, within the framework of the American initiative, for proper talks to take place on the principle of territory for peace. Unless the Israelis are prepared to do that I fear that their 40th anniversary year will be a grave disappointment both to them and to the rest of the world.

Mr. Latham: Does my hon. Friend recall that this year there must be a general election in Israel, when the basic issue must be the peace process? Does he realise that many friends of Israel outside that country are hoping that the electors of Israel will listen to Mr. Peres and others who are putting forward peace proposals?

Mr. Mellor: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that typically constructive comment. It is crucial that, whatever else people disagree about, they agree that the status quo is no longer an option. If it were maintained there would be more bloodshed and more calling into question of the fundamental principles on which the state of Israel was rightly founded. The sooner that people come to grips with that and begin serious discussion, the sooner we can, I hope, make further progress.

Sharpeville Six

12. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of South Africa concerning the case of the Sharpeville Six.

Mrs. Chalker: Along with many other Western Governments, we have repeatedly urged the South African Government to exercise clemency in the case of the Sharpeville Six.

Mr. Taylor: The Minister's answer does not completely clarify matters. What representations have been made since the postponement of sentence on the Sharpeville Six? Will she confirm that there has been no change in the South African Government's murderous intention towards them and that this Government will seek, through every avenue available in the remaining time, to ensure that they are saved from the South African Government's rope?

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have made our position absolutely clear. We and other Western Governments have repeatedly urged the South African Government to exercise clemency. Those appeals for clemency remain. On both 16 and 17 March, when I answered private notice questions from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), I made it absolutely clear that as the Pretoria Supreme Court had agreed a stay of execution, we would not only continue to follow proceedings closely and with concern, but would do whatever must be done when news is received. No further news has been received at this point.

Mr. Forth: Has my hon. Friend made a list of all the judicial systems throughout the world of which the Foreign and Commonwealth Office approves or disapproves? Does she monitor the extent to which different countries adhere to their judicial processes? Does she agree that the South Africans have adhered strictly to their judicial processes in the trial of the Sharpeville Six? Why, therefore, is it any of our business?

Mrs. Chalker: In no way is it a responsibility of the Government to monitor all the judicial systems of the world. However, when human rights issues come to the fore, such as with the Sharpeville Six—and as I clearly explained on 16 and 17 March — I believe that the Government's stance on appealing for clemency is fully justified, and we shall maintain that.

Mr. Tony Banks: The hon. Member for Luton, North (Mr. Carlisle) asked, in effect, "Why pick on South Africa?" Is not the answer that the British Government should exercise their influence in South Africa because the British actually underpin the South African economy? When will the Government stop being miserable apologists for apartheid South Africa and start doing something? If the Sharpville Six are judicially murdered there will be no reason to prevent the Government from imposing full sanctions against South Africa. The only thing that that country understands is force. The Government have not delivered the goods on ending apartheid, and it is about time that they stopped being apologists and took effective sanctions against South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: Not for the first time, and no doubt not for the last, the hon. Gentleman has misrepresented the Government's stance. The Government are wholly and totally opposed to apartheid. We find it repugnant and we want it ended as soon as possible. However, we shall not achieve that by measures that can only make worse an already disastrous state for many black people in South Africa. As my right hon. and learned Friend said, there is no way that we can speed the end of apartheid by repressive economic measures.

EC Internal Market

13. **Mr. John Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further contribution his Department is making to increase awareness by business of the opportunities offered by the completion of the EC internal market by 1992.

Mrs. Chalker: We have launched a major campaign to bring to the attention of industry, business and the public the opportunities and challenges of the single European market. All Departments are involved in this campaign, which will include a major conference in London on 18 April, followed by regional briefings throughout the country.

Mr. Marshall: Does my hon. Friend agree that 1992 is a year of massive opportunities for British industry, and that the tragedy at the moment is that while French and German industry are well aware of the opportunities facing them, British industry is not? Does she also agree that if we do not get a move on, there is a real risk of British industry once again being taken to the cleaners by the French?

Mrs. Chalker: That is the very reason why the Government have just launched this major awareness campaign. We need to tell businesses of all sizes, throughout the country, exactly what opportunities lie ahead for them in the single market. That is why Ministers and, I hope, all hon. Members, will explain, as I am doing, from St. Ives to Manchester and to the far north of Scotland, just what the opportunities are. I am sure that my hon. Friend will join that important campaign for the future of British industry and for increased exports from this country.

Prisons

3.30 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd): With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement on prisons.

In July last year, I announced a package of measures designed to secure a better balance between the rapidly rising prison population and the prison accommodation available. Those measures eased the position, but only temporarily. The prison population has continued to grow apace. After falling to 47,500 in early September, it rose to 50,600 at the end of last week. That is some 1,200 more than at the same time last year. Taking into account the July measures, there has been an underlying increase over the same period of some 4,200. Projecting those trends forward, we could be faced with a prison population of some 52,000 by the summer of this year.

That sharper rise has not come about because of any acceleration in crime — indeed, the figures that I announced last week show a much smaller increase than the average rate of increases in recorded crime for the last 30 years.

There are four main causes of that growth in the prison population. First, there is a substantial increase in the number of criminals being brought before the Crown court, where the rate of custodial sentencing is higher. Secondly, there is a substantial lengthening in the sentences imposed by the Crown court for offences involving violence, including robbery and rape, and for offences of criminal damage and drug offences. Thirdly, as a result of a tighter policy on parole, the numbers are some 2,000 higher. Finally, there has been an unwelcome increase in the remand population, which has almost doubled since 1980, with some 700 added since the end of November last year alone.

So the uncrowded capacity of the prison system is some 7,000 below last week's population figure. Obviously, that means that there is severe overcrowding, particularly in remand prisons and, what is worse, 1,400 prisoners are being accommodated in police cells all over south-east England and beyond. Those cells are wholly unsuited for the long-term accommodation of prisoners. Their use is expensive and can be dangerous. It diverts police officers from their job of preventing and detecting crime and keeping the peace.

Part—almost half—of the police cells problem results from industrial action in some London prisons by members of the Prison Officers Association. Such action is irresponsible and places additional burdens upon the police and the rest of the system. Prison service management are working hard to try to resolve it, and I met the POA leaders earlier today and urged them to use their influence to bring the action to a speedy end.

It is not for me to decide who and how many convicted offenders should be sentenced to imprisonment: that is for the courts. It is my role to see that the courts have a satisfactory range of sentencing options open to them, and that when they send someone to prison there is suitable accommodation available for him or her. So this dual responsibility is reflected in the measures that I announce today.

First, on the demand side, work is in hand to make community service orders more demanding and more strictly administered — for example, through the introduction of national standards. Secondly, I have already announced a substantial expansion of the programme for providing bail hostels, involving an extra nine hostels at a cost of about £3·8 million. Thirdly, next month I intend to issue a circular designed to help the courts in taking their decisions on bail. Finally, and in the only slightly longer term, I am considering how to build up forms of punishment in the community which are seen by all to present a firm and fair way of dealing with offenders who do not merit a custodial sentence. That is on the demand side.

But the most serious crimes are rightly punished by imprisonment. Our existing prison building programme involves investment of almost £1 billion. That is the supply side. I am announcing today a number of measures, additional to those that I have already taken, to ensure that accommodation is available to hold prisoners in conditions of proper security.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): Come on, Mr. Porridge.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hurd: First, Army camps will be opened at Rollestone and Camberley to house a total of about 700 prisoners. Because of the existing pressures on the police and prison services these will be manned by military police and other personnel acting under the direction of prison management grades. This will be a strictly temporary measure to bridge us through the summer until more permanent prison accommodation is available.

Secondly, through the building programme and other measures, just short of 3,000 additional permanent prison places will be created by this time next year. Of those, more than 1,300 will come on stream in the south-east from now into this summer because of the special need to relieve pressure on the remand system in and around London.

Thirdly, I am planning to reinstate Ashford remand centre in Middlesex, which would otherwise close in April for rebuilding, as a temporary remand holding centre for about 400 prisoners from the late autumn.

Fourthly, I have reviewed the existing prison estate for ways of creating additional places by using system-built accommodation and by other means. In that way, I plan to add about 800 extra places from the beginning of 1989. I shall be recruiting the prison staff needed to man those places.

Fifthly, by speeding up the existing building programme, I shall provide a further 1,000 places from the beginning of 1990. These will be created in purpose-built blocks on existing prison sites.

The combined effect of the measures that I have announced and those which I have already put in hand will be to provide just over 4,000 permanent extra places, with the necessary staff, by the end of the financial year 1988-89, with a further 1,000 starting to come on stream from the very end of 1989.

I believe that this is an energetic response to the massive growth in the prison population. I will not hesitate to take further measures should they seem desirable. We must be ready to think imaginatively to ensure that the prison service can meet its obligations. In that context, the possibility of involving the private sector more closely in aspects of the prison system should be urgently considered.

I have already moved in this direction by establishing the Prison Building Board, which includes substantial private sector representation.

Mr. Skinner: They will be able to opt out.

Mr. Hurd: The board is inviting the private sector to make proposals for building remand or open facilities faster than has been done in the past. I propose, in addition, to publish a Green Paper on private sector involvement in all aspects of the remand system, and at the same time to engage consultants to help in working out the practical implications. I also propose to explore whether there might be room for developing privately managed bail hostels, providing more secure conditions than the current range of hostels provide.

I believe that, in contrast with the past, this Government's record of commitment to the prison service in unparalleled. The further measures that I have announced today underline that commitment and our determination to ensure that public safey and security, as well as decent conditions for prison service staff and prison inmates, are attained.

Mr. Roy Hattersley (Birmingham, Sparkbrook): The Home Secretary has just told us that the Government's commitment to the prison system is unparalleled. That amounts to three things: first, record crime figures; secondly, record prison populations, despite deplorable clear-up rates; and thirdly, a prison system that is in chaos.

The Home Secretary has been less than candid with the House about the extent of that chaos. Will he now confirm that the Home Office, as late as today, has been making estimates about the extent of the crisis and has established that the prison population may well rise to more than 56,000 by next year. In the light of that, does the right hon. Gentleman understand that his response to that crisis is wholly inadequate and that it is based more on his desire to play politics with the problem than to solve it—*[Laughter.]* Hon. Members who laugh will recall that the Home Secretary categorically told us that the holding of remand prisoners in gaols was the result of the prison officers' dispute.

Mr. Hurd: Did I?

Mr. Hattersley: Well, I will read the words to him:

"action in some London prisons by members of the Prison Officers Association."

That is what the Home Secretary said, but it is not, however, what the Minister of State said in the Lords a fortnight ago. When asked the same question, the noble Lord said:

"The reason why prisoners are in police cells—and I must again make this clear—is that the prison system has been temporarily overwhelmed by the high levels of population growth in recent years." —[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 4 March 1988; Vol. 494, c. 413.]

If the Home Secretary now recalls what he said in his statement, will he tell us whether he sticks by it or whether the noble Lord in the other place was giving a more honest and less political analysis of why the problem has arisen?

Will the Home Secretary begin to accept some of the Government's responsibility for the crisis that he is now facing? In July, we told the Home Secretary that what he proposed to reduce the prison population was attacking the symptoms rather than the causes. Today he has confirmed our judgment by saying that the improvements that he then made were only temporary. He should know that those temporary improvements and the proposals that he has now described will not meet the crisis and nor will a programme of increased prison building.

The problem is the number of people who are sent to prison in this country. It is clear that custodial sentences are right and necessary for those who commit violent or serious crime, but we send too many people to prison and keep them there for far too long.

In particular, the Home Secretary is doing nothing about the remand prisoners, who are a major problem within the system. He has told the House today that the prison population has increased by 700 as a result of the increase in remand prisoners. That is exactly the number of new places that he is creating at Rollestone and Camberley. Had there not been an increase in remand prisoners, he would not have had to open those two Army camps. He is making the situation worse as a result of the Criminal Justice Bill, out of Committee yesterday, by changing the remand rules from seven to 28 days. What is more, he is failing totally to apply the 110-day rule throughout the United Kingdom. If it were universal, it would reduce the prison population by a substantial number.

The right hon. Gentleman and his predecessor must also take responsibility for another increase. The right hon. Gentleman blandly tells us that the tighter parole policy has increased the prison population by 2,000. But that policy is the responsibility of this Government—as is the failure to provide an alternative to custodial sentencing.

Two Bills ago, when the right hon. Gentleman was merely the Minister of State at the Home Office—some six years ago—the Opposition told him that he ought to develop more non-custodial sentences. Today the Home Secretary has told us that that is what he is now proposing to do and what he is thinking of doing. The truth of the matter is that the Home Secretary is trapped between logic and the 1922 Committee. That is why, at the end of his statement, we heard all that irrelevant nonsense about privatising the prison system. Everyone knows that that will not make a scrap of difference, but it may see the Home Secretary through another difficult afternoon. Good luck to him.

Mr. Hurd: I know that the right hon. Gentleman's political difficulties are crowding in on him, but he should keep some hold on reality in spite of the deputy leadership contest. He adverted to figures, but neglected to look at the latest ones, which show that police clear-up rates are rising again, which means that more criminals are being caught. There is a major problem at the violent end of crime, as we readily admit. The courts are responding to that by sending more people to prison for longer, and that is part of the problem.

I repeat what I said in my statement, to which the right hon. Gentleman did not listen because the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) was making so much noise. I said:

"Part—almost half—of the police cells problem results from industrial action".

That is exact. About 600 of the prisoners who go to police cells each night do so as a result of industrial action by the POA. The easiest single contribution to solving that problem is that that industrial action should come to an end.

The right hon. Gentleman said that I was not doing anything about remand; of course we are. We are building

[Mr. Hurd]

nine new bail hostels. Contrary to anything that went before, we are imposing time limits on trials. Later this week, on 1 April, I am extending that to 14 new police areas and I hope that by the time it covers the whole of England and Wales it will provide a saving of the sort the right hon. Gentleman describes—600 remand prisoners. The proposals in the Criminal Justice Bill offer a balance on the issue of bail which is right.

The right hon. Gentleman prattled about non-custodial sentences. Of course, there has been a great increase in the use of community service orders. We need to move on from the position we inherited and developed and build up the notion that there can be punishment in the community as well as in prison. That is not easy to achieve, but it is what we are working on, and the House will have an opportunity to consider our proposal.

The right hon. Gentleman's approach is deeply hypocritical. My two predecessors and I have tried, starting from nothing, to build up a major investment of £1 billion in the prison building system. The Government to which the right hon. Gentleman belonged not only did nothing, but inherited from a Conservative Government a prison building plan that they cut by 35 per cent. in 1976. I cannot remember whether that was at the same time as they cut the hospital building programme or a little before or after, but it was part of the same process, and it completely disqualifies the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) from making these proposals.

Mr. Leon Brittan (Richmond, Yorks): Does my right hon. Friend accept that further development of alternatives to custody will be warmly welcomed and that the further use of time limits as envisaged in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 will also play a constructive part in the future? Does he also agree that, in the short run, faced with a crisis caused in substantial measure by industrial action, he is absolutely right to take urgent measures to make more places available for the prison system and to accelerate the prison building programme? That is essential, both in the short term and in the long term.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend. He began the process of experimental time limits on the length of time a person could be kept on remand, and he knows that that is proving successful. He also knows that it is sensible to proceed step by step, which is what we are doing. I believe that this will make a substantial contribution to easing the problem.

Mr. Menzies Campbell (Fife, North-East): How long does the Home Secretary expect the strictly temporary use of Army camps to be necessary? Does he accept that the remand prison population makes a disproportionate contribution to the problem about which he has just told us? Will his circular on bail draw to the attention of the courts the presumption of innocence which all persons on remand should enjoy; and will he explain why he is unwilling to institute an immediate extension of the 110-day rule throughout the whole of England and Wales? It has been operating in Scotland for over 100 years. Is it not time that England and Wales enjoyed the same benefit?

Mr. Hurd: The answer to the hon. and learned Gentleman's first question is, the late autumn. The answer to his second question is that the Bail Act 1976, together with the amendments in the Criminal Justice Bill, gets the balance about right. There is purpose and point in a circular that will draw to the attention of the courts the possibilities that are now opening up about getting more precise information about the circumstances of an offender. Such information will enable the courts to decide more accurately whether bail should be granted. There is a great deal of point in building up bail hostels and possibly bail hostels in secure accommodation so that courts have the alternative of sending someone home on bail instead of locking him up in custody.

I think that I have already dealt with the hon. and learned Gentleman's third point. He knows that the Scottish system and processes of bringing people to trial are quite different and that therefore the 110-day rule cannot automatically be applied. We are building up step by step, area by area, and gradually tightening, a system of time limits suitable for England and Wales.

Mr. Ivan Lawrence (Burton): Is my right hon. Friend aware that it is not only distinguished former holders of his office who think that today's package is no more than good sense? What are the comparative costs of holding prisoners in Army camps and in police cells, and which is the most favourable? Does he accept that the sooner the go-ahead is given for private contract remand prisons to be introduced to the system the sooner will the kind of problem that he addresses today be permanently removed?

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend. The costs are roughly as follows. It costs the huge sum of about £1,000 a week to keep a prisoner in a police cell. To keep a prisoner in an Army camp would cost about £400 a week and in a prison the cost is about £250. I know that my hon. and learned Friend is a strong supporter of the concept of private management of remand. There are more attractions in that than in holding convicted prisoners in privately managed conditions. The arguments of principle and practice need to be thrashed out in British terms as opposed to, or in addition to, American terms. That is why the Green Paper and the consultants' report are the right next steps.

Mr. John Morris (Aberavon): What precisely will be the increase in number and availability of prison officers? Is the Home Secretary aware that such is the crisis at the moment that there is very great concern in the courts that there are frequently no dock officers to search defendants and no dock officers present when custodial sentences are to be imposed? There is also concern when there are no policemen present in magistrates courts. Must a tragedy occur before something is done? If a tragedy does occur, will the Home Secretary take personal responsibility for it?

Mr. Hurd: The right hon. and learned Gentleman knows better than that. He knows, or should know, that for many years we have been recruiting prison officers substantially faster than the rise in the prison population. If he has studied the figures, he knows that I have already announced that 1,960 prison officers will be recruited in the course of next year. That is 1,360 more than the expected wastage rate. I quite agree that the provision of extra places that I have announced will need staffing, and I made that clear in my statement.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman is perfectly correct to say that in some places there has been a problem about the absence of police and prison officers in courts where the magistrate or the judge expected them to be. I have discussed this with the Lord Chief Justice and steps are in hand to make sure that in each local situation those concerned—the chief constable, the prison governor and those responsible for the administration of the courts—get together to find a common-sense solution to that problem.

Miss Janet Fookes (Plymouth, Drake): May I remind my right hon. Friend that many of the problems that he has pinpointed today were pinpointed in the report of a Select Committee that I chaired in the mid-1970s, and that at that time the then Labour Government singularly failed to grapple with any of them? May I further impress upon my right hon. Friend the need to look at alternative means of imprisonment, particularly at the day fine system as a means of keeping fine defaulters out of prison, and at the new suggestions for electronic surveillance of people who do not need to be in prison?

Mr. Hurd: I thank my hon. Friend for that helpful contribution. She is perfectly right. We shall certainly tackle the possibilities of electronic tagging when we put forward our ideas on punishment in the community. I am keen that it should not be regarded as something separate or as a gimmick, but that it should find its place, if there is a place for it, in our general approach to punishment in the community.

My hon. Friend is also right about fine defaulters. They form a small part of the prison population, about 500 at any given time, and they are sent to prison by the courts only as a last resort. It would be more sensible if, in the beginning, the courts could assess offenders' means more accurately when they fix a fine, and we propose to help them to do that.

Mr. Peter Archer (Warley, West): On reflection, does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the terminology of the free market about suppliers and consumers, where there is no consumer choice, shows too firm a determination to prime ministerial doctrine? As he has told the House that the Government's repressive policy on parole has contributed 2,000 prisoners to the crisis, why not discontinue that policy?

Mr. Hurd: I do not think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman is right. The courts place the demand on the prison system. It is perfectly reasonable to describe it as a demand which has to be met with action on the supply of prison places. That phraseology is perfectly right.

It is perfectly true that my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), my predecessor, imposed restrictions on parole, which I have continued and which I believe to be entirely justified. As the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows, the Parole Board has gone considerably further than that. Most of the increase that I have mentioned does not relate to the policy of successive Home Secretaries, but to the spontaneous action of the Parole Board going wider than that. That matter will be discussed.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the initiatives that he has announced this afternoon will be welcomed outside the House as well as within it, particularly by the police, who have been obliged to devote a disproportionate amount of their manpower to acting as temporary prison warders?

Does my right hon. Friend agree that additional prison accommodation can be made available far more quickly by the private sector than by the public sector? Is he aware that a number of companies and consortia would be able and willing to build prisons and then either lease them or sell them to the Government and that that would produce accommodation far more quickly? There are companies and consortia waiting to do that. Will he consider that possibility and implement it as soon as possible?

Mr. Hurd: Absolutely. That is one of the proposals that I have announced. We have had approaches from a good many companies proposing to build and lease or build and sell. We are now saying, "Give us the precise ideas; let us discuss them with you." My hon. Friend is right: there is more scope than we have realised or used in the past for using the private sector to accelerate the provision of prison places. The matter becomes more difficult when we get into the problems of private management. I answered a question from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) about remand in connection with that point.

Mr. Gerald Bermingham (St. Helens, South): Does the Home Secretary agree that part of the problem—we all agree that there is a crisis in the prisons—could well be solved by taking two simple and effective measures tonight—first, to release those who are currently in prison for non-payment of fines and, secondly, to release those who are in prison for non-payment of maintenance? That would at least create approximately 1,000 places overnight and go a long way towards solving the police station problem.

Does the Home Secretary agree that there is a little irony in his statement this afternoon because his hon. Friend the Minister of State rejected out of hand the day fine system when it was considered in Committee as recently as a few weeks ago? Is not the truth of the matter that the Home Secretary is not prepared to take the bold and imaginative steps necessary to solve what is becoming a perennial crisis?

Mr. Hurd: I certainly do not think that I would be justified in letting out of prison, by some form of executive release, people whom the courts have sent to prison as a last resort for non-payment of fine. That would be quite wrong. Many people have considered that problem and have started by saying that it must be wrong that fine defaulters are in prison and ended by acknowledging, as did the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley), with his knowledge of the matter, that, in the last resort, the courts must have that right. The figure is about 500 at any one time. The answer is to make the level of fine realistic in the first place; that is what we are concentrating on.

Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (Lancaster): May I assume, since I have written to my right hon. Friend on the subject, that he is well aware that ever since I came to this place, I have been promised by successive Home Secretaries that when the lease of Lancaster castle ran out, the prison would be removed? The city and county councils were hoping to make a superb tourist attraction on this site, and are very disappointed that my right hon. Friend will now hang on to it. Will he promise me here and

[Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman]

now that if the prison population falls more rapidly than expected, he will relinquish the prison at the earliest possible moment, and enable us to use it for tourist purposes?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend and I have clambered over the roof of Lancaster castle together and I know how devoted she is to it, and how ambitious she and her constituents are for taking it out of prison use and making a tourist attraction of it. I have to disappoint her, and I hope that I warned her and the Duchy of Lancaster in good time that we need to hang on to it for prison purposes. I cannot give her a date when that will come to an end. Obviously, if her hopes were to be justified and there was a rapid fall in the prison population, we would look at the matter again, with the legitimate ambitions of the people of Lancaster for their castle very much in mind.

Mr. Martin Flannery (Sheffield, Hillsborough): Is it not a fact that, under this Government, the prison population has increased by some 20 per cent. — an abnormal increase — and that there is something seriously wrong with the Government under whom this is occurring? Will the Secretary of State study the reports from the last three Select Committees on Education, Science and Arts about prison education? Although prisons are now pregnant with violence, education is made more and more difficult. There are not enough warders to look after those who wish to be educated and to take them from place to place, and nothing is being done to help prisoners, despite our reports.

Mr. Hurd: The prison population was rising long before 1979. The difference is that we have done something to provide prison places, when the Labour Government did not. The hon. Member is on to a good point about prison education, and I know that he has followed this for many years. However, he paints too gloomy a picture. There have been major problems in the regimes, which have affected education, but that tide is beginning to turn. I was at Bristol prison on Friday and I was impressed by the educational facilities there, which have been improved.

Mr. David Wilshire (Spelthorne): Will my right hon. Friend comment further on the third of the measures that he announced — the re-use of Ashford remand centre, Middlesex, which is in my constituency, because this is an issue of major concern for those whom I represent? There are four points which they would like clarified. First, the announcement this afternoon referred to bringing Ashford remand centre back into use for 400 inmates, when 376 are being moved out this week. Can my right hon. Friend assure my constituents that overcrowding will not become a problem in this centre when it is brought back into use?

Secondly, how is the remand centre to be staffed, come the late autumn? Will it be by prision officers or by private contractors? Thirdly, will bringing this back into use result in the abandonment or delay of the proposals for redevelopment, because many people locally wish to see the proposals abandoned? Fourthly, will my right hon. Friend give the undertaking that has been given in the past to liaise closely both with me as the local Member of Parliament and with local councillors, so that the community is well aware of what is going on?

Mr. Hurd: Those are reasonable questions, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the tone in which he put them. Four hundred is a round figure, and we have to work out in greater detail what is an acceptable level of occupation. The staffing will be by prison officers and not by soldiers. The redevelopment plan still exists, so it is delayed rather than abandoned. The answer to the last question is, yes, certainly, we shall keep in close touch with the local authorities, with the local people and with my hon. Friend.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): Will the Home Secretary address himself to the central question which he has so far ignored, which is why it is that we send more of our citizens to prison per head of population than any other country in western Europe, yet neither our streets nor our citizens are safer as a result? Will he admit that prisons are overcrowded not as a result of people being in prison because they have committed violent crime — there would be no disagreement about that — but because they are cluttered with petty offenders, who are on short sentences in local prisons? Therefore, as a matter of urgency, will he address his attention to the evidence that is coming from the National Association of Probation Officers, so that we solve this problem not by building more prisons but by using other forms of treatment for people who are in prison but should not be?

Mr. Hurd: The trouble is that one man's petty offender is another man's dangerous housebreaker. That is decided not by the hon. Member or by me but by the courts, case by case. That is the answer to the hon. Gentleman's question. I want to build up for the courts a wider menu or set of alternatives to custody for the non-violent offenders. That is precisely what we are doing.

Mr. Simon Burns (Chelmsford): My right hon. Friend's statement will be warmly welcomed, and nowhere more than in Chelmsford, where the young offenders' prison has been greatly over-subscribed in the past few months. Is not a great deal of time wasted by prison officers who have to go between the prisons and the courts with prisoners and sit in the dock with them while their cases are being heard? Is he prepared to consider privatising that part of the service, so that prison officers can be released to get back to working in the prisons?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend is quite right to say that the amount of time spent by prison officers in escort duties of different kinds weighs heavily on the service. It is the other side of the coin about which the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) was talking when he was complaining that there were not enough of them. The Green Paper will go into this and all other aspects of possibly involving the private sector in the remand system.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I believe that I have now called all those who are directly affected by this statement. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I have no exact knowledge of which hon. Member has a prison in his constituency. I ask hon. Members, in view of the business before the House today, and there is a great deal of it, to ask brief questions so that we can have brief answers and get on.

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): In the light of the recent evidence given by the prison service to the Public Accounts Committee on the gross under-utilisation of prison workshops, is it not clear that the reason for their under-utilisation is the problem of warder power, and the fact that one cannot run industrial workshops in prison

conditions if those in charge regard themselves as part of a penal institution? Is there not a sensible argument for bringing the private sector into the management of those workshops, to give some new objectives and to set a different scene, in which prisoners can enjoy rehabilitation?

Mr. Hurd: That is exactly what we are doing. A good many workshops were closed because they were not properly organised and used. We are relying more and more on private sector advice in building up from that position. In most workshops there have to be discipline staff, or the instructors will feel insecure. The number of uniformed staff necessary in a workshop will differ from one prison to another, but within the limits of security, the fewer uniformed staff one needs in that place the better.

Mr. Andrew Rowe (Mid-Kent): My right hon. Friend is aware of the successful experiment in Kent, which has kept a large number of people out of institutions altogether. Given the enormous cost of what he is proposing, will he look again at his Department's view that when an experiment in community care, or any other such scheme, is a success, the cost of it has to fall wholly on the local authority? Should he not look at using some of his central funds to expand and increase such experiments?

Mr. Hurd: Of course we do that. As my hon. Friend knows, depending on the exact service involved, the costs are rightly shared between central and local responsibility. As we develop and publish our proposals for punishment in the community — for dealing with people outside prison—we shall tackle the question of financing.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does the Minister accept that the remand problem would be diminished if more people were treated like Ernest Saunders, who seems to be able to flit round Europe with consummate ease? Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that there is a more fundamental question behind the massive explosion in the prison population that he described in his statement and that the philosophy of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost, encapsulated in the so-called enterprise culture, in fact breeds crime? The Government seem very lacklustre in their efforts to chase city spivs who make millions of pounds but very keen on burdening our prisons with petty criminals. Does the Minister accept that we need a change in the Government's philosophy? In particular, they should set an example by stopping robbing the taxpayer as they did over Rover.

Mr. Hurd: No Government have taken more initiatives more effectively than this Government to clamp down on fraud; the hon. Gentleman knows that perfectly well. No other Government in recent times have done more to emphasise the responsibilities of the citizen as well as the enterprise of the citizen, which, as the hon. Gentleman rightly says, we are encouraging.

Sir Anthony Grant (Cambridgeshire, South-West): Is my right hon. Friend aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) and I drew the attention of his Department to the deplorable state of affairs in Bedford remand prison, where prisoners are three to a cell, where there are top security prisoners and where slum conditions prevail? We had a helpful meeting with a junior Minister at the Department on the subject. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that the measures that he announced today will make an early contribution to solving the extremely urgent problem in Bedford?

Mr. Hurd: My first priority is to reduce the number of prisoners going into police cells night by night because the conditions there are just as bad — perhaps in some cases worse—than those in Bedford, and there is the danger of escape and the diversion of police from their proper duties. My hon. Friend is perfectly right that another aim must be to reduce overcrowding, which is unacceptable, particularly in local prisons such as Bedford, and especially among the remand population.

Mr. Ken Eastham (Manchester, Blackley): Does not the Minister's announcement today confirm the record increase in crime? The Minister said that there were four causes: an increase in detentions, longer sentences, reduced parole and an increase in the remand population. Should he not have mentioned a fifth cause, which is that people are being placed in prison when they should really be in mental hospitals? Because of the inadequacies of the Health Service, patients are now being dumped at the doors of prisons when they should be somewhere else. It is because of those inadequacies that the prison officers are having to cope with the problem. Is it not about time that there was consultation between the Home Secretary and the Department of Health and Social Security with a view to making some changes?

Mr. Hurd: The thrust of the hon. Gentleman's argument is right, if the rhetoric is stripped away. There are still too many mentally disordered offenders in prison, although there are fewer than there used to be, and the right answer is to find the right institution, case by case and person by person. We constantly work both nationally and locally to do that.

Mr. Geoffrey Dickens (Littleborough and Saddleworth): All those concerned with law and order will welcome the Home Secretary's statement. However, why does the Home Office persist in locating prisons to the convenience of the courts and prison visitors? Why can we not locate prisons to the convenience of local residents? As my right hon. Friend knows, a prison is to be located on the outskirts of Rochdale and Oldham in my constituency. Why cannot prisons be built in remote areas or even on islands?

Mr. Hurd: Because it is both risky and extremely expensive to locate prisons, particularly remand prisons, a long way from the courts that they serve. My hon. Friend will no doubt be glad to hear that in France people clamour for prisons to be built in their constituencies because of the employment that they provide.

Mr. Gerry Steinberg (City of Durham): I am sure that the Home Secretary will be aware that I have three prisons in my constituency. The Government have completely lost the confidence of the Prison Officers Association by reneging on the "fresh start" agreement with that association. That distrust has led to the prospect of industrial action at one of the most dangerous prisons in the country, Frankland prison. Instead of opening Army camps, which are not necessary given that there are empty prison wings all over the country, why does not the Home Secretary honour the "fresh start" agreement and recruit prison officers to get on and do the job properly?

Mr. Hurd: We are recruiting prison officers as fast as we possibly can. I have given the House the figures, which show that next year we plan to recruit 1,960 against an expected wastage of 600. An enormous increase is taking place, and I entirely reject the assertion that we are reneging on "fresh start". "Fresh start" gives those of the hon. Gentleman's constituents who are prison officers a properly organised professional service for the first time. To take industrial action against it, in Frankland—or, even more damaging, in London—is a self-destructive act on the part of prison officers.

Mr. Nigel Forman (Carshalton and Wallington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that his announcement that 1,300 extra prison places will be provided in the south-east will be particularly welcome in the context of the remand problem? Is not one of the root difficulties the delay in the process of justice? is there not a case for his pressing upon the Lord Chancellor the recruitment of more circuit judges to speed up the process?

Mr. Hurd: That has already happened. There is also the problem of the Crown prosecution service, and my hon. Friend will know of the steps that my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General is taking to put more resources into the CPS. Furthermore, there are the natural delays in the law. We have dealt with the question of time limits. We are anxious to use every pressure that we legitimately can to cut down delays.

Mr. Derek Fatchett (Leeds, Central): Does the Home Secretary recall the plans announced by his Department two years ago, which were aimed at reducing overcrowding in several prisons, including Leeds prison? At that time the population of Leeds prison was 1,200 against a certified normal accommodation of 650. The population of Leeds prison is now 1,400, and the prison continues to exist only because of the good will and hard work of the staff. What hope does the Home Secretary's statement hold out for the prison staff and what will it do to reduce the massive overcrowding in Leeds prison? Will there be a substantial reduction?

Mr. Hurd: The hon. Gentleman is right that Leeds prison has steadily become more overcrowded, and it survives—it does much more than that; it does very well—because of the high morale and the hard and constructive work of its staff. When I went there not long ago, I was very impressed to find that it was planned to make a success of "fresh start" and the new flexibility that that gave. As I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) our first aim must be to ease the numbers of prisoners in police cells night by night. Our second aim must certainly be to relieve the pressure on overcrowded large local prisons such as Leeds. As the medium and long-term measures that I have announced come into effect, that should happen.

Mr. Greg Knight (Derby, North): Does my right hon. Friend accept that he need not take lectures from Opposition Members, given the disgraceful cut in the prison building programme under the last Labour Government? On the subject of Army camps, can my right hon. Friend tell us what sort of prisoners he envisages being sent there and whether they will be secure? I welcome my right hon. Friend's announcement about private sector involvement, but how soon does he envisage the private sector providing substantial extra places?

Mr. Hurd: My hon. Friend's first point is perfectly right. Not just the prisons but the police and the law and order service as a whole were grossly neglected by the Labour party, as they would be again if it ever had the chance of establishing priorities. The prisoners in Rollestone and Camberley will be category C convicted. I do not exclude the possibility of using [illegible] provision for suitable remand prisoners, as we did with Rollestone in the autumn.

My hon. Friend asked about private sector involvement. In building, there are no handicaps or difficulties; it is full steam head. There is much to be done over bail hostels. On the management of convicted prisoners, I am hesitant. On the management of remand prisoners, there is plenty of scope for ideas and discussion and eventually for an experiment; that is what the Green Paper will illustrate.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): The statement is welcome for the relief that it will bring prisoners and prison staff, but the Home Secretary knows perfectly well that we will be here again next year with a similar emergency statement unless something is done about the supply side. Why is Britain so uniquely prone to sending people to prison? Is it because of the practice of the courts or because we create more crime—in which case, what will the Home Secretary do about it rather than pursue the irrelevancies of privatisation?

Mr. Hurd: We do not create more crime. If we compare our crime figures with those of our European partners, we do not find that we are a more criminal nation. It is certainly true that our courts send more people to prison than is the case in most European countries, although the judges dispute the statistics and say that they are not comparable. Nevertheless, the hon. Gentleman's general proposition is right. Parliament fixes the maxima and it is for the courts to decide, case by case, within those maxima what sentences to apply.

I have already answered the hon. Gentleman's main point. I do not believe that we should, or could, limit the courts' ability to make their own decisions case by case. I want, however, to spread before them for the lesser offender—especially the non-violent offender—a wider range of disposals outside prison so that they no longer think that it is only by sending someone to prison that they can impose a worthwhile punishment.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I shall call the five hon. Members who have been rising, but I ask for brief questions.

Mr. Patrick McLoughlin (Derbyshire, West): I think that my right hon. Friend said that 1,400 people are currently held on remand in police stations. Is he aware that two people who were held on remand in Chesterfield police station after allegedly committing an armed robbery escaped last Friday morning? Does he agree that, as long as people are held on remand in police stations, it will represent an extra burden on the police? Incidents such as occurred last week take up quite a lot of police time, so my right hon. Friend's statement is welcome—we hope that it will relieve some of the pressure on the police service.

Mr. Hurd: I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I said that the use of police cells for prisoners was dangerous, and that is precisely what I meant. We had the escape from Battersea of seven prisoners and I have had today a first

report of the escape from Chesterfield to which my hon. Friend referred. It underlines my point—the sooner we can reduce and then do away with the use of police cells for prisoners, the safer the system will be.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend estimate the size of the recidivist prison population? Does he agree that that group turns prisons into what Lord Justice May called universities of crime? Will my right hon. Friend continue to try to find means of rehabilitating prisoners so that they do not return to prison? What is being done to increase education and the prison work programme which, tragically, has declined recently?

Mr. Hurd: I agree with my hon. Friend. It is no longer fashionable to suppose that prison is a place where everybody can get reformed, and my hon. Friend is not arguing that case. The prison service and prison governors are clear that there are cases when a great deal can be done to prevent reoffending, and workshops and education are means of achieving that. That is why one purpose of "fresh start" is to make possible an improvement in regimes.

Mr. James Couchman (Gillingham): My right hon. Friend has made it absolutely clear how unacceptable it is to hold 1,400 people on remand in police cells, quite often many hundreds of miles away from their homes and from the scene of their crimes. What he has announced today is entirely welcome. When he uses Rollestone and Camberley, what will be the status of any military personnel who are used to guard the camps? What status does he envisage for any prison officers who might be outside the POA but used in contract remand prisons in the future?

Mr. Hurd: On the second part of my hon. Friend's question, it is too early to say, but that is a matter which the Green Paper will have to study. Camberley and Rollestone will be prisons. They will be designated as such and I shall appoint prison governors. There will be administrative grades to look after them. The military personnel employed will be in the same relationship as they were in 1980 and 1981, which is the last time that military personnel were used to look after prisoners. The ones who are in contact with prisoners will be military police and provost personnel, not other soldiers. I believe that the system will work smoothly, as it did last time.

Mr. John M. Taylor (Solihull): I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, but what accommodation does he propose for that small but significant number of offenders who fall between the various sections of the Mental Health Act 1983? They are quite unsuitable to be in prison but are either inadequate or unsafe to be at large?

Mr. Hurd: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has a responsibility there and the Home Office and his Department have to keep in close touch locally and nationally on certain cases to ensure that we keep the kind of people about whom my hon. Friend spoke out of prison.

Mr. Chris Butler (Warrington, South): My right hon. Friend will be aware of the deplorable conditions that exist in remand centres such as Risley, which need urgent attention. May I urge my right hon. Friend to be less tentative than issuing a Green Paper and going through a possibly lengthy system of consultation, and get down to the immediate relief that the private sector could bring?

Mr. Hurd: I do not think that the private sector could bring immediate relief. Even an experiment, if it was to be worth while, would need a change in the law, which would certainly be contested. I have to have regard to the industrial relations side. As my right hon. Friend knows, the planning side is also difficult. We would not solve any of the planning problems of new prisons or remand centres by privatising. We need to push ahead with our thinking on this matter. I hope relief action will be the result. It is a major step and it must be carefully weighed and worked out in British terms.

Mr. Hattersley: Can the Home Secretary clear up the confusion about day fines? He seemed in answer to a question to be very sympathetic towards their introduction, but his Minister of State explicitly ruled them out in Committee a few weeks ago. Could we be told whether the Government are in favour or against? Will he confirm that 56,200 is the Home Office estimate of the prison population, but that he decided not to give the figure to the House?

Mr Hurd: On the first point, what I said and what I repeat is that, as regards fines, we are considering ways of helping the courts to assess offenders' means more accurately when they fix a fine. *[Interruption.]* No, that has been our policy for a long time. The figure I mentioned in my statement was 52,000 this year. One cannot be precise about the figures for the future. That is why I did not give a figure for after the summer of this year. On present projections, the population will continue to rise quickly. That is why I have announced 4,200 extra places. If we can get the short term and the medium term right, that will join in with the results from our longer-term building programme and the problem will begin to be solved.

Workington Brewery (Closure)

4.27 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The proposed closure of the Workington brewery by Scottish and Newcastle Breweries in contravention of assurances given to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1986 to safeguard employment in Workington."

The House will recognise that, while the matter is specific to my constituency, it is important to the country as a whole because Scottish and Newcastle has set out clearly in the leaked minutes which I have in my possession, and which were referred to in *The Independent* this morning, to deceive the people of Workington in an unparalleled manner.

Last year, Scottish and Newcastle successfully acquired the profitable Mathew Brown brewery on the back of a collapsing stock market and having given half-hearted assurances to the people of Workington and the Government that it would not threaten jobs. No sooner had it acquired control of the company than it set up a small group of senior management to plan the brewery's closure.

The plan involved opportunism, dishonesty, deception and betrayal. Directors of the company, often pillars of the community in areas where they live, were party to a squalid and underhand operation which, under the code name "Operation Trojan", planned the deception of the trade unions during negotiations on wages; an attempt to appoint a company placeman in the unionised work force without the knowledge of the unions; the manipulation of regional development grant applications to avoid raising premature suspicions among employees; the use of Scottish and Newcastle's big guns if things became difficult; the handling of misleading information in response to local speculation and local opposition; the holding of covert brewing trials under false labels in Newcastle; and the deployment of the lie in defence of the company's interests.

The irony is that Virgil tells us that the use of the Trojan horse to get access to Troy was the means by which the Greeks gained control and destroyed the city. Scottish and Newcastle's Operation Trojan was equally designed to gain control by deception and deceit, and then having secured control, to destroy the Mathew Brown citadel in Workington. Mr. Speaker, can we debate this matter.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"The proposed closure of the Workington brewery by Scottish and Newcastle breweries in contravention of the assurances given to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1986 to safeguard employment in Workington."

I have listened with concern to what the hon. Member has said, but I regret that the matter that he has raised is not appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

Scottish Schools (Legislation)

4.31 pm

Mr. Donald Dewar (Glasgow, Garscadden): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will be aware of the correspondence between the Prime Minister's Secretary and his opposite number is the Secretary of State for Scotland's Office, which has been widely reported in the press.

It reveals a dangerous abuse of power, with the Prime Minister dictating policy and tactical detail. The Prime Minister has in effect instructed the Secretary of State to enter into a scandalous conspiracy with one of his own Back Benchers to introduce powers to allow schools to opt out of the education system.

That is offensive because there is no case for that alien innovation which will fragment the school system and make it more difficult to provide real opportunity to all children across the whole range of educational and social backgrounds.

It is doubly offensive because Ministers have repeatedly denied that there was any such intention. For example, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, who I am glad to see is present, on 14 August 1987, at a press conference launching his discussion document on school boards,

"emphasised that the proposals for Scotland would not allow school boards to opt out of the local authority sector."

On 21 March 1988, the same Minister speaking in the Scottish Grand Committee, claimed that the only circumstance in which opting out would be considered was "if there was evidence of real and substantial demand".—[*Official Report, Scottish Grand Committee*, 21 March 1988; c. 37.]

There is no such evidence, and it is a disgrace that on the very day that the Minister was giving what now seems to be a worthless assurance from a discredited source, the Prime Minister, presumably finding herself at a loose end for five minutes, was wishing on Scotland a dangerous nonsense, unwanted by parents and pupils alike.

This is a matter of great importance because it promises enormous damage to Scotland's independent and proud education system, and because it gives a chilling insight into the way in which the Prime Minister dictates to her Ministers in this case forcing a change of course despite undertakings freely given. There is a question here of faith and credibility.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, the abundant evidence that, in connection with a recent education order on school closures, the Secretary of State was not master in his own office. That charge has been totally justified by this further example of the Prime Minister's malign influence. The Secretary of State has been forced to swallow his pride, and, much more seriously, the Prime Minister's policies. It is essential that those policies should not now be forced on Scotland's schools. The matter is urgent because we know from the correspondence that meetings are imminent. We fear that there may be an all too unequal contest between the Secretary of State's duty to represent Scotland and the Prime Minister's entrenched prejudice.

There should be a statement and an assurance that there will be an end to this unwelcome invasion of our affairs by the Prime Minister. That assurance should be given now, before the House rises. I appeal through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Government to give us that assurance and to act now to put an end to this nonsense.

Mr. Speaker: I have seen the reports and I listened to the radio at lunchtime. I understand the hon. Member's concern but, as he correctly stated, it is not for me to say whether there should be a statement. I am certain that those who are responsible for these matters will have heard what has been said.

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that we are to have an education debate during the first week after the Easter recess, would it not be perfectly logical for the Secretary of State to make a full statement during that debate so that hon. Members can make up their minds on the issue?

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. We look to you to protect the interests of the House in this matter. What has been disclosed today is appalling in its sheer dishonesty. We have a major change of policy to be announced, in contradiction to a ministerial assurance very recently given, by means of a planted amendment to a Bill which has not even had its Second Reading. We know that the Secretary of State for Scotland has become the Prime Minister's lapdog, but that does not excuse him or the Prime Minister treating the House with utter contempt and dishonesty. We ask you, Mr. Speaker, to protect the House and to demand a statement from the Leader of the House.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: May I say to Scottish Members who are rising to intervene on this matter that there is not very much I can do about it. The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has said that there is a Bill. I was not aware that there was a Bill to be debated shortly after we return from the Easter recess. I have no knowledge of any amendments having been tabled. They have not yet been brought to my attention.

Mr. John Marshall (Hendon, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not high time that these bogus points of order, started by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar)—whose child has been opted out of the state education system—are brought to an end so that we can get on with discussing the Housing (Scotland) Bill?

Mr. Speaker: I do not recognise the phrase that the hon. Member used. I know that this is a matter of high interest and concern in Scotland, but I must say to hon. Members that we have a heavy day of Scottish business before us, followed by the Merchant Shipping Bill. I ask that we get on with that, as there is not much that I can do about the matter.

Mr. Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, will agree that it is of the utmost importance that hon. Members who are about to break for a brief recess to meet their constituents during the next 10 days, prior to debate on the education Bill which has been referred to, should go home with better information for their Scottish constituencies than mere newspaper reports, which are well-founded in that they emanate from 10 Downing street, and that we as Members of Parliament should have proper information in the form of a statement from the Minister, or indeed, the Secretary of State?

We should not have to go home to our constituents—my constituents have already been on the phone to me this morning—and explain to them, on the basis of newspaper reports, what the Prime Minister has leaked to the newspapers. That information is not only highly alarming to Members of Parliament and our constituents but seeks to destroy the fundamental education system in Scotland and will deeply damage our educational system by integrating it with the English system. That is why a statement is needed today.

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): I have no new policy to state, but I hope that it may be helpful if I state the position as I understand it. The Government's policy on the involvement of parents in the management of schools has been clearly spelt out. That policy is given effect in the School Boards (Scotland) Bill, which was introduced on 16 March and which is to have its Second Reading after Easter. That Bill does not contain provisions for opting out and the Government do not propose to include such provisions in the Bill. As for future policy, the Secretary of State and the Ministers have made it clear on several occasions that opting out may be considered for future legislation, but no decisions have yet been reached.

Mr. Dewar: Further to that point of order. Mr. Speaker. It is unsatisfactory for the Leader of the House to say that no decisions have been made, when, according to press reports, there has been actual correspondence with the Prime Minister's office that makes it absolutely clear that a decision has been taken in principle and that it is merely the tactics of implementation that have to be considered. The credibility and honour of the Under-Secretary, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) are very much at stake. He has given repeated assurances that the Government will not go down that road. All that the Leader of the House did was make it even more imperative that there should be a statement from a responsible Minister to clear up this mystery and allow us to put the point that this nonsense must be taken off the agenda now.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that we can take the matter any further today. I am not responsible for whether Ministers make statements. The Leader of the House has already stated the factual position concerning this newspaper leak. I do not think that there is any way in which I can assist the House.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Leaving aside the damaging policy implications, a much more important underlying revelation in the newspaper articles is the subversion of the policy-making role of the Secretary of State for Scotland. Scottish Members do not have the advantage of a Select Committee that can summon Ministers and civil servants before it to get to the bottom of the matter. The Leader of the House should therefore consider what should be done about it this afternoon.

Mr. Martin O'Neill (Clackmannan): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Did the Leader of the House make a statement or an intervention? If it was a statement, we should be entitled to question the Leader of the House.

Mr. Speaker: I think that the Leader of the House rose to give the factual position in an effort to assist Scottish Members who have important business to discuss today by giving an indication of the business after we return from

[Mr. Speaker]

the Easter recess. I think that the Leader of the House was seeking to suggest that that was the appropriate time for this matter to be discussed.

Mr. O'Neill: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. What is the position when a Bill has received its First Reading and there is clear evidence to the effect that a substantial change is to be made before the Bill receives its Second Reading? Can you explain to me how we can properly debate the contents of that Bill if we do not know the exact nature of the policy changes?

Major changes are often made in Committee, but normally that is done on the understanding that circumstances have changed. There is ample evidence to show that the Government's policy has changed since the Bill was published. The House is entitled to guidance from you on the procedural significance of a change between the First Reading and the Second Reading of a Bill. We cannot have a proper Second Reading debate if the contents of the Bill have not been made known to the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman was present when I gave my previous answer, but I shall repeat what I said in one sentence. The Bill does not contain provisions for opting out and the Government do not propose to include such provisions in the Bill.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. With the greatest possible respect, will you not reflect on the fact that the Leader of the House has made a business statement? A business statement is normally followed by questions. The Leader of the House has been courteous and has given a further explanation. I respectfully ask you to say that Opposition Members, particularly from Scotland, should be allowed to probe further the Government's thinking on this very important issue. That is a reasonable request, in the absence of the Secretary of State for Scotland coming to the House to make a statement.

Mr. Speaker: In seeking to be helpful to Scottish Members, I am not certain that the Leader of the House is in a position to answer factual questions. That is surely not a matter for him. The original point of order from the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) contained a request for a statement. It was perfectly legitimate for him to ask for a statement, and the Leader of the House gave the factual position. I do not think that we can take the matter any further.

Mr. Millan: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Following the points that you have fairly made, could not the matter be resolved if the Leader of the House gave an undertaking that the Secretary of State for Scotland will make a statement tomorrow? That is what we are asking for. Why can we not have such an undertaking?

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can you confirm your responsibility for the protection of the business of the House? You must be becoming aware, as we are, that there is a plot on the other side of the House to use bogus points of order to prolong business that is not on the Order Paper, thus preventing the House from considering very important legislation. It must be within your power and discretion to prevent abuse of the House by bogus points of order and to let us get on with the business.

Mr. Speaker: That is what I am seeking to do. However, the hon. Member does not represent a Scottish constituency. He may not know the background to these points of order and he may not therefore understand the concern of Scottish Members. The Leader of the House has been very helpful and has stated the factual position. I do not think that we can take it any further this afternoon. The time to raise it is tomorrow during Prime Minister's Questions or at business questions. Today the House has to consider further very important Scottish business following a very late night and also the Report stage of the Merchant Shipping Bill.

Mr. Harry Ewing (Falkirk, East): further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry that the Leader of the House has left the Chamber. I apologise for the comment that I am about to make in his absence. He tried to be helpful to the House, but I have to advise you that the Leader of the House repeated word for word what the Prime Minister recorded at 1 o'clock today in a television interview in Scotland that is to be broadcast tonight. My view is that the Leader of the House is protecting the interests of the Prime Minister. It is well known that there will be another row tomorrow because of what the Prime Minister has gone to Scotland to say today.

As for the Bill to which the Leader of the House referred, according to the *Glasgow Herald* the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) is to be given an amendment to that Bill and the Government are to use it to set out their policy. In a sense, that is much more acceptable than the shabby way in which the House and the Secretary of State have been treated. I have a lot of sympathy for the Secretary of State for Scotland. He is becoming an object of pity. Because of the activities of the Under-Secretary of state for Scotland, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth), the Secretary of State for Scotland can hardly turn his back now.

My point of order for you, Mr. Speaker, is the accuracy of the record. The Scottish Grand Committee met in Edinburgh on 21 March. The letter from the Prime Minister's private secretary to the Secretary of State for Scotland is dated 14 March. The Minister must have known on 21 March the contents of that letter when he made a statement in the Scottish Grand Committee which is now on the record and clearly shown to be untrue.

Surely you, Mr. Speaker, as the custodian of the report's accuracy, are under an obligation to act on the way in which it has represented the matter, when something completely different was going on behind the scenes.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has no idea of what is going on behind the scenes, and I cannot be held responsible for what Ministers say. Nor can I be held responsible for what is in letters that are leaked to the newspapers.

I fully understand the concern of Scottish Members about the matter, but I say to them again that I do not feel that anything further can be said about it today. No doubt we shall return to it during Prime Minister's Questions tomorrow, and, as the Leader of the House has been present today, we may have a further opportunity to

discuss it then. Today, however, in the interests of the whole House, we would be well advised to get on with the Report stage of the Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Time is getting on, but I am in the hands of the House. If Scottish Members wish to pursue the matter in this way, they may do so, but they must take the consequences.

Mr. Norman Buchan (Paisley, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The problem could be solved. Three Scottish Office Ministers are present, including one who is directly involved in the argument that we have been having today. He can clear the whole matter up. He can let us know whether it is true that there was a planted question, and that he was aware of the exchange of letters when he made his statement to the Scottish Grand Committee on 21 March. He can tell us that he or the Secretary of State is prepared to come here tomorrow to make a clean breast of the whole matter.

It must be kept in mind that the school that occasioned much of this, although the whole of Scottish education is now affected, was in Paisley, involving my constituency and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley, North (Mr. Adams). The matter was raised by the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), who has already been endeavouring to distort any sane and sensible solution for comprehensive education in Paisley.

You have handled the matter, Mr. Speaker. We must thank you for allowing us to say what we have said. But this is a crucial issue: the present position cannot continue.

Strathclyde region is now discussing the future of the schools. If we are now told that there will be a planted question to change the proposed Bill, that future can be altered. Strathclyde region now needs to know whether the Government intend to go ahead with what the Under-Secretary has been conspiring with the Prime Minister to achieve. Will he tell us today either that he will make a statement, or, perhaps, that the Secretary of State intends to resign? He has been sufficiently humiliated; I believe that he is prevented from resigning only by his knowledge that the Under-Secretary would take his place, and has put his country before his honour to save us from that prospect.

The Leader of the House has spoken. Why cannot one of the three Scottish Office Ministers make a clean breast of the matter, so that we know where we are?

Mr. Brian Wilson (Cunninghame, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We have here an episode that is probably more corrupt and devious than anything that those of us who have been Members of the House since last June have witnessed in Scottish affairs——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Accusations of corruption in the House are not parliamentary. I ask that the hon. Gentleman withdraw that.

Mr. Wilson: I used the word in its dictionary sense, but I shall withdraw it if it has been taken in another way.

Three Scottish Ministers are sitting on the Front Bench, one of whom is at the centre of this web. One Minister has been exposed as having colluded with the Prime Minister and the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) to achieve an end with the specific purpose of deceiving the House. The hon. Member for Stirling — Mr. Forsyth Limited——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Hon. Members do not refer to each other in that way either.

Mr. Wilson: When the Scottish Grand Committee met recently in Edinburgh, the Under-Secretary — the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth)—spoke twice, at the beginning and at the end of the debate. Surely he, as a central figure in this squalid affair, can now come to the Dispatch Box and answer for his role in it.

Mr. Alexander Eadie (Midlothian): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) talked about a conspiracy. I agree that there is a conspiracy. You, Mr. Speaker, have a responsibility when there is a conspiracy involving what I would describe as a corruption of power by the Executive.

This is a serious matter. When an hon. Member has been discovered to be economical with the truth — although he may well have been in error — he has a responsibility to come to the Dispatch Box. The House is always very generous, when people err, about any statement that they may make in Parliament; and, after all, the Scottish Grand Committee is an adjunct of Parliament.

This is not a criminal matter. If power corrupts a Government and the Executive try to corrupt power, Mr. Speaker has responsibility in that regard. He must examine the matter closely.

There are 50 Members of Parliament in Scotland—a quarter of the Opposition. They cannot be treated in such an arrogant and conceited way. It was not sufficient for the Leader of the House to come and make a statement. He made a statement, and then he left. We sympathise with your difficulty, Mr. Speaker, but we want an undertaking from the Treasury Bench that the Secretary of State for Scotland will come to the House tomorrow and make a statement. The Government have been found out, and, in all honesty, they should apologise to the House and make a statement to clarify the position.

Mr. Michael Fallon (Darlington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is this not a clear abuse of the procedures of the House, and is it not patently obvious that, on education matters, the Government have the Opposition on the run? In view of that, should we not now move on to housing policy, and give the feeble 48 a little time in which to recover?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already said to the House, and I believe that the whole House accepts it, that there is nothing that the Chancellor can do about this matter. I understand the strong feelings of hon. Members. They have vented those strong feelings, and they are asking for more information. But the Leader of the House has stated the factual position, and I think that the time has come to move on to the next business.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Well, I am in the hands of the House.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek your guidance on what may be a breach of parliamentary procedure. Today, in Scotland, the Prime Minister said in an interview conducted by Miss Fiona Ross on Scottish Television that the school boards' proposal was simply a stepping stone on the way to an opting-out policy, and that legislation would be introduced soon. Should not that statement have been made from the Dispatch Box by a Minister responsible for Scottish education?

Mr. Cranley Onslow (Woking): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker—if it was a point of order, which I somehow doubt. You said just now that you were in the hands of the House in this matter. I put it to you, Mr. Speaker, that the House is in your hands, in the sense that if points of order are not genuine, or are merely tedious repetition—if they have already been made and made again, and nothing new is being said—there is no need whatever for you to continue to take points of order.

Mr. Speaker: As ever, the right hon. Gentleman has made a very helpful comment.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The contribution from the chairman of the 1922 Committee was pretty tasteless, and in view of his ancestry he should be ashamed of it. I ask for a ruling arising from something that you said in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), when you referred to those responsible.

I believe that the good name of the House of Commons is at stake, in that when politicians are apparently responsible for unauthorised disclosures little or nothing happens, but when civil servants are responsible they can, like Clive Ponting, land up at the Old Bailey. There is a genuine argument relating to the good name of politicians as a whole. When civil servants are blamed, by innuendo or otherwise, one law applies, but when a disclosure is made apparently on political authority it is different. The Leader of the House has an obligation to tell the House on whose authority the letter was disclosed and whether there will be a leak inquiry.

In the past four days, on seven separate occasions, on two of which you, Mr. Speaker, were in the Chair, I quite legitimately raised the subject of the correspondence between Mr. Gray and Mr. Jeffrey as it affected educational testing and the Department of Education and Science. On each occasion, there was a light-hearted acknowledgement from the Secretary of State for Education and Science and no one said that I was wrong when I made the specific accusation that it had been done on the authority of the Prime Minister's secretary's press office.

The question——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot see any point of order for me in what the hon. Gentleman has said so far. Perhaps he will now come to his point of order and I will see whether I can deal with it.

Mr. Dalyell: My point of order is that the good name of the House of Commons is involved and that a leak inquiry should be announced tomorrow.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think that all the Scottish Members have had their say. I am not taking any more points of order on this Scottish matter.

Points of Order

5.2 pm

Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours (Workington): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Only if it is a totally different point of order will I take it.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: It is absolutely different, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday there was a statement to the House on the privatisation of Rover Group. My point of order relates to what is printed in *Hansard*, as against what may be available on the BBC tapes of our proceedings. At the end of my question, I asked:

"Is it not true that the only people who have benefited from this matter in the past few days, and indeed, today, are those who are speculating in BAe's shares who have pre-empted this decision and who will inevitably make a substantial gain?"—[*Official Report*, 29 March 1988; Vol. 130, c. 895.]

A Minister, from a sedentary position but within earshot of a number of my hon. Friends, was heard to say, "You don't understand. You don't understand. The shares have been suspended. There's no speculation." I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, whether you could arrange to have those words published in the *Official Report*. My reason is as follows.

British Aerospace shares were suspended at 1.6 pm yesterday at a buying price of 373p. They were returned to the market at 4.5 pm, when the buying price was quoted as 410p. In the next few hours, the price shot up to 435p. This meant that a 16 per cent. increase had taken place in the price of British Aerospace shares in the very period that I had identified in the Chamber. Taking into account the previous period of speculation from Monday morning, the increase was from 355p to 435p——

Mr. Speaker: Order. This seems to be a continuation of what took place yesterday. I do not see in *Hansard* this interjection from a sedentary position, and it cannot be part of the parliamentary record unless the hon. Member concerned was called by the Chair or the comment from a sedentary position was subsequently taken up. It was not subsequently taken up, so it is not part of our proceedings.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When I asked my question yesterday, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry, the hon. Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins), was sitting where the Scottish Minister is sitting now and it was from that position that he made the sedentary intervention. It is important——

Mr. Speaker: Order. Sadly, and incorrectly, all kinds of things are occasionally said from a sedentary position, but they are not part of our parliamentary proceedings.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. On yesterday's Order Paper and today's Order Paper a total of 58 questions appear, tabled by the hon. Member for Beaconsfield (Mr. Smith). I notified the hon. Gentleman that I intended to raise this matter.

In the introduction to the 1987 new Parliamentary edition of the Register of Members' Interests, there are nine specific classes under which Members are required to register their interests. The fourth class refers to

"the names of clients when the interests referred to above include personal services by the Member which arise out of or are related in any manner to his membership of the House."

The hon. Member for Beaconsfield is a consultant to Price Waterhouse. I understand that Price Waterhouse is building up a business plan and seeks the information. If the Order Paper is used to put down so many questions, where there is a direct fiduciary or pecuniary interest it should be entered in the Register of Members' Interests to make it clear that the activity is being undertaken for payment.

In my view—I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, share my view—Members should not ask parliamentary questions in return for payment, which seems to be the issue in this case. I hope, therefore, that you will produce a statement in the near future deprecating the practice so as to bring it to a halt.

Mr. Speaker: If the hon. Gentleman has a complaint of that kind, he should make it to the Select Committee on Members' Interests. That is the proper way to deal with it.

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This derives from what took place both today and about 10 days ago. My question is when a contribution from the Government Front Bench becomes a statement on which we can ask questions.

On the previous occasion, the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, came to the House late one night and made a short statement relating to the Sharpeville Six. Quite properly, she said that she had limited information and you, Mr. Speaker, equally properly in my view, said that she could not answer any further questions because she had nothing more to tell the House. On an earlier occasion, however, I recall that you ruled that when a Minister came to the Dispatch Box in reply to points of order, that made the contribution into a statement and rendered it open to questions from other parts of the House.

The matter has arisen again today. I ask your guidance on how a contribution by a Minister—in this case from the Leader of the House, although it would apply equally if the contribution had been from a Scottish Minister—in response to points of order becomes a statement on which the Minister concerned can be questioned in the normal and conventional way.

Mr. Speaker: It is true that on one occasion in the past when the Minister responsible made a comment from the Dispatch Box I allowed it to progress as a statement. Today, however, the Leader of the House was seeking to be helpful against the background of a very heavy day before the House. I was grateful for what he said; I think that he was seeking to be helpful to me as well as to the whole House.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) referred to what happened in the House yesterday and to the statement by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. He also mentioned the suspension of trading in British Aerospace shares and the altercation about that. Trading in the shares was suspended and then restarted, resulting in a 22 per cent. appreciation in value over three days and a 16 per cent. appreciation yesterday.

Notwithstanding the difficult position in which you are placed, Mr. Speaker—certainly with some of the points of order raised earlier—you have also been in somewhat of a predicament lately because this Government are treating themselves to a display of arrogance. They are rolling over the Opposition, which is all right; they do it at every opportunity, but we expect that. We know that that is the Government's role. However, the Government are now beginning to treat the Chair with contempt, as has been evident from all the events—*[Interruption.]* I am referring to the Executive, the whole of the Treasury Bench.

It would be easy for you, Mr. Speaker, to ascertain precisely what was said in the seated intervention to which my hon. Friend the Member for Workington referred. Many of us listened to the radio broadcast and clearly heard what the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry said. The Government are handing over £650 million of taxpayers' money, on the nod, to British Aerospace, while social security claimants, especially the pensioners and the disabled will be hammered during the next fortnight. It is important that the Opposition are allowed to say, at the time that the issue is raised, that this Government are letting British Aerospace make money hand over fist on the Stock Exchange.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It might help the hon. Gentleman and, indeed, the whole House, if I were to state the position of the *Official Report*. The proceedings of the House relate to when an hon. Member is called by the Chair to ask a question or to speak. When comments are made from a sedentary position—and I regret that they are far too frequent—they do not form part of the official proceedings of the House unless they are subsequently taken up.

I have no knowledge of what was alleged to have been said yesterday by a Member sitting on the Bench.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You may have read reports in the newspapers today that the Prime Minister has met the leader of the illegal regime in Fiji, which took power following a coup. The reports state that the Prime Minister has agreed to consider measures to allow Fiji to re-enter the Commonwealth and to consider the reintroduction of training—which I find astonishing—for military personnel in Fiji.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there is an illegal regime in Fiji. You will also be aware that the Queen has refused to receive its leader. Do you have any information on whether the Prime Minister intends to make a statement about her discussions with the head of an illegal regime? Does the Foreign Secretary plan to make a statement to the House? This is a matter of some concern.

Mr. Speaker: I have no such knowledge. The matter did not arise during Foreign Office questions today. It may possibly arise tomorrow during Prime Minister's questions.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. During Question Time my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) referred to the Austrian President. You ruled that it was out of order to refer to the President of a friendly state in the manner used by my hon. and learned Friend.

I wish to seek your clarification of how we are to know whether or not a state is friendly for the purposes of the language that can be used in the House. It is an extremely important point of order because we need guidance. For

[Mr. Bruce Grocott]

example, is South Africa classed as a friendly or an unfriendly country for the purposes of any reference to its Head of State by hon. Members? Indeed, hon. Members may wish to refer to Heads of other countries.

We need a clear ruling as to which Heads of State we can refer in colourful parliamentary language, and to which Heads we are obliged to be permanently polite.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The position is well stated in "Erskine May". It is not in order to cast aspersions on Heads of State with whom Her Majesty's Government have friendly relations.

Mr. Grocott: Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think that anything further can arise from that point of order.

Mr. Grocott *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. We have a busy day ahead of us.

Mr. Grocott *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I cannot help the hon. Gentleman further.

Mr. Grocott: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I simply do not understand. Is South Africa a country with which we have friendly relations and on whose Head of State we cannot pass comment?

Mr. Speaker: We have diplomatic relations with South Africa.

Statutory Instruments, &c.

Mr. Speaker: With the leave of the House, I will put together the three motions relating to statutory instruments.

Ordered,

That the Local Government (Direct Labour Organisations) (Competition) (Amendment) Regulations 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 160) be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Venezuela) Order 1988, be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.

That the draft Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Turkey) Order 1988, be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Wakeham.]*

Empty Property and Community Aid

5.17 pm

Mr. Ken Hargreaves (Hyndburn): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to require local authorities to take steps to identify empty houses and put them to use.

Mr. Bruce Grocott (The Wrekin): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have dealt with the hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Grocott *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have already dealt with the hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. Hargreaves: In crude statistical terms, there are more empty properties in Britain than there are households. At the same time, homelessness continues to increase. Government figures show that in 1979 local authorities in England accepted 57,200 households as homeless; in 1986, the figure was 100,000. It is likely that even those high figures are but the tip of the iceberg.

I am not suggesting that if all empty properties were brought back into use, the problem of homelessness would be solved. Many empty properties are the wrong size and in the wrong place. However, I do suggest that empty properties in areas of housing need, where there is an unmet demand for housing, are a wasted resource.

The Bill has one aim: to ensure the maximum possible use of houses left empty for many years. The mere existence of large numbers of empty houses, despite all the public concern, is in itself sufficient evidence that new initiatives are needed. We must act to end the scandal of empty properties in both the public and the private sectors. There are long waiting lists for rented accommodation, and thousands of families live in bed-and-breakfast accommodation, where family life is impossible.

Those are reasons enough to justify the Bill's proposals, but the problems caused by empty properties do not end there. Worry, distress, vandalism, danger, financial loss, loss of property value and spoilt neighbourhoods are all problems suffered by neighbours when properties are allowed to lie empty, abandoned and derelict for many years.

In my constituency there are several examples of properties being left empty and derelict for many years. That has caused distress to the neighbours and a steady stream of correspondence from the local authority, but all to no avail. For example, No. 40 James street, Oswaldtwistle, is one of several properties owned by a London-based family. It has been empty for 10 years. A concerted effort to have the property improved and brought back into use has failed.

Having been vacant for at least seven years, the house was deteriorating to a point where it was affecting neighbouring properties and jeopardising the housing action area investment in that locality. It was therefore decided in October 1986 compulsorily to purchase the property as no alternative solution had been possible. An agreement to do so was confirmed by the housing services committee of the borough council in December 1987.

The owner has been given every opportunity to sell at a realistic price or to improve the house with the aid of a

full improvement grant, but he has not done so. The amount of staff time and effort used to accommodate the owner has been considerable.

No. 17 Bright street, Oswaldtwistle, is derelict and boarded back and front. It is in very poor condition and detrimental to the area. It is one of a number of properties owned by a local person and it is understood that those properties are, in the main, unoccupied. For reasons best known to the owner, 17 Bright street has been vacant since 1946. During that time, it has naturally deteriorated and been a major problem to the residents of the neighbourhood. As the owner has exercised his free choice not to let the property, the local authority has not been in a position to insist that it should be brought back into use. Only when it has become so bad as to be detrimental to the area has the council been in the position compulsorily to purchase it.

The Bill would require local authorities to register all empty residential property and provide the Secretary of State for the Environment with an annual statement of their strategy for bringing back into use any empty properties that they own. It would oblige councils to allow community groups, such as housing associations or other voluntary bodies, to use empty properties in their possession for housing homeless families, unless they can show good reason why the properties are empty. It would allow local authorities to guarantee loans made by building societies to enable them to repair houses that are empty, the loans being repaid by the occupants as if they were rent or mortgage payments.

The Bill would give councils a new power, similar to the control-order provision of the Housing Act 1964, to put empty property use orders on long term empty houses. That would allow local authorities — working, for example, with housing associations—to make use of the property to house homeless people for up to five years, where the owner of the property has been unable to show good reason why the property is empty.

Private owners whose property is brought back into use by means of empty property use orders would benefit in real terms by the material improvement in the property over the period of use, particularly as building society funds would be used to improve the property substantially.

Some private developers have already adopted a far-sighted attitude to the use of property which has been temporarily left empty. They speak highly of such schemes. Mr. Colin Smith, managing director of Wimpey Property Holdings Limited, stated:

"We are delighted to have reached agreement for the continued occupation of our properties. As a result, the houses are preserved for use by those in need, instead of being allowed to decay."

The power to impose empty property use orders on empty properties is a lesser power than already exists. At present, councils use compulsory purchase orders which allow total expropriation of the properties by the council for ever. Empty property use orders permit a council to use a house for up to five years only, and then return it to the owner in better condition. Therefore, an empty property use order is a less extreme measure and reduces the need for the more extreme measure of a compulsory purchase order. It is a less drastic and more flexible weapon with which to counter the problems that are caused by empty properties.

I welcome the all-party support that the idea of empty property use orders has received, not least from those closely involved. Councillor George Micklewright, a Labour councillor in Bristol, wrote:

"The problem of using CPOs is the procedure is longwinded and it is very much a last resort. It is like using a sledgehammer. But at present we have no alternative if persuasion does not work. We could do with something more sophisticated than CPOs. The use of empty property use orders would help."

His Conservative counterpart, Councillor Terry Allen, said:

"Our philosophy normally would be not to intervene against private property, and we do have some sympathy for the owners. But we have more sympathy for neighbours having to endure these properties and for the potential occupants. The idea of empty property use orders appeals to us. They will give us a less drastic power to help us secure use of these long-term empty houses."

An empty property use order, which could be used at a much earlier stage than a compulsory purchase order, would result in the saving of houses before they become derelict and often beyond repair.

With 700 empty properties in England alone, much needs to be done. The Bill would make a real contribution to improving the availability of houses for homeless people and go some way towards reducing the eyesores that we see in our towns and cities. Its proposals will benefit neighbours and residents where there are empty houses. Ratepayers will benefit from the saving of public money and the homeless will benefit. I hope that the House will support the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ken Hargreaves, Mr. David Alton, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. David Evennett, Mr. Frank Field, Mr. Robert Hughes, Mr. Simon Hughes, Mr. Allan Roberts, Ms. Joan Ruddock, Mr. Cyril Smith, Mr. Robin Squire and Mr. Teddy Taylor.

Empty Property and Community Aid

Mr. Ken Hargreaves accordingly presented a Bill to require local authorities to take steps to identify empty houses and put them to use: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 6 May and to be printed. [Bill 136.]

Orders of the Day

Housing (Scotland) Bill

As amended (in the Standing Committee), further considered.

Clause 54

PERSONS BY WHOM RIGHT MAY BE EXERCISED

5.25 pm

Mr. John Home Robertson (East Lothian): I beg to move amendment No. 7, in page 31, line 42, leave out from 'Homes;' to end of line 9 on page 32 and insert

'and every public sector landlord including regional councils or joint boards or joint committees of two or more regional councils and any trust under the control of a regional council will automatically be so approved.

(2) An approval under this section—

(a) shall require the consent of the rent assessment committee in every area in which the new landlord may wish to acquire property;

(b) shall, in relation to any landlord, specify the maximum number to which the approval extends of houses to be acquired by him under this part of this Act; and

(c) in determining the maximum number referred to in Part 52 (2)(b) above Scottish Homes shall in all cases consult with the appropriate rent assessment committee.'.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean): I understand that it will be for the convenience of the House to discuss also amendment No. 160, in page 32, line 9, at end insert—

'(4) The Secretary of State may approve a public sector landlord as an approved person for the purposes of this section where—

(a) the majority of tenants of an approved person have complained in writing to the district council in whose area the houses tenanted are situated as to the financial affairs of, administration of or level of service being offered by such an approved person; and

(b) the Secretary of State, upon enquiry, is satisfied that such a complaint is justified and the acquisition of all of the houses owned by the approved person complained of would be appropriate for the local authority.

(5) The Secretary of State may make regulations under this part of this Act by statutory instrument to provide for the holding of enquiries where complaint has been made by tenants, the determination of such enquiries, and the procedure for acquistion of any property following such an enquiry.

(6) A statutory instrument containing any order or regulation under this part shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

(7) Orders or regulations under this part may make different provisions for different cases or circumstances or different areas and may contain such incidental provisions as the Secretary of State thinks fit.'.

Mr. Home Robertson: Having listened to the resounding silence of one Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, he who is supposed to be responsible for education—some would call it dumb insolence in his case—I return to the attack on the question of housing in Scotland.

Amendment No. 7 would require local authorities to acquire houses from the private sector, subject to consent from the tenants, and would enable rent assessment committees to monitor and, where necessary, to regulate private landlords in Scotland.

Part III has been described by the Scottish Office publicity machine as a "tenants' choice" mechanism. that must be a new low in dishonesty, even by the threadbare standards of the present Administration in the Scottish Office. Presumably the word "choice" is supposed to imply that all tenants will be able to choose their landlord. However, as we know, the truth in the Bill is very different. Tenants will be totally passive. Part III establishes a framework of "landlords' choice" whereby private landlords will be able to acquire public sector houses at bargain prices under a perverse form of compulsory purchase scheme. That is not tenants' choice; it is more like a landlords' lucky dip at the expense of the local authority and the tenant. The only power that is given to the tenant in this process is to grant his or her consent to the transaction going ahead.

The Government have specifically excluded the possibility of privately owned houses being transferred to the public sector, however much the tenants of privately owned houses might want that transfer to take place. The transfers will be in one direction only and those transfers to the private sector will be irrevocable. There will be no going back once the tenant has allowed that to happen.

The amendment provides for genuine choice by enabling the property to be transferred in either direction, either from the public to the private sector, or the private sector to the public sector. It also provides for safeguards to be applied by the rent assessment committees in the private sector.

The Government clearly see the redevelopment of private landlordism in Scotland as an end in itself. They therefore want to make it easy for private landlords to acquire property cheaply and easily—not by building houses to rent or improving existing property, but by raiding district council housing stock in Scotland. We shall no doubt see further incentives for the private sector, coupled with even more disincentives for the public sector, as part of the Government's doctrinaire and spiteful policy towards Scottish housing.

We in the Labour party want to promote genuine diversification in housing in Scotland. One need look no further than Labour-controlled local authorities, such as Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling and, indeed, to my own constituency of East Lothian. Labour-controlled local authorities, on a local basis, are promoting housing associations, co-operatives and, indeed, partnership with the private sector, and why not? There is a long list of examples of locally initiated schemes introduced voluntarily by elected local authorities without this heavy-handed interference by central Government.

There is evidence that most Scots who want to rent their homes would prefer to have the option of public sector tenancies. There are examples of that from places as unlikely as the Shetland Islands, where tenants of the Scottish Special Housing Association have made it abundantly clear that they wish to remain in the public sector and would prefer to transfer to local authority tenancies rather than be shuffled into the private sector.

Equally, as my hon. Friend the Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) said last night, there is overwhelming evidence that the tenants of new town development corporations do not want to be shuffled into the private sector. They want the option of transferring to the local authorities. That is understandable. There will be even stronger demand for public sector tenancies when the

true horror of insecurity and high rents that are inherent in the assured tenancy system become well known when and if this wretched Bill reaches the statute book.

May I take the House briefly through the process whereby a private speculator will be able to operate the scheme in part III? First, a representative of the private landlord must persuade a tenant to sign the consent for him to acquire the public sector house concerned. That could involve bribes and inducements, including offers of rent-free periods, and in some instances representatives of speculative landlords may try to trick tenants into giving up their secure tenancies in the public sector and move into insecure tenancies in the private sector. The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux has expressed anxiety about the fact that there is no provision for clear advice for tenants in those circumstances.

Having secured the tenant's consent, the acquiring landlord would have to notify the local authority, which would then be obliged to sell the house to the acquiring landlord at the district valuer's valuation. Of course, that will be a low valuation, and it will be even lower since it will be made subject to the secure tenancy that still applies in the public sector.

Finally, unless the tenant withdraws his consent, the landlord can spring the trap. He will have acquired the property at an artificially low valuation and the tenant will immediately lose his rights under the secure tenancy system, including the right to a fair rent, the right to full security, the right to succession and even the right to buy. The tenant would move quickly into the uncharted and insecure waters of assured tenancies. There should be a Government health warning on the assured tenancy system, which will be a recipe for insecurity, eviction and stress for many tenants.

That is not the end of the story. Having acquired a potentially valuable asset on the cheap, the landlord will have an immediate windfall gain, as the value of a house with an insecure tenant is higher than the value of a house with a secure tenant. It will then be open to the landlord to find ways of exploiting the position even further—by forcing up the rent or even trying to get rid of the tenant altogether by evicting him. That will be easy under schedule 5. Then, with vacant possession of the house, the landlord will be able to sell at a vast profit without the local authority having any say in the matter, despite the fact that it built up the asset.

That is indefensible, and a warning should go from the House to Scottish tenants to avoid the trap by refusing to sign anything that may be put before them by fly-by-night landlords who may appear on their doorsteps in the coming months and years. I am especially worried about the loss of special needs housing for rent that could result from the legislation. We have already experienced that in many areas, under the right to buy, and the position could become worse as a result of this landlords' choice mechanism.

The Minister's English counterparts promised significant safeguards in the comparable scheme for England and Wales. They have undertaken to introduce a code of conduct for approved landlords, and they have accepted the principle that transferred tenants should be allowed to return to local authority tenure if they wish. They have also imposed a duty on the housing action trusts—there is no equivalent for Scotland—that may acquire the properties to assist local authorities in housing homeless people. No such duties will be imposed on acquiring landlords in Scotland. No such undertakings have been given for Scotland.

Part III has nothing to do with choice. It is a bare-faced device to allow speculators to plunder the public housing stock under a perverse and unjustifiable form of compulsory purchase scheme. If they want to be involved in rented housing, why do they not build houses, improve existing housing stock or acquire houses voluntarily from the local authority? That happens in Glasgow. But that is too straightforward. It is too much to expect that from the private sector. In Scotland, the private sector has been declining since the beginning of the century. It has dwindled to only 6 per cent. of the Scottish housing stock, and it is absurd for the Government to build a housing policy on the dwindling and discredited private rented sector.

Shelter has informed us that 50 per cent. of the cases of homelessness that have been reported to it in Glasgow came from the private rented sector. How much worse will the position become when the scheme comes into effect? The Government are taking a dangerous risk for tenants in Scotland by trying to found their entire housing policy on people who have failed in the past and who are known to include unscrupulous people who are capable of exploiting and harassing tenants.

Part III is a dishonest and dangerous scheme. The only way in which it can be made to work satisfactorily is to provide for proper regulation of private landlords and to enable local authorities to acquire housing if private tenants wish to change to local authority tenure. That would inject the comprehensive element of choice that is completely lacking from the Bill at present. The amendment would achieve those objectives, and I commend it to the House.

Mr. George Foulkes (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for Conservative Back-Bench Members from Scotland to attend this debate? I do not know whether they have been named——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that that is not a point of order. Let us get on with the debate.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Would it be in order for Conservative Back-Bench Members from any part of the country to attend this debate?

Mr. Andrew Welsh (Angus, East): Those interventions have tempted me to say that sometimes I think I miss even the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker)——

Mr. Foulkes: Surely not.

Mr. Welsh: Well, perhaps not.

Amendment No. 7 would allow local authorities to be approved landlords. The Scottish National party amendment, No. 160, represents a fail-safe device to meet the major problems that will arise under this new housing system. The two amendments are interlinked and their basic principle is to allow tenants the extra option of returning to public authority housing.

Amendment No. 160 provides a procedure for the reacquisition of houses by a local authority in circumstances where it would be appropriate for that

[Mr. Welsh]

authority to reacquire them as a purchaser of last resort. As set out in subsection (4)(a) of the amendment, they include circumstances where

"the majority of tenants of an approved person have complained in writing to the district council in whose area the houses tenanted are situated as to the financial affairs of, administration of or level of service being offered by such an approved person."

Allowance is made for the Secretary of State to make inquiries and deal with the problem.

The amendment offers an important form of tenant protection that is missing from the Bill as drafted. The Government assume that all local authorities are bad landlords and that all private landlords are automatically good. The traffic directed by the Bill is all one way—out of the public sector—with no channel of return, even if the tenant wishes to do so. True freedom of choice should work both ways, with citizens having the opportunity freely to opt out or in of the public and private sectors.

The Government's version of free choice stops short at the public sector. My amendment would alter that to allow local authorities to replace private landlords where they have proven themselves to be inferior. That would restore two-way traffic between the private and public sector and offer genuine freedom of choice to the individual.

The Government assume that the transition to a private landlords will only be to the good. My amendment questions that assumption by looking at cases where the majority of transferred tenants are dissatisfied by the deal offered and the services given. The amendment would enable the Secretary of State—if satisfied upon inquiry that such complaint is justified—to allow tenants to return to their preferred tenancy under a local authority. Surely that is offering genuine freedom of choice under controlled and obvious circumstances. I hope that the Government will accept that.

I accept that there is parliamentary supervision and that a set of provisions will follow, but the end product should be greater freedom of choice for tenants and the right freely to choose the best deal whether that is in the public or private sector. If the Bill remains unamended, such choice does not exist. It offers one-way traffic only, with no alternative for those people who prefer the public sector.

My amendment would allow such free choice and would operate to overcome the worse possible problems that would be faced by tenants due to inferior landlord services. The amendment tackles the fundamental question: what happens when something goes wrong after tenants have left the public sector for the private sector? The Government have avoided or plainly ignored that problem. The tenants, however, would suffer from the Government's failure to allow use of the obvious available mechanism to address that problem.

The amendment would offer a public sector option to the existing choice. The amendment allows the Secretary of State to approve a public sector landlord when the tenants have complained in writing to the district council about

"the financial affairs of, administration of or level of service being offered by such an approved person."

The Secretary of State could then make inquiries, and if he was satisfied that the complaints were justified, the local authority could then step in to solve the problem. That authority would meet the needs of those tenants. The amendment proposes an orderly system to sort out that problem.

I hope that the Government will not hide behind ideology. I hope that they will go some way towards allowing a wider choice for tenants and ensure a proper co-ordination between the private and public sector as providers of housing.

The principle behind the amendment has apparently already been accepted for England and Wales by the Government. I refer the Minister to the proceedings of Standing Committee G when the Minister for Housing and Planning said:

"we have no difficulty accepting the principle of tenants returning to the local authority if the authority wants to have them. We may need to amend the Bill to make that clear or give assurances."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee G*, 11 February 1988; c. 810]

That offers a clear undertaking that, for England and Wales, tenants will have the right to return to the public sector. Therefore, there should be absolutely no problem for the Minister to give a similar assurance for Scotland. If not, we are entitled to ask why. The Scottish people will draw a suitable conclusion about the Government and their motivations if such an assurance is not given when the Minister replies.

Mr. John McAllion (Dundee, East): I am still a relatively new Member of the House and I have had a limited experience of the Bills that have been passed in any one parliamentary Session. To paraphrase a former member for a Dundee constituency, I believe that rarely has a Bill promised so much yet delivered so little.

Mr. Foulkes: Does my hon. Friend mean Peter Doig?

Mr. McAllion: I was thinking particularly if Winston Churchill—he was a Liberal then.

We have been repeatedly told by the Minister and indeed by every Conservative Member who spoke in Committee—that was not very many—that the Bill represents a major extension of tenants' rights, notably as a result of the provisions in part III regarding the pick-a-landlord scheme. Amendment No. 7 specifically refers to that.

Those who seek to exercise the new right that the Minister is so keen to encourage will find that that very act will mean that they will surrender many of the rights that they possess as public sector tenants. The Minister has not confronted that problem. There will be council tenants who will be frustrated by the inability of their local councils to carry out the major repairs required by their houses and who will therefore succumb to the offers of new windows or whatever the potential private sector landlord may dangle in front of them.

Those tenants may well choose to transfer the ownership of their house from the local council to that private sector landlord. As soon as a tenant does so, he or she immediately loses many of the rights that they currently possess. Indeed, in Committee the Minister told us that he spent one night in the Committee that considered the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980 defending and promoting the very rights that will be taken as a result of the Bill.

5.45 pm

Tenants stand to lose rights, such as the right to buy their houses. If a tenant moves to a private sector landlord,

he immediately loses the right to buy that house at a discount. It is no use the Minister saying that the private sector landlord and tenant should come to an arrangement between themselves as to what price the landlord may sell the house. The success of the sale of council houses has depended on the fact they have been sold at a discount: had they not been sold at a discount, I do not believe that a single council house would have been sold to a sitting tenant.

Tenants will also lose the right to a secured tenancy that is quaranteed by a cast-iron written lease. If they move to the private sector they will also lose the right ever to choose a landlord again. The right that the Minister is seeking to promote today can be exercised only once. If a tenant makes a mistake in exercising that right, the Ministers answer is, "Well, that's tough. You will have to live with that mistake".

There is no provision for people to return to the public sector if they find themselves in the grip of some Rachman-type landlord who is exploiting them. The Minister believes that that is just hard luck. The amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) attempts to resolve that problem. That amendment offers tenants an emergency way out, and I hope that the Minister considers it seriously.

Someone may choose a landlord who, to begin with, may seem rational and reasonable. That landlord may offer them new windows, new doors, new heating systems and so on. However, once they are under the control of that landlord, the rents go up and the villainy starts. Those tenants may then wish to get away from that landlord, but they cannot. The Minister must address that problem.

The Bill, far from extending tenants' rights, represents an attack upon them. The Bill also takes away those rights in an indirect manner. Earlier in our discussions, I mentioned the views of tenants in my constituency who are representatives of tenants' organisations, especially in the Whitfield area. They emphasised the importance of being local authority tenants and the many facilities that are made available to them by the local authorities to enable them to come together to organise into a tenants' organisation to try to improve their environment.

The local authority has made available to those tenants a house or flat free of charge and has also given them direct aid in the form of grants to enable them to meet the expense of establishing such tenant organisations.

Without such direct assistance from local authorities, such tenants' organisations could not survive for any length of time. As Part III of the Bill stands, if tenants make a decision to move from the public to the private sector all such facilities will be denied them. The Minister should concede that it is frankly inconceivable that any private sector landlord will make available a house or flat, free of rent, for such tenant organisations.

It is inconceivable that any private landlord would give direct aid in the form of grants to such tenant organisations to enable them to work together in their interests — by their nature, such interests must be in direct conflict with the landlord's interests. The Minister must come to grips with the fact that local authorities in the public sector are different from the private sector and take a much more enlightened view of their relationships with tenants than any private sector landlords.

The Minister came to Dundee and announced a grant of more than £6 million for the Ormiston crescent tenants' co-operative, and everyone was grateful for that. He should know from his experience, therefore, that tenants in Whitfield were able to form a co-operative because in the previous year they had worked closely with the elected officials of the district council, who had brought them to a state of readiness in which they were able to form the co-operative and make a success of it.

That sort of work will not be done in the private sector; it can only be done in the public sector. By encouraging people to move from the latter to the former, the Minister is encouraging them to give up the potential to form themselves into co-operatives, of which he says he is in favour.

The amendment will give tenants a genuine choice — not the one-sided choice of leaping from the public to the private sector but the choice to do what they want; not, as the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) said yesterday, what the Government and Tory Back Benchers think they should want. That is an important distinction, and there is overwhelming evidence of what tenants want.

In Committee, we dealt with the views of Scottish Special Housing Association tenants and discussed whether they were enraptured with the Bill's provisions. The SSHA tenants made it clear that they did not want the new Scottish Homes agency as their landlord. They wanted to remain tenants of the SSHA and to be left alone by the Government. They wanted a ballot in which to make clear exactly what they felt about the Government's propsals, but the Minister denied them that.

The whole affair was summed up by Mr. Derek Mason, the chairman of the SSHA, whom I quoted in Committee as asking what the point of having a ballot was when we already knew what the result would be. Almost all SSHA tenants would vote against the Scottish Homes proposals, yet the Minister has denied them the ballot. We know what the outcome would be, but that does not suit the Government. They favour the ballot box only when the outcome suits them; they are against ballots that vote against their proposals.

Any hon. Member who has attended the scores of public meetings that have been held to discuss Scottish Homes will understand what I am saying. I shall be attending two meetings in Dundee next week that have been organised by tenants' organisations which have come into being since the introduction of this Bill to defend tenants against its attacks on them. Tenants are united in their condemnation of Scottish Homes and demand the right to transfer from the SSHA into the local authority sector, not the private sector. They know that the local authority sector offers them much more in the long term than they can ever possibly get from the private sector, the more so once they have a Government who properly fund local authorities and allow them to provide the services that they are anxious to supply.

This is not only a matter of facilities being provided for tenants' organisations, or the co-operation between local authorities and their tenants that enables the latter to form co-operatives—it is a question of rent levels, too. SSHA tenants will say that they would rather be local authority tenants because that means lower rents. Transferring to the private sector even now means increased rents; transferring to the council sector, lower rents. That is one of the most attractive things about local authorities in tenants' eyes.

It is no good the Minister or his Scottish Back Benchers — none of whom are present — lecturing Scottish local authorities about having far too low rent levels. Dundee

[Mr. McAllion]

has the second lowest rent levels of any major city in Scotland, but 60 per cent. of its tenants need housing benefit to pay their rents. Nevertheless, the Minister wants to put up those rents and pauperise more tenants. Perhaps he will not be happy until 100 per cent. are on housing benefit, or perhaps he means to drive them all out of the public sector. That is the spirit behind the Bill.

The legislation is a dreadful attack on the public sector provision of housing in Scotland. It is an undisguised onslaught upon it, which is why all who are genuinely interested in tackling Scotland's housing problems should unite in supporting the amendments.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Lord James Douglas-Hamilton) *rose*——

Mr. Sam Galbraith (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order and fair that the Minister should have to stand at the Dispatch Box discussing a subject of which he has but a tenuous grasp, without the support of any of his Scottish Back Benchers? Do you have any powers to drag some of those Back Benchers——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. We had better get on with the debate.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I am glad to respond to the debate. The hon. Member for East Lothain (Mr. Home Robertson) asked why there was a need for the tenants' choice provisions, as much of the progress that has already been made towards co-operatives is being made without legislation. The answer is that disposals of local authority property to co-operatives require both the Secretary of State's approval and the co-operation of the local authorities. The Bill extends rights to tenants to transfer, whether or not the local authority agrees and without the need for approval by the Secretary of State — so it represents an extension of opportunity and choice.

The hon. Member for East Lothian said that it was important to have guidance in an appropriate form for local authority tenants. Under clause 2(2)(e), appropriate guidance and advice will be given by Scottish Homes to tenants, and rightly so.

The hon. Member for Angus, East (Mr. Welsh) asked what would happen if something went wrong. It would be the responsibility of Scottish Homes to approve a landlord and monitor the situation, and to help to avoid any problem arising. If one arose, it would be the responsibility of Scottish Homes to ensure that another housing association took over. If that was not possible, the landlord division of Scottish Homes would have to take responsibility. That was an important point that we considered in Committee.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: The blindingly obvious alternative is to say that local authorities, which have housing, could also solve that problem, so why not use the existing mechanism?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There are a number of reasons why not. We believe in extending opportunity and choice, but local authorities in some areas already have 80 per cent. of the stock. If we gave the right to transfer to local authorities within the public sector and from the private sector back to the public sector, that would lead to a perpetual merry-go-round and cause a bureaucratic nightmare.

Mr. McAllion: Does the Minister accept that he should be trying to facilitate what the tenants want, not what the Government want? If tenants in a given area decide that they all want to be local authority tenants, that is a matter for them, not for the Minister or me.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We are approaching the matter highly pragmatically by giving an extension of opportunity, whether or not that opportunity is taken up; that is a matter for the tenants, as the hon. Gentleman says. If they do not want to take it up, they will not.

It is correct that accurate information will have to be given to tenants well before any choice could be exercised under the Bill. If tenants, however, do not want to transfer, that will be the end of the matter——

Mr. Andrew Welsh *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Amendment No. 7 seeks, first, to open up the tenants' choice provisions to allow transfer to public sector landlords and, secondly, to create a role in tenants' choice transfer procedures for local rent assessment committees. I do not believe the House should accept either purpose.

Part III of the Bill seeks to widen the choice of tenure available to tenants in the public sector. In many areas, as I mentioned, choice is severely restricted, with many areas having 60 per cent. local authority housing, and in some it is almost as high as 80 per cent. Amendment No. 7 would increase local authorities' holdings and thus intensify the difficulties that they face in providing a satisfactory level of service for their tenants. That is not the purpose of part III of the Bill. Our aim is to diversify tenure, not to reinforce existing near-monopolies——

Mr. Galbraith *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I shall make one further point and then allow the hon. Gentleman to intervene.

Of course, the provisions in this part of the Bill which preclude transfer from one public sector landlord to another, except to Scottish Homes, do not rule out completely tenants transferring to public sector landlords. The Secretary of State can, for example, under section 12(7) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, approve sales by a local authority of any of its stock. As I said in Committee, this power has been used on a number of occasions. For example, the transfer of large numbers of houses from Glasgow district council to the SSHA in Castlemilk and the transfer of stock to housing co-operatives, are covered by this section.

Moreover, it will still be possible for a local authority, without consent, to acquire property under section 2(1)(c) and section 9 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 if it wishes to do so, and provided it is prepared to give priority, within its capital allocation, to the purchase. Such property could, I believe, include tenanted property, and any such transfers would in practice require the tenants' consent. I repeat that the provisions in part III do not rule out transfers to public sector authorities under other arrangements.

6 pm

Mr. Galbraith: I must come back to the point that I made, because the Minister talks about diversifying the

tenure. Why will he not allow the tenure to be the choice of the tenant? Will he diversify the tenure by forcing tenants in one direction? This is a disgraceful example of the Government's political eugenics. Why will the Minister not allow tenants to make their own choice? Why must he force them against their wishes to go for a form of tenancy that they do not want? Why can they not have the choice?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: There is no question of any compulsion. This is an extension of opportunity, and in due course it will be entirely a matter for tenants as to whether they take up that opportunity.

Mr. Galbraith *rose*——

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No, I shall not give way. I have answered the hon. Gentleman's question. There is quite clearly no element of compulsion. That was the essence of the hon. Gentleman's question, and I have answered it. He may not like the answer, but I repeat that there is no way in which there will be any element of compulsion in the proposals that I am putting before the House.

Mr. John McFall (Dumbarton): I should like to ask the Minister for information about co-operatives. If some co-operatives decide to transfer to a private landlord and others do not, are the individual rights of people guaranteed, or will the transfer be subject to a majority decision of the tenants? I am interested in individual cases.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In the two kinds of co-operatives that I know—management co-operatives and ownership co-operatives—the decision about forming a co-operative is a matter for the tenants. The hon. Gentleman's suggestion is a novel one that I have not heard about. He spoke about a co-operative transferring to a different form of ownership. An ownership co-operative is owned by the tenants, and that is a matter for them.

I shall now return to the role suggested in the amendment for local rent assessment committees. When considering applications for approval for prospective new landlords, Scottish Homes will of course be expected to conduct careful inquiries. In guiding Scottish Homes in the exercise of its duties, the Secretary of State will encourage it to maintain the closest possible links with local bodies, and particularly with local authorities.

We would not wish to impose on Scottish Homes, when it exercises its various duties under the Bill, a statutory requirement to consult any particular body, whether it be the local authority, the local rent assessment committee or whatever. Nor do we think it reasonable to impose on Scottish Homes a requirement that all approvals must set a limit to the number of houses any receiving landlord can acquire. Clause 54(2) (c) already allows Scottish Homes to impose such a limit where it believes that this is required.

Amendment No. 7 suggests, in effect, a requirement that any private sector receiving landlord should go through two approval processes, by Scottish Homes and by the local rent assessment committee. This double approval mechanism is neither necessary nor desirable. I repeat that we cannot support the inclusion of public sector housing authorities as receiving landlords.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): Has the Scottish Office issued any guidelines to local rent assessment committees? If it has, what criteria do those guidelines suggest?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman asks about guidelines. I imagine that he is posing his question in the context of tenants' choice. I can tell the hon. Gentleman what I have said in Committee—that the fullest possible information will have to be made available to tenants. The hon. Gentleman's question may well be a future question for consideration by Scottish Homes when it has been set up.

Mr. Home Robertson: The hon. Gentleman is the Minister.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I agree, but the hon. Gentleman must appreciate that when a responsible body such as Scottish Homes is set up, it has a responsibility to take seriously its duties as they are set out in the Bill. The Secretary of State has power under the Bill to give directions if Scottish Homes does not properly carry out its responsibilities.

I should now like to speak to amendment No. 160. I suspect that the amendment as drafted goes rather further than intended. It would mean that, once a landlord had been approved by Scottish Homes as a receiving landlord under this part of the Bill, a majority of that landlord's tenants could petition the Secretary of State to hold a public inquiry. The tenants coming together in this way need not include any who had transferred to the landlord under the tenants' choice provisions.

The amendment suggests not just a return ticket to the public sector in the unlikely event of an approved landlord letting down its new tenants, but a possible transfer to the public sector of other tenants of that landlord or, for example, tenants of a housing association who have had no previous link with the public sector. We see part III as a means of breaking down local authority monopolies. The amendment could well tend to reinforce monopolies.

Mr. Andrew Welsh: If the democratic majority of tenants have a crummy landlord and wish to have a better housing service, and if they could get that from the public sector, why should they not have that democratic right of choice?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The hon. Gentleman says that if a housing association is set up and a majority of tenants say that they wish to transfer to a local authority, they should have the power to do that. That is certainly not part of our proposals. For example, if a company did up a block of flats and the majority of tenants said that they wanted to transfer to the local authority, that would virtually amount to compulsory purchase, and that is certainly not part of our proposals.

Let us look at the amendment in more detail. First, Scottish Homes' approval to receiving landlords will not be given lightly, and Scottish Homes will be expected to monitor approved landlords' performance. Many of the receiving landlords under tenants' choice will be registered housing associations, responsibility for which will be taken over by Scottish Homes from the Housing Corporation in Scotland. In such cases, Scottish Homes can and will take action to safeguard the position of tenants long before the difficulties that the amendment suggests might occur would reach the state of affairs suggested.

If Scottish Homes' advice and assistance fails to prevent the level of service offered by the landlord from deteriorating in the way suggested, what the amendment proposes would be equivalent to compulsory purchase.

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

The local authority would be given the right to acquire property from the private sector. There is a very considerable difference in principle between introducing legislation under which rights are given to acquire property from the public sector, where public money has been involved in providing the property, and seeking to permit compulsory removal of property from the private sector. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will withdraw his amendments; otherwise, I shall have to ask the House to oppose them.

The hon. Member for East Lothian said that concessions had been promised in the English Bill to recognise the possibility of tenants who had transferred from the public sector returning to local authorities. It has been suggested that a similar concession should be made in Scottish legislation. The positions are not exactly comparable. For example, the undertaking given by the Minister for Housing and Planning in the Department of the Environment does not relate to transfer under tenants' choice provisions. That undertaking was given in the context of the English housing action trust provisions. We should not confuse the two initiatives.

Under tenants' choice, the tenant has complete discretion on the question of whether to seek a new landlord. That is not the case under English housing action trust proposals. It is not unreasonable, therefore, that, when the trust is disposing of housing stock, tenants who so wish should be able to move back to the local authority, if the authority wishes to resume landlord responsibilities. I must make it clear that housing action trusts form no part of the Scottish legislative proposals. It is therefore very much a red herring to complain that undertakings given in another debate in a different context have not been repeated in our consideration of the legislation.

The hon. Gentleman also mentioned a code of conduct. We discussed on many occasions in Committee the question of ensuring that landlords who are in receipt of public money or who are approved for the purposes of tenants' choice provide a good housing service to their tenants. There is a variety of ways of achieving that and different methods may be appropriate for different circumstances. It may be sensible to have different mechanisms relating to registered housing associations and to approve tenants' choice landlords. I am aware that various proposals have been discussed in England, but, given our Scottish Homes proposals, it would be sensible to consider separately the right approach for Scotland.

6.15 pm

Mr. Home Robertson: The Minister said that the Government were opposed to the principle of compulsory purchase in the context of the amendment moved by the Opposition. That must be the most spectacular example of doublespeak that has come from any Minister, although we are accustomed to the Minister becoming confused in the context of the legislation. If the Minister is opposed to the principle of compulsory purchase, why is part III in the Bill? It provides for the compulsory purchase by private landlords of public sector property whatever the broader interests of the local communities might be.

The Minister frequently parrots the slogan that this part of the Bill extends tenants' rights. He should not believe the briefs put in front of him by his officials at the Scottish Office. He will find that it does no such thing. The Bill establishes rights for ambitious landlords to acquire public property at low prices. It is a lucky dip for profiteering landlords. The Minister knows that and the House should be aware of that. This is blatantly one-sided legislation because it allows the private sector to acquire public assets at knockdown prices, but establishes no parallel right, even where there may be an overwhelming case, for private sector propery to be taken over by the public sector, when the tenants desperately want that. The tenants have no rights in that respect. The only rights built into this part of the legislation are for acquiring landlords.

The Minister made it clear that the Government are simply expressing their prejudice against local authority housing in spite of the fact that he knows perfectly well that the majority of people who want to rent their houses in Scotland would prefer to rent on a secure basis with a fair rent in the public sector.

If the Minister is not aware of that, as he happens to be one of my constituents, I invite him to come along on a Saturday to one of my surgeries in the town where he lives. He will be able to hear the views of private sector tenants who would like to choose the option to move into the public sector, but cannot do so because the Government will not allow the local authorities to provide the housing required.

The Government are denying opportunities for many tenants in Scotland. There is no support for their measure. That is borne out by the fact that no Scottish Tory Back Benchers have come along to speak in support of the Government. They have not even been present in the Chamber during the debate.

There is no case for the Government's proposals, but there is every case for amendment No. 7 and I urge the House to support it.

Mr. Andrew Welsh *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Does the hon. Gentleman have the leave of the House to speak again?

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leave withheld. The hon. Gentleman cannot speak again. He does not have the right of reply. His amendment has not been moved.

Mr. Welsh *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I refer the hon. Gentleman to page 421 of "Erskine May".

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 202, Noes 233

Division No. 242] **[5.16 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane	Blair, Tony
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*	Bradley, Keith
Allen, Graham	Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Alton, David	Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Archer, Rt Hon Peter	Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Armstrong, Hilary	Bruce, Malcolm *(Gordon)*
Ashdown, Paddy	Buchan, Norman
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack	Buckley, George J.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Callaghan, Jim
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Barron, Kevin	Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Beckett, Margaret	Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Beith, A. J.	Canavan, Dennis
Benn, Rt Hon Tony	Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*	Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Bidwell, Sydney	Clay, Bob

Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McLeish, Henry
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blackburn, Dr John G.
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Rt Hon Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Gardiner, George
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Robert B *(Herts W)*
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey

Mans, Keith
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 55

APPLICATION TO EXERCISE RIGHTS CONFERRED BY THIS PART AND OFFER TO SELL

Amendments made: No. 67, in page 32, line 18, at end insert—

'In this subsection, "prescribed" means prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.'.

No. 68, in page 32, line 22, at end insert

'and in this subsection the reference to a tenant's or joint tenant's spouse includes a person of the opposite sex who is living with the tenant or joint tenant as if he or she were the tenant's or joint tenant's husband or wife.'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 56

VARIATION OF CONDITIONS

Amendment made: No. 69, in page 33, line 39, after 'Tribunal' insert

'for Scotland (hereinafter in this Part of this Act referred to as the Lands Tribunal)'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 57

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE

Amendment made: No. 70, in page 34, line 21, after 'period', insert 'immediately'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 59

REFERENCE TO LANDS TRIBUNAL

Amendments made: No. 71, in page 35, line 6, at end insert—

'(bb) the Lands Tribunal has made a finding under section 58(3) above and the landlord has not, within 2 months, duly progressed the application in accordance with that finding.'.

No. 72, in page 35, line 13, leave out from 'under' to end of line 16 and insert

'subsection (1) above, it shall consider whether any of paragraphs (a) to (c) thereof apply and, if it so finds, it may serve an offer to sell notice and do otherwise as the landlord might do in pursuance of such notice; and anything done by it under this subsection shall have effect as if done by the landlord'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 62

ABOLITION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY'S POWER TO REFER PART VII CONTRACTS TO RENT ASSESSMENT COMMITTEES

Amendment made: No. 73, in page 36, line 12, leave out from beginning to 'shall' and insert

'sections 66(1), 68 and 71(1) of that Act the words "or the local authority" in each place where they occur'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Clause 64

RENT OFFICERS: ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS RELATING TO HOUSING BENEFIT ETC

6.30 pm

Mr. Home Robertson: I beg to move amendment No. 6, in page 36, line 23, leave out Clause 64.

The amendment would delete an obnoxious clause relating to housing benefit, which is supposed to deal with the likelihood that high rents in the private sector might become an excessive burden on the housing benefit system. One might expect a mechanism to be provided to enable the rent officer to restrict rents in such cases and to stop unscrupulous landlords from profiteering at the expense of tenants on low incomes in the housing benefit system, but that is too much to hope for from this Government. Instead, they propose to penalise the tenant if the landlord forces him to pay an excessive rent.

Rents are certain to increase under the Bill. That is the deliberate strategy of the Government. Indeed, such rudimentary controls as used to exist to prevent rent increases of more than 25 per cent. in any one year are being swept away elsewhere in the Bill.

The innovation is taking place against the background of the drastic cuts in social security and housing benefit to be introduced in a few weeks' time. We are indebted to Edinburgh city district council for making figures available showing exactly how the new system will bear on those claiming housing benefit in the city of Edinburgh. Of a total of 24,000 housing benefit claimants, no fewer than 19,000 will be worse off as a result of the changes to be

introduced next month. Some 2,000 of those claimants will lose housing benefit altogether, while 17,000 will lose a proportion of their benefit. The average loss to the 19,000 who will be worse off will be £6·42 per week.

If any of those people happen to be private sector tenants in a house which, strictly speaking, is bigger than they need, or in a house of good quality in a high value area of the city, the landlord will be able to force the rent up under the assured tenancy system that the Government have so generously provided. The Government talk about "freely negotiated rents" and the assured tenancy system. We know what that really means: in areas where there is a shortage of housing—in most areas of Scotland, that is—the landlord will be able to dictate the rents and tenants will find themselves having to offer a high rent or do without housing.

The local authorities, which act as the Government's agents in the housing benefit system, will be obliged to take direction from the rent officer on the level of rent that can be subsidised. The rent officer will have no power to restrict the rent, regardless of the quality of the housing or the means of the tenant. He will, however, have a duty to assess whether a tenant is living in a house which is too good or too big and in those circumstances he will have no option but to direct the district council to restrict the payment of housing benefit accordingly.

I was interested to read the advice given by the director of housing for East Lothian, my own district council, to members of that council:

"People in situations of severe housing stress such as the homeless are liable to agree to unaffordable rent levels in order to put a roof over their families' head. Without the fairness introduced into the rent fixing process by the Rent Officer they may quickly find arrears building up. If the rent is considered too expensive they may not even be entitled to full Housing Benefit and the new legislation will speed up the eviction process."

My local authority is right to fear the prospect of an increasing number of evictions under the assured tenancy system.

The East Lothian director of housing continues:

"It is intended by government that Housing Benefit will be restricted if applicants are living in accommodation considered too large or too expensive for their needs. Any excess Benefit paid over fixed thresholds will only be subsidised by central government at a rate of 25 per cent. compared to the standard rate of 97 per cent. The Council will therefore have to devote extra resources to these cases and it is not yet clear how such actions will be viewed by auditors.

Consequently it is possible that an elderly widow in a three bedroom house no longer occupied by her family will not receive full Housing Benefit and will be forced to move to smaller accommodation perhaps in another town or village."

Presumably it is indeed the Government's intention to force people on low incomes into ghettos of cheap housing. I was interested to read in the Edinburgh evening newspaper on Tuesday 8 March that Edinburgh city district council has found a private sector landlord who had acquired some property designed not to house people but to house pigs—a pigsty on a farm—which he intended to convert into bed-sits for the unemployed, who would then benefit from the housing benefits system. That is an example of the kind of landlord that the Bill will encourage. Such activity would be deplored by any responsible Government, but unfortunately this Government cannot be described as responsible.

I am especially worried about the position of elderly or disabled people who have moved into sheltered housing on the understanding that their rent will be covered by the housing benefit system. I suspect that more and more of them will find themselves in difficulties, as has happened already under recent changes in the housing benefit system.

A further clear illustration of the Government's twisted thinking on the subject is to be found in the Scottish Development Department consultation document "Deregulation of the Private Rented Sector: Consultation Paper on the Implication for Housing Benefit", which was issued in December 1987. Paragraph 3 of that document says:

"With an increasing proportion of rents in future not subject to statutory rent control, it will be particularly important to ensure, where a tenant's rent is being met, in whole or in part, by public funds through housing benefit, that the rent which attracts such support is not unreasonable."

So far, so good. One might conclude that it would be logical to do something about excessively high rents, but that is not going to happen.

Paragraph 5 of the consultation paper says:

"The Government also intend to provide, as soon as the necessary information for setting limits is available, that benefit should not be payable in full on the rents for the most expensive privately rented properties in each local authority area. The Government will introduce further limits on benefit should that prove necessary."

That seems to us to be the wrong way of approaching the problem.

Paragraph 23 states:

"In due course it is intended that regulations will be made by the Secretary of State for Social Services specifying where the necessary limit will be set. Once such regulations are made, in cases where the rent is above the limit, the local authority will calculate benefit on rent only up to the limit specified."

But here comes the rub:

"If the claimant chooses to remain in accommodation with a higher rent, he will have to make up the difference from his own resources. Subsidy will, of course, only be paid on benefit awarded on rent up to the limit."

One can imagine a father desperate to house his family finding that his only choice was to avail himself of over-priced private rented housing. Within weeks of taking on that commitment he could find that his rent was not covered by housing benefit. He would then be in terrible trouble because he would not be able to pay his rent and his family would face the prospect of homelessness all over again. That would be tragic and the Government should be ashamed of themselves for creating circumstances in which that kind of thing can happen.

It is all too cruelly clear that tenants who depend on the housing benefit system will not have the means to pay higher rents and will therefore face the prospect of losing their homes. Clause 64 is a vicious clause which should be taken out of the Bill, and I sincerely hope that the House will find ways of compelling the Government to think again.

Mr. Bruce Millan (Glasgow, Govan): I fully support everything that my hon. Friend the Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) has said about the clause, which is offensive even judged by the standards of the rest of the Bill. As I understand it, two sets of circumstances will be dealt with by the clause. I hope that the Minister will not just read out from the bits of paper in front of him when he replies. That is exactly what he did last night in speaking to new clause 16, which is closely related to this amendment. Had new clause 16 been accepted, there

[Mr. Bruce Millan]

would be no need for clause 64, even on the Government's arguments. I hope that the Minister will answer the points put to him.

Clause 64 is offensive in two respects. First, it provides for a judgment about whether accommodation is excessive. There is no such judgment in relation to mortgage interest relief. When one applies for mortgage interest relief no one asks whether one really needs such a big house and whether one should not perhaps move into something smaller and cheaper and have one's mortgage interest relief reduced.

Many private tenants live in very poor conditions—they will continue to do so under the assured tenancy system—and I find it very offensive that they should be asked to justify the accommodation in which they live, given that the desperate shortage of rented accommodation means that many of them will have been forced into the houses that they occupy. That is offensive enough, but what the Government intend to do with rent levels is more than offensive—it is a scandal.

The clause can operate in terms of rents only if the rent officer determines that the rent is excessive. One would imagine that there would be a mechanism for reducing rents. Why should an unjustifiably high rent, as determined by a rent officer, continue to be paid, irrespective of whether the tenant is on housing benefit? The Government, however, propose that, if a rent officer decides that the rent is too high, housing benefit should be reduced accordingly, but the rent should remain the same. There will then be a gap between the housing benefit payable and the rent. As we are talking about poorer people, the difference obviously cannot be made up out of income. Tenants will therefore be pushed out of their homes.

Clause 64 protects taxpayers in that housing benefit is controlled. It protects landlords with a vengeance, because even when it is seen that they are taking an unjustifiably high rent, that rent will remain in force. The power of the clause is directed against tenants. We did not get anything like a satisfactory explanation from the Minister last night. He talked about a free market and a willing landlord and a willing tenant negotiating rents on equal terms, but that is a travesty of the facts.

I have experience of these matters from my constituency. We had an unscrupulous and crooked landlord in my constituency. I am glad to say that he is now serving a prison sentence. Tenants are often on social security, and many are vulnerable for other reasons such as physical or mental disability. In those circumstances, and when there is a desperate shortage of housing, it is ludicrous to pretent that there can be free negotiations between a willing landlord and a willing tenant.

This scandal has been exposed time and again, but the Government have done nothing about it. Now they are doing something about it, the changes are at the expense of tenants rather than at the expense of landlords. We must have a proper explanation of the clause. Regardless of any explanation, however, the clause is so deeply offensive that I shall vote against it.

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): I entirely agree with what has been said about clause 64. If the amendment is pressed to a Division, I shall support it and recommend that my right hon. and hon. Friends do the same.

I also am worried about the judgment that is to be made by the rent officer. Nothing can amend that power adequately. The only way forward is to remove the clause. The clause embodies a worrying principle, which could be extended. If private tenants are to be affected, what is to stop the principle being extended to private owners who may receive housing benefit but live in mansions? The Government seem to be treating tenants and private owners differently.

6.45 pm

I am worried about subsection (4), which extends the power of rent officers to make investigations and seek information or evidence to determine a claim. We are all familiar with the housing benefit and social security system and section 51 of the Social Security Act 1986. I served on the Committee which considered that Bill, and we spent some time on section 51 because it provides some far-reaching and unconstrained powers for the DHSS concerning inquiries into people's personal circumstances.

The House should be careful about extending such powers to rent officers. We are involving a new type of public official in far-reaching investigations into personal lives. We should not do that lightly, not least because rent officers are not trained in the same way as social security and adjudication officers.

Subsection (3) worries me because it involves the Secretary of State for Social Services in the rent allowance subsidy paid to local authorities in Scotland for housing benefit. The Secretary of State for Social Services will find it difficult to discover what happens in Scotland, where special conditions prevail. How does the Minister envisage subsection (2)(b) being implemented? It refers to making "different provision for different cases or classes of case and for different areas".

What will that mean in terms of the power available to the Secretary of State? These are far-reaching powers. We discussed them in Committee, but the Government have not yet made it sufficiently clear what they mean in practice.

I should like to repeat the now familiar point about the negative resolution procedure provided for in subsection (2)(a). Such regulations should be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure.

Clause 64 gives the Secretary of State wide powers. It is wrong to give powers willy-nilly by statutory instrument when it would be perfectly easy to set out on the face of the Bill what the Secretary of State wants to achieve. There are several real difficulties with the clause. There are plenty of bad clauses in the Bill, but clause 64 is probably the worst in that it empowers rent officers to make judgments about what level of housing benefit tenants should be entitled to.

Mr. McAllion: I agree that clause 64 is the most detestable in the Bill. The very idea of a public official being sent around to label people as unfit to occupy their accommodation is thoroughly offensive.

The clause really has all the hallmarks of stigmatising poverty that I thought society was beginning to leave behind. When local authorities used to have the power to clothe children whose parents were too poor to provide clothing for them, some local authorities were insensitive enough to make those children go to one particular retailer

to get one particular type of clothing. Therefore, those children were easily spotted at school and were stigmatised for being poor. That was deeply resented by poor people. Clause 64 will also be deeply resented if the Government do not back down.

Will the Minister clarify the point that I raised with him in Committee? During Second Reading, the Secretary of State for Scotland was very clear about how he interpreted clause 64. He said:

"a local authority will be required to refer to the rent officer every rent for which it has received an application for housing benefit. The rent officer will then determine whether the rent payable is appropriate for the property."

The rent officer will consider whether

"the tenant is . . . over-accommodated or . . . the accommodation is of a quality that few people could ordinarily afford."

That seems quite clear, but the Secretary of State for Scotland qualified that by saying:

"We are talking not about existing tenants, but about a new tenancy."

That suggests that clause 64 will apply only to those tenants who move into new assured tenancies and short assured tenancies that will be prevalent in the private rented sector.

In Committee, when I pressed the Minister on that point, I used as an example my parents who live in a council house and receive housing benefit. The house used to accommodate all my family, but now it accommodates only my mother and father. Therefore, they would be over-accommodated. The Minister assured me that it would not apply to them.

On Second Reading my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Galbraith) gave the Secretary of State for Scotland the example of his parents, who also live in a council house in which they brought up their children. My hon. Friend asked the Secretary of State for Scotland:

"If one of them should die, the other would be left occupying a house with three bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen and a sitting room. Will that be gross over-accommodation for the partner who is left?"

If the Secretary of State had known what he was talking about, he would have said that it would not apply to my hon. Friend's parents because they are renting in the public sector and clause 64 does not apply to the public sector. However, the Secretary of State did not say that. He said:

"I will not try to give a definition . . . For the simple reason that Opposition Members would attack any definition that I might give as showing an indefensible rigidity and inflexiblity of approach." — [*Official Report*, 11 January 1988; Vol. 125, c. 50-53.]

The Secretary of State's answer implied that clause 64 will apply equally to the public sector and the independent rented sector.

Will the Minister make absolutely clear to which sector clause 64 will apply and will he explain why the Secretary of State for Scotland did not know what he was talking about on Second Reading?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I can tell the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) straight away that clause 64 has nothing to do with public sector tenants and with registered rent tenants in the private sector. When the Secretary of State was asked that general question, I think that he was thinking in terms of the definition of over-accommodation. I shall come to that later in my remarks.

The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) obviously disagrees with the policy. I respect his point of view, but I must say that the premise upon which the Bill is based is that the private rented sector will be substantially increased. The right hon. Gentleman may find it offensive that the market should play a part in this matter, but if a landlord imposes an excessive rent, in future there will be increased opportunities for tenants in the private rented sector. I will be happy to be reminded of these remarks in a few years' time, when the effects of the Bill will be seen very much more clearly.

The hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) asked about qualification. I will look into the matter, but my interpretation of the subsection to which he referred is that account must be taken of particular special circumstances. That certainly should happen.

I appreciate the active imagination of Opposition Members about clause 64. The Government's intention is certainly not sinister; it is simple and reasonable, and seeks to prevent abuse of the housing benefit system.

I invite the House to consider the scope for abuse in the system as it now operates and as it would operate in future without the protection of the powers to be taken under clause 64. In future, a tenant who applied for housing benefit would have his application assessed according to his ability to pay the rent for the accommodation where he has chosen to live. The actual level of rent would not affect his entitlement.

The rent could be for excessively large or expensive accommodation, or quite ridiculously high for the accommodation itself, but the rent would be paid in full or in part from housing benefit unless the local authority decided to restrict the benefit. The system would be wide open to abuse. I challenge Opposition Members to adduce any good reason for the taxpayer, through the State, to pay rents which are obviously excessive or rents for people living in accommodation which is far beyond their needs.

Mr. Bob McTaggart (Glasgow, Central): The Minister must realise that single parents and unmarried mothers have children at university who come to stay with them when the universities are in recess; therefore, they keep a spare room for their children. Under the Bill, many people would be deemed to have over-provision in their homes because they wanted to keep a spare room for one of their kids to join them during the holidays. That could happen under clause 64.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: In relation to over-accommodation, I am pleased to tell the hon. Member for Glasgow, Central (Mr. McTaggart) that we are aware of the difficulties which might arise in such circumstances —for example, if someone dies or if relatives move out because they are students or for some other reason. That is one of the many subjects which are now being carefully considered in the discussions with local authority associations. I can say no more than that at this stage.

Mr. Kirkwood: Will the Minister give way?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. I should like to move on to my next point.

Clause 64 gives the Secretary of State the power to require rent officers to perform such functions as he may specify by statutory instrument. The intention — I am talking about the procedure — is that rent officers will make an assessment of rent whenever a tenant of a private

[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton]

landlord applies for housing benefit. If the rent officer considers that the rent may be unreasonably high, he will carry out a valuation. If that establishes that the rent should be lower, the maximum rate of Exchequer subsidy will be paid only on housing benefit in respect of the assessed rent.

However, local authorities will still have the discretion to pay benefit in respect of a higher rent, but I should make it quite clear in this connection that local authorities will have the flexibility to assist in special cases — for example, with higher rent for a few weeks to give the tenant the time and opportunity for the situation to be sorted out. It is quite possible that local authorities might wish to use that flexibility, but there will be no Exchequer subsidy on the excess.

Rent officers will assess reasonable rents on the basis of guidance issued by my right hon. and learned Friend. A reasonable rent will be the market rent. Where there is insufficient evidence of market rents for comparable properties, the rent officer will make an assessment by taking account of appropriate yields which might be expected from investment in the private rented sector.

Mr. Jimmy Dunnachie (Glasgow, Pollok): When they assess the rent, will the rent officers make sure that the money that the tenants receive from the Government will be decreased? The local authorities will have the right to assist for a couple of weeks until things are sorted out. What does that mean? Who sorts out what? A landlord can charge whatever he wishes, so who sorts out the difference between what the Government will pay and what the tenant has to pay the landlord?

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: A local authority will have the flexibility to assist in special circumstances — for example, if a tenant's circumstances change. We believe that the provisions will act as a brake on excessive rents and make it very much harder for rents to be increased.

Mr. Kirkwood: Will the orders that the Secretary of State will be able to make under clause 64 make clear the procedure that is available to aggrieved tenants who wish to appeal against a rent officer's decision?

7 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The answer is probably no, but I shall look into the matter and write to the hon. Gentleman.

The rent that is set by a rent officer will not be the maximum rent that can be charged for a house. The landlord will be able to charge a higher rent if he can find a tenant who is willing to pay it, but in practice we believe that these provisions will act a serious brake on private sector rents generally, because tenants receiving housing benefit will continue to be a very significant proportion of all private sector tenants.

When examining a claim for housing benefit, the rent officer will also have to consider whether the tenant is over-accommodated. Again, the rent officer will apply the criteria to be laid down by my right hon. and learned Friend. If, according to these criteria, the claimant is found to be over-accommodated, housing benefit subsidy will be restricted to the rent that would have been payable on a house of a size that is appropriate to the claimant's need.

Opposition Members have expressed concern about the position of somebody who is living in over-large accommodation, purely because the house was a family home but the other members of the family have moved away or died. I fully understand that point and it is being considered in the discussions that are taking place between Government Departments and local authority associations.

Mr. Dunnachie: The Minister is telling us that if an old person is living in a house or apartment that is too big for him, the adjudication officer will be able to say that, rent-wise, that person, in his opinion, requires different accommodation and should be evicted.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: That is not what I am saying. The matter is being discussed with the local authorities. The points that were raised in Standing Committee and in the House will be taken into account.

I am now in a position to give an authoritative answer to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood). It is that this matter is under consideration. I shall make certain that he knows what the final outcome is.

Contrary to what has been suggested, there is nothing draconian about the new tests of excessively large or expensive accommodation. The tests will be applied fairly and with discretion. They are necessary because the Government are obliged to support tenants and also to prevent the abuse of public funds.

Mr. Home Robertson: I think that that was a plea of guilty, but it was a confused plea of guilty. The answer to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) is that it must be the bailiff who will have to sort out the problem. If a tenant were in an assured tenancy, he would have no security if he was unable to pay his rent. He would be put out into the street. That is the serious answer to the serious question that was asked by my hon. Friend. Not for the first time during our deliberations, the Minister refused to answer the question and to face up to the consequences of his legislation.

Mr. Dick Douglas (Dunfermline, West): Surely my hon. Friend is wrong to suggest that it would be up to the bailiff. However, it is for the Minister, with all the knowledge that he has displayed at the Dispatch Box, to rise and contradict him.

Mr. Home Robertson: I should be very happy to give way to the Minister if he would like to refute that point, but I am afraid that there is absolutely no way in which he can do so. It is irrefutable. That is what the Government are legislating for, and the Minister knows it. He must be even deeper into cloud cuckoo land than we thought he was if he is suggesting that the private rented sector will produce a large amount of low-priced rented accommodation to deal with Scotland's tragedy of over 30,000 people becoming homeless every year.

Because of the present shortage of rented housing in Scotland, a shortage that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, the Minister knows that it is a seller's market and that the market rent is likely to be high. Desperate people will have to pay rents that they cannot afford. As they will have no housing benefit to help them to pay the rent, they could face the prospect all over again of being homeless.

The Government recognise that landlords may try to extract high rents from claimants, but it is bizarre that,

instead of penalising landlords, they intend to penalise tenants. That says all that needs to be said about this Government's philosophy and about the sick minds of the unrepresentative, minority regime in the Scottish Office. Clause 64 is an affront to the people of Scotland. I invite the House to delete it from the Bill.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 198, Noes 226.

Division No. 243] **[7.07 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Cleiland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Marshall, Jim *(Leicester S)*
Maxton, John
Meacher, Michael
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert N.
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ken Eastham.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Budgen, Nicholas
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan

Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grylls, Michael
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Howard, Michael
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New Forest)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Alan Howarth and
Mr. David Maclean.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 67

FINANCE

Amendment made: No. 74, in page 37, line 28, leave out 'in consequence of' and insert 'under' — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 1

SCOTTISH HOMES

Amendment made: No. 27, in page 42, leave out lines 19 to 26 and insert—

'Execution of Documents

18. A document is validly executed by Scottish Homes if it is subscribed on its behalf by one of its members or by any other person duly authorised in that behalf.

19. A document shall be presumed, unless the contrary is shown, to have been validly executed by Scottish Homes if it bears to have been subscribed on its behalf by one of its members or by any other person duly authorised in that behalf and to have been sealed with its common seal (whether attested by witnesses or not).'. — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 3

SCOTTISH HOMES: AMENDMENTS OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS ACT 1985

Amendment made: No. 146, in page 46, line 49, at end insert—

'10A. In section 15A—

(a) in subsection (3), for the words from "is", where second occurring, onward there shall be substituted the words—

"(a) was, prior to the specified date, designated as such by the Housing Corporation; or

(b) is, on or after that date, designated as such by Scottish Homes,"

and, in this subsection, "specified date" has the same meaning as in section 3 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988; and

(b) in subsection (4)—

(i) for the words "The Housing Corporation" there shall be substituted the words "Scottish Homes"; and

(ii) in paragraph (b) after the word "designation" there shall be inserted the words "(including a designation made by the Housing Corporation under subsection (3) above as originally enacted)".'. — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 4

TENANCIES WHICH CANNOT BE ASSURED TENANCIES

Amendments made: No. 138, in page 49, line 42, leave out from 'house' to end of line.

No. 141, in page 50, line 3, at end insert—

'(bb) that, at the time when the tenancy was granted, there was an ordinary means of access—

(i) to or from the house by way of that other house; or

(ii) to or from that other house by way of the house

(whether or not that access was available to the tenant as of right'.

No. 142, in page 51, leave out lines 6 to 8.

No. 76, in page 51, line 26, leave out from 'Association' to end of line 27.

No. 77, in page 51, line 33, leave out lines 33 to 36. — *[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 5

GROUNDS FOR POSSESSION OF HOUSES LET ON ASSURED TENANCIES

Amendments made: No. 79, in page 52, line 29, after 'tenant', insert

'not later than the date of commencement of the tenancy'.

No. 80, in page 53, line 50, leave out 'money or money's worth' and insert 'value'.

No. 82, in page 54, line 25, leave out from 'hearing' to 'in' in line 26 and insert

'at least three months rent lawfully due from the tenant is'.

No. 3, in page 54, leave out lines 27 to 30.

No. 84, in page 54, line 32, at end insert—

'Ground 11A

Suitable alternative accommodation is available for the tenant or will be available for him when the order for possession takes effect.'.

No. 85, in page 54, line 32, at end insert—

'Ground 11B

The following conditions are fulfilled—

(a) the tenant has given a notice to quit which has expired; and

(b) the tenant has remained in possession of the whole or any part of the house; and

(c) proceedings for the recovery of possession have been begun not more than six months after the expiry of the notice to quit; and

(d) the tenant is not entitled to possession of the house by virtue of a new tenancy.'.

No. 86, in page 54, line 32, at end insert—

'Ground 11C

Whether or not any rent is in arrears on the date on which proceedings for possession are begun, the tenant has persistently delayed paying rent which has become lawfully due.'.

No. 87, in page 55, line 27, leave out from 'situated' to end of line and insert

'or, where the house in question is in a new town, of the development corporation established for its purposes under the New Towns (Scotland) Act 1968 or, in any case, of Scottish Homes, certifying that the authority, the Corporation or, as the case may be, Scottish Homes'.

No. 88, in page 56, line 2, after 'authority', insert

'or development corporation or by Scottish Homes'.

No. 89, in page 56, line 11, after 'authority', insert

'or development corporation or of Scottish Homes'.

No. 90, in page 56, line 12, leave out 'the authority' and insert 'that body'.

No. 91, in page 56, line 15, leave out 'the authority' and insert 'that body'.

No. 92, in page 56, line 22, after 'authority', insert 'or development corporation'.

No. 93, in page 56, line 23, after 'therein', insert 'or of Scottish Homes'.

No. 94, in page 56, line 24, leave out 'authority' and insert 'body'.

No. 95, in page 56, line 26, leave out 'A local authority' and insert

'Local authorities, development corporations and Scottish Homes'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 6

AMENDMENTS TO SCHEDULE 1 TO RENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1984

Amendments made: No. 96, in page 57, line 26, leave out from 'as' to second 'by' in line 27 and insert

'then has occupancy rights under section 18 of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981 (rights of cohabiting couples) or, if neither or none of them has such rights, such one of them as may be decided'.

No. 144, in page 57, line 34, leave out 'five' and insert 'two'.

No. 145, in page 58, line 4, leave out 'five' and insert 'two'.

No. 97, in page 58, line 13, at end add—

'PART II'

STATUTORY TENANTS BY SUCCESSION: MODIFICATION OF ENACTMENTS

10. In relation to the assured tenancy to which the person becomes entitled by succession, section 18 of this Act shall have effect as if in subsection (3) after the word "established" there were inserted the words "or that the circumstances are as specified in any of Cases 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, and 21 in Schedule 2 to the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984".

11.—(1) In relation to the assured tenancy to which the person becomes entitled by succession, any notice given for the purpose of Case 13, Case 14 or Case 16 of Schedule 2 to the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984 to the original tenant (within the meaning of Schedule 1 to the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984) shall be treated as having been given for the purposes of whichever of Grounds 4 to 6 in Schedule 5 to this Act corresponds to the Case in question.

(2) Where sub-paragraph (1) above applies, the regulated tenancy of the said original tenant shall be treated, in relation to the assured tenancy of the person so entitled, as "the earlier tenancy" for the purposes of Part IV of Schedule 5 to this Act.'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 7

MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1987 (C. 26)

Amendments made: No. 98, in page 59, line 10, at end insert—

'14A In section 250 (repairs grants in housing action areas), in subsection (7), in paragraph (b) for "249(5)" there shall be substituted "250(5)".'.

No. 14, in page 59, line 14, at end insert—

'16A. In section 268 (notice of determination) in subsection (4) for the words "1 to 3" and "281, 283 and 284(1)" respectively there shall be substituted the words "2, 3 and 7", and "282, 284 and 285.'

No. 15, in page 59, line 14, at end insert—

'16AA. In section 281 (effect of repurchase on certain existing tenancies) in subsection (2)(b) for the words "34(1)(d) of the Tenants Rights Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980" there shall be substituted the words "9(1)(d) of the Rent (Scotland) Act 1984".'.

No. 99, in page 59, line 14, at end insert—

'16A. In section 276 (repurchase by authority other than local authority), in subsection (3), in paragraph (a), for '21' there shall be substituted '20'.'.

No. 16, in page 59, line 21, after '1980', insert

'(notice that tenancy is to be a protected shorthold tenancy)'

No. 17, in page 59, line 22, after '1984', insert

'(notice that the tenancy is to be a short tenancy'

No. 18, in page 59, line 22, at end insert—

'18A. In section 285 (request for tenancy under section 282 or 283) in subsection (1)(a) for the words "paragraph 4" there shall be substituted the words "paragraph 3".'.

No. 19, in page 59, line 25, at end insert—

'19A. In section 338 (interpretation) in the definition of "standard amenities" for "244(5)" there shall be substituted "244(6)".'.

United Nations precedents offer the best guarantee that the

No. 20, in page 59, line 30, after '8', insert

'(as the case may be)'.

No. 21, in page 59, line 31, at end insert—

'20A. In Schedule 20 (assistance by way of repurchase) in paragraph 3 for the words "a notice" there shall be substituted the words "an offer to purchase".'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 9

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

Amendments made: No. 100, in page 62, line 36, at end insert—

'(5A) In section 177 (statutory tenant to be regarded as lessee for purposes of the Act), in paragraph (a), after '1984' there shall be inserted the words 'or Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1988'.'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Schedule 10

REPEALS

Amendments made: No. 139, in page 64, line 1, column 3, at end insert—

'In section 68, the words "or the local authority".'

No. 140, in page 64, line 3, at end insert—

'In section 71(1) the words "or the local authority".'

No. 101, in page 64, column 3, leave out lines 33 to 35.

No. 123, in page 64, line 33, column 3, at beginning insert—

'Section 62(11) to (13).'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Title

Amendments made: No. 102, in line 5, after 'tenants;', insert

'to make new provision as to limit on discount on the price of houses purchased by secure tenants;'.

No. 103, in line 5, after 'tenants;', insert

'to abolish, and make interim provision for the capitalisation of, certain subsidies and contributions relating to housing;'.—*[Lord James Douglas-Hamilton.]*

Order for Third Reading read.—[Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]

7.19 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

This is a major Bill. Indeed, it is the most important housing legislation for Scotland since the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980. That legislation was badly misjudged by the Opposition of the time, who said that there was insufficient demand for the right to buy. We know now how wrong they were. I am confident that the current opposition to this Bill will, in time, be seen to be equally misjudged as the provisions bring a better quality of life to those living or wishing to live in rented homes.

The Bill has received a detailed and thorough examination by the House. No fewer than 600 amendments were considered in Standing Committee and more than 190 were dealt with on Report. The Bill has been improved substantially as a result of the debates that those amendments generated. We have listened carefully to views expressed both by hon. Members and by interested parties who have followed our debates. I think it right at this point to mention the considerable effort that has been put into the Bill by many groups who have assisted all parties in the House. I should mention specifically Shelter, Age Concern, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, the Lands Tribunal for Scotland, the Law Society, the Scottish Special Housing Association, the Housing Corporation and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

In many cases, we have been able to respond to reasonable suggestions by making amendments to the Bill, and I have been happy so to do. In all, more than 66 amendments of this nature have been made, although some, of course, were of a minor or technical nature. We have also had a number of matters drawn to our attention which it may be possible to bring forward further amendments in another place.

In relation to Scottish Homes, the general nature of the legislation within which the new body will work has been confirmed. This will give it the flexibility that we regard as necessary in the future housing scene. At the same time, through amendments, it has been given specific functions in relation to training and research, and its role in relation to all forms of housing has been clearly established. That was the result of an amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Griffiths).

The doctrine of tacit relocation, one of the ornaments of Scottish law for which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) made a passionate appeal, has been accepted. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where is he?"] My hon. and learned Friend is temporarily absent, but I suspect that he will be tacit only until he is relocated.

In part II, the new tenancies for the private rented sector have drawn much comment. We have been able to respond to many of the suggestions made, and on Report the House approved a broad package of improvements to the assured and short assured tenancy regimes. In addition —the hon. Member for Dundee, East (Mr. McAllion) raised this in Committee—we have recognised that it was unnecessarily stringent to require a successor to a regulated tenancy to have lived with the tenant for five years. We have therefore reduced the period to two years. That matter was also raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) and by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood).

The provisions of part III, which deals with tenants' choice, have been simplified. There has been recognition that the arrangements proposed in the Bill will meet the needs of Scotland more closely than those proposed for elsewhere. Amendments have been made to give effect to policy proposals in the White Paper which were not in the Bill on its introduction. We have been able to provide for the abolition of certain Exchequer subsidies under arrangements which are acceptable to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

The Bill now incorporates a reasonable compromise between the aspirations of tenants to purchase their homes at a discount and the needs of local authorities. The new provisions for the cost floor should enable more tenants to exercise their right to buy, without their discount being restricted. The Bill gives effect to the majority of the proposals in the White Paper, but legislation alone does not achieve the improvements in the quality of life that we seek. The legislation enables tenants and others seeking a home to exercise more choice and opportunity, and

enables those providing homes to do so with greater diversity. Above all, it enables individuals to take greater responsibility for their own homes.

It cannot go unremarked that the Opposition have no comprehensive policy for housing in Scotland. They are full of criticism for the constructive policies that the Government have put forward and they are always trying to drag down any attempt to move forward in providing better housing, but they have failed to produce one new idea to make progress on the remaining problems of today.

It came as no surprise, therefore, to see the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) claiming recently that, in the unlikely event of his party forming a Government, they will promote housing choice by encouraging local initiatives to develop co-operatives, housing associations and owner-occupation. Having failed to devise policies of its own, the Labour party adopts those of our policies which seem most popular—those which we have pursued successfully since 1980. I am only sorry that the hon. Member for East Lothian does not acknowledge that and join us in achieving what appear to be our common aims.

Instead, there has been a continuing campaign of misinformation bordering on the irresponsible. Despite repeated assertions to the contrary from the Opposition and irresponsible interests outside, the Bill contains not a word of compulsion on tenants—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) wishes to know, the leaflet put out in the summer by NALGO to SSHA tenants was highly irresponsible. There are many copies of that leaflet available.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has given clear and personal assurances that the rights of SSHA tenants in particular are in no way diminished by the Bill. The Bill expands the opportunities available. The Opposition claim that there is no call for those opportunities. They said the same about the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980, and they will be proved equally wrong now.

7.26 pm

Mr. Home Robertson: I feel as though I have just been savaged by a pet lamb. The Minister's harangue would have been more convincing if he had been able to deliver it with a straight face, but I suspect that he found it no more convincing than the rest of the House did. He claimed to have listened to representations made in Committee and on the Floor of the House. He claimed to have listened to Shelter, to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, to the housing associations, to the Scottish Council for Single Homeless and all the rest, but there is precious little evidence that he understood or responded in any way to the positive representations made to him about housing in Scotland.

The Bill has been exposed as an irrelevant, dangerous and doctrinaire measure. In particular, it has highlighted the glaring deficiences in parliamentary scrutiny of Scottish legislation. Yesterday and today, the House has been voting through a measure which will have drastic effects on housing in Scotland, but without paying any attention to the arguments. Repeatedly, both yesterday and today, the Minister found himself in solitary splendour on the Conservative side with only a Whip from an English constituency to keep him company. Yet hundreds of English Conservatives poured into the Lobbies to vote on a measure which has no bearing on their constituents but which will have a far-reaching effect in Scotland.

As for the Committee stage, it is worth putting it on record that the people of Scotland elected 50 Labour Members of Parliament, 12 Members representing the so-called minority parties and only 10 Members from the real minority — the Conservative party. The Standing Committee, however, consisted of 11 Conservatives, six Labour Members and just one alliance Member. It is interesting to consider how the Tories managed to get 11 Members on the Committee when they have only 10 Scottish Members, two of whom are members of the Cabinet. To get their work through, they had to add two English Members—*[Interruption.]*

I will not be lectured by the Minister of State, Scottish Office, the hon. Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), about insults to the House. The hon. Gentleman represents a minority Administration in Scotland. He constantly treats the people of Scotland with abuse. He was not elected to do that, and I am not taking any nonsense from him. The Government managed to get their business through Committee only by adding two English Tories to its membership. That is just within Standing Orders, but it is an affront to the principles of democracy in Scotland.

The House and the Government should be warned about the strains that result from such provocative conduct by the minority Administration in the Scottish Office. The nation of Scotland does not have to put up with such abuse. Ministers are always quick to criticise the Opposition for any mention of civil disobedience in Scotland. The time is long overdue for Ministers to show some obedience to the electorate of Scotland — something that is lacking in this Bill and in other policies.

The Bill began life with a travesty of a consultation process. Ministers paid no heed to those who know and care about Scottish housing. Parliament has failed to carry out its duty to prevent the passage of bad legislation for Scotland. Part I creates a monstrous housing quango, Scottish Homes, whose board will be personally nominated by a Secretary of State who does not represent any more than a tiny rump of a minority in Scotland. That quango will have the full range of powers over housing in Scotland, but there will be no representation on its board from the tenants of Scotland. The powers of locally elected authorities are being savagely curtailed and SSHA tenants are being cynically manoeuvred into an uncertain future under Scottish Homes.

Part II provides for a new framework of so-called assured tenancies, which will be anything but assured. They are specifically designed to undermine tenants' rights and security and to force up rents to encourage the redevelopment of private landlordism in Scotland. The Government are running a terrible risk of encouraging the worst features of Rachmanism in Scotland. Clause 33 provides for damages for unlawful eviction, but it is clearly little more than a fig leaf. What is the point of protection against unlawful eviction when it will be all too easy to evict lawfully under schedule 5?

The Opposition, who are the majority in Scotland, want to put on record a clear warning to speculators that we will introduce a new framework of security and rent control as soon as possible, either in this Parliament or in a directly elected Scottish assembly. The Government are pinning their hopes on an upsurge in the provision of private

[Mr. Home Robertson]

rented accommodation by a sector that has been in decline since the beginning of the century and that now holds only 6 per cent. of the rented housing stock in Scotland.

The Government are establishing a mechanism under Part III which will allow private speculators to acquire public sector housing stock at a cut price. That demonstrates the Government's lack of confidence that the private sector will invest in building or in improving rented accommodation. The private sector cannot and will not rise to the challenge, and the Minister knows it. Even if it did, tenants could not afford the increased rents.

If the Minister will not take that from me, perhaps he will take it from the chief executive of the Nationwide Anglia Building Society, Mr. Tim Melville-Ross. *The Scotsman* states that during a speech at the Institute of Housing conference in Aviemore recently, he called for

"a significantly more generous housing benefit system to help people on modest incomes meet the higher rents likely under the Government's policy."

The article stated:

"The head of one of Britain's biggest building societies gave warning yesterday that the Government's planned housing reform would fail unless more financial help were given to both tenants and the providers of private rented houses."

We keep hearing about Nationwide Anglia, but that is what its chief executive said about the Government's proposals. Of course he wants more concessions, but, to his credit, he is also calling for better support for tenants.

The Minister has rejected an appeal to reconsider the impact of the legislation on housing benefit. The Government are not interested in that. They may not want to recognise it, but there is a mounting housing crisis in Scotland. Those of us elected to serve Scottish constituencies come face to face with it every day of the week. More than 30,000 people in Scotland become homeless every year, and their number has increased relentlessly during recent years. More than 200,000 people are on waiting lists and more then one quarter of the population is living in overcrowded accommodation.

Scotland probably has about 500,000 damp houses, but it is difficult to establish the facts and figures because the Government refuse to conduct a house condition survey similar to those carried out in England and Wales. The position is deteriorating because of the Government's refusal to invest in housing in Scotland. The Bill offers no hope to Scots who face homelessness or who are stuck in bad or overcrowded accommodation. It is simply a threat of unaffordable rents and eviction as the Government sacrifice tenants' right in their reckless endeavour to encourage private landlordism in Scotland.

The Government are sacrificing everything — fair rents, security, local control, and even the precious right to buy that Ministers keep praising. That right would be lost to tenants who transferred to the assured tenancy system. The Government are unleashing born-again Rachmanism in Scotland because there is no provision for effective regulation of the private sector.

We welcome the spectacular new motivation during recent months among tenants' organisations in Scotland which have been provoked by the Government's proposals. The Labour party strongly supports the rebirth of the tenants' association movement, which is a welcome development. I will not take any chiding from the Minister or from anyone else about the Labour party's housing policies. It has had positive achievements in housing in Scotland. We are happy to stand by the record of Labour-controlled authorities which, in all parts of Scotland, have made remarkable achievements, despite the interference and hostility of the Government.

Glasgow city district council, in particular, has made spectacular progress in difficult circumstances by developing and diversifying both public and private sector housing in partnership with housing associations, housing co-operatives and the private sector. It is a similar picture in many other areas. There is a stark contrast between the practical achievements of Labour-controlled authorities which want to provide for the needs of people in their localities and the negative approach of the minority Conservative Administration in the Scottish Office, who are interested only in encouraging their friends, the private property speculators. We stand for investment, for development and for tenants' rights. We reject the Bill.

7.37 pm

Sir Hector Monro (Dumfries): I do not intend to follow the typical carping speech of the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) because we all know that homes, houses, waiting lists, condensation and dampness are all run-of-the-mill subjects with which we have to deal as constituency Members of Parliament. Any Bill that will improve the position must be welcome, and I certainly welcome this one. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister for piloting his first Bill through the House with such success.

I am glad that this year my hon. Friend has provided additional money for housing in Scotland. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State made an important announcement yesterday on urban aid. I understand that the additional money for non-housing revenue account money and improvement grants will be welcomed by local authorities as it will enable them to improve their housing stock. It is a rapid move in the right direction.

I am glad that the Bill includes an extension of our most successful policy of council house sales, which has done so much to grant the wish of many Scots to own their homes. I am also glad that my hon. Friend has dealt with choice of tenure, choice of landlord and rented accommodation generally. I do not know why the Opposition are so opposed to rented accommodation, which is important in Scotland, and in which the private sector plays as important a part as the public sector. As an immense number of people want to be mobile and to move from one job to another, rented accommodation available at reasonably short notice is important, but we must have the right structure for that to happen.

It is disappointing that all Opposition parties keep shouting alarm and despondency and creating a great deal of comment in Scotland that the Bill might be disadvantageous to the average Scots household. Of course it is not. It is there to help. Its whole objective is to improve the quality of Scottish housing. That is why the most important part of the Bill is the setting up of Scottish Homes, bringing together the Scottish Special Housing Association and the individual housing associations that are doing so much throughout Scotland to improve the quality of homes, especially for the less fortunate and for handicapped people. That is one of the most important and dramatic developments in Scotland over the past ten

years or so—long may it continue. I hope that my hon. Friend will continue to make substantial sums of money available to the housing associations.

All in all, I congratulate my hon. Friend and the Secretary of State for Scotland on promoting the Bill, and I wish it well in another place.

7.40 pm

Mr. Douglas: I shall be brief, but I want to address the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland who has piloted the Bill through Committee and through our proceedings. I might be using the word "piloted" loosely, because a pilot usually achieves his objective by getting the ship into port safely, with the crew happy. The crew that I am speaking about are hon. Members — in this case, those representing Scottish constituencies. I would not describe it as a happy crew. Indeed, the Minister's own crew have deserted——

Mr. David Maclean (Penrith and The Border): There are not many Opposition Members present.

Mr. Douglas: If the Whip would stop interrupting from a sedentary position, he would realise that it is not the Opposition's responsibility to carry the Bill through. He has that responsibility. Quite noticeable in our previous debate were some of the more knowledgeable English Members. I am referring, among others and in his absence, to the hon. Member for Aldershot (Mr. Critchley) who must have got material for three or four articles while listening to the Minister's erudite reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie). When my hon. Friend asked the Minister a question about clause 64, the reply from the Box was, in effect, "We do not really know the answer. After all this time, we are considering it." That is the level of debate and assistance that we have had from the Government.

The Under-Secretary of State, whom I have known for a considerable time, bears among his names a name that I bear also. Throughout history, the Douglases have fought for Scotland and Scotland's interests——

Mr. Archy Kirkwood (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): Ruthlessly.

Mr. Douglas: Yes, ruthlessly, it is true. However, I do not think that the way in which the Under-Secretary of State is fighting at present is in Scotland's interest or that it is doing the Douglas name any good. He knows that I respect him highly, but he should consider his position. In a way, his piloting of this Bill is a triumph of our liking for him over his intellectual grasp of the housing issue.

The Under-Secretary of State mentioned a whole host of organisations that had been consulted about the Bill, not one of which supported the measure. The Scottish Special Housing Association initially thought that it was quite a useful measure, but on examining it in detail, it turned against it.

The hon. Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) has left the Chamber and deserted the ship, but I pick up some of his strictures that we should all be concerned about the future of housing and that we should be flexible and not have a doctrinaire aproach. However, what concerns me about the thrust of the Bill, and about when it becomes an Act, is that it goes against the cohesion that we have kept in Scotland, in terms of a sense of community.

The Bill means that people will be able to move out of the local authority sector into Scottish Homes. It is possible—indeed, I would say, probable—that there is a dual thrust out of the local authority sector because people will move out of the local authority sector into Scottish Homes, either through housing associations or in another way and, because of the discounts, people will buy themselves out of the local authority sector, which will be ghettoised. People who are concerned about a sense of community should be concerned about that. Only the poorer sections of the community and the worst type of housing will remain in the local authority sector. I advise the Minister that if he is concerned about communities, he should take that on board.

Moreover, as we saw in debating clause 64, the local authority will have burdens placed on it in relation to care of the homeless and vexatious aspects of rent control and rent legislation. People might be considered to be living in over-luxurious accommodation and be asked to move out. It is the local authority, not Scottish Homes, that will have the responsibility of looking after them.

What the Tories are doing to Scotland, not only in housing, but in education and in all aspects of Thatcherite policy, is destroying our sense of community. We did not vote for that in 1987. There is no majority in Scotland for that thrust and that approach. I warn my colleagues that we have suffered this for eight long and dreary months, but I doubt whether we can suffer for long an approach such as we have witnessed today — in the article in the *Glasgow Herald* and in the speeches that the Prime Minister has made in Scotland. I doubt whether the Douglases — people who have fought ruthlessly for Scotland—can stomach that for much longer.

7.47 pm

Mr. Kirkwood: Although I believe that the Bill is a missed opportunity, I begin by agreeing with the Government at least in so far as their stated objectives were made clear to the Committee, to the House on Second Reading and in subsequent stages. First, it is obviously right, in the context of the condition of Scotland's housing at the moment, that increased home ownership should be given a degree of priority by the Government, and by local authorities and housing agencies.

Secondly, it is also true that increased diversification of forms of tenure is a perfectly proper and laudable objective. Finally, the geographical locations require urgent attention and priority, whether relating to legislation, resources or anything else that should be given to the peripheral housing schemes, especially in our bigger cities. I believe that all hon. Members would find it easy to agree with those things.

However, when we take the stated objectives and consider the content of the Bill as it has been produced by the Second Reading and Committee stages in the House, we are looking at the introduction of the new organisation, Scottish Homes. I believe that it would be possible for another Government with a different social and economic perspective, in office in Scotland, to make Scottish Homes a force for change for the better. However, because of the Government's track record on economic and social issues, I have substantial doubts that they will manage to achieve anything positive.

I believe that the proposals for Scottish Homes will have little impact on my constituency. I hope that I am wrong about that. The housing association movement has made a small but meaningful change for the better in rural

[Mr. Kirkwood]

areas and small towns in south-east Scotland and the border areas. I hope that that will continue. But even the housing associations are anxious about the application of the new assured tenancy scheme to their future tenants.

The Minister said that he will continue to consider the matter. *I implore him to get that consideration right. He* must deal with the loss of security and succession rights. I warn him that, if he does not, he will lose the co-operation of housing associations. They will be in the same boat as local authorities which have, to all intents and purposes, lost any meaningful relationship with central Government. If the general powers and specific functions of Scottish Homes cannot be implemented with the agreement of local authorities and housing associations, the prospect of its succeeding are negligible. I hope that I am wrong, but I say that to the Minister with all the conviction that I can muster.

The Minister must also consider the balance between private and public sector investment. Of course, private sector investment should be brought in. I agree with the hon. Member for East Lothian (Mr. Home Robertson) that to make public sector investment meaningful for investors, the Government will have to provide financial inducements over and above anything that they have considered to make substantial inroads into housing investment. That would cause me some anxiety. Although I do not mind allocating public funds to support housing provision in Scotland, it is wrong to give tax breaks and financial handouts to companies and individuals simply because they are prepared to consider moving into the private housing sector.

The balance of landlord to tenant in the new assured tenancy scheme is out of kilter. Time will tell whether I am wrong about that, but I believe that the Minister has gone too far in the wrong direction. I concede that to develop the philosophy that is contained in other parts of the Bill, there may have been arguments for considering how to free the private rented sector. I do not necessarily agree with it, but I concede that some adjustment may have been necessary. I think that the Minister has overdone that adjustment, and time will prove me correct.

What causes local authorities most anxiety is part III. The prohibition of opting into the public sector is unnecessary to achieve the Minister's aims. If his analysis is right and the public sector has been found wanting in the past — there have been legitimate criticisms of some local authorities, especially in the central industrial belt, in relation to repairs and maintenance — it must be unnecessary to proscribe people's ability to return to the public sector. It would have cost the Minister nothing to make the choice a genuine one, and he could more easily have defended himself against attacks on the issue from the Opposition. It was a bad tactical mistake, and I believe that the House will wish to reconsider the matter in the future.

I implore the Scottish Office, and the Minister's Department, to pay more attention to the processes of consultation. There is a widespread feeling, which I support entirely, that the Bill has been rushed through in an indefensible manner. I cannot understand what the hurry was. There are at least two, three or even four years remaining of this Parliament, and it would have served the interests of his Department better if the Minister had taken his time over consultation and introduced the Bill next Session. That would have allowed the organisations to which the Minister paid tribute—I endorse that tribute — more time to discuss the issues. A much better Bill would have followed the Green Paper consultation and White Paper processes. If the Minister has any influence with his Department, I hope he will never again allow such scant consultation on Scottish legislation.

The parliamentary process of the Bill was disgraceful. The Committee stage got into a bit of a fankle for the first two weeks, and we could have made better progress then. But thereafter the Opposition were as constructive and positive as they could have been. The Minister said that about 190 amendments were tabled on Report, 88 of which were from the Government. Of course, there should be half a dozen or even a dozen amendments that derive directly from discussions in Committee, but the tabling of so many amendments on Report and the charade that we had last night sent me home deeply frustrated and despairing of what people outside this place—interest groups and the public—must have made of our proceedings.

The Minister must bear responsibility for that. If his Department comes to him and suggests that future legislation should be handled in that way, he should say, "No. I am not prepared to legislate in that fashion on important issues." If we do not protest vigorously against such procedures, the Government will have recourse to such tactics even more regularly. The Minister will take up my points later, but I believe that it does the House no service to legislate as we have with this Bill.

I hope that the Bill will succeed. I fear that it will not, but time will tell.

7.57 pm

Mr. Dennis Canavan (Falkirk, West): The Bill will do almost nothing to solve Scotland's undoubted housing crisis. It will do almost nothing to help the thousands of homeless people, or the thousands of people threatened with homelessness, or the thousands of people living in what they consider to be inadequate accommodation, or the thousands of people on house waiting lists whose only hope of getting a home lies in the public sector through either the local council or the Scottish Special Housing Association. Not only will the Bill do almost nothing to help them; in many instances it will make matters considerably worse.

I shall confine most of my remarks to SSHA tenants, of which there are more than 1,000 in my constituency. The creation of Scottish Homes will be of no advantage to those tenants. Although the SSHA is far from perfect —I and many other Opposition Members have criticised it for being a quango and for being non-accountable, without any elected representation on the board—with the Bill we are coming out of the frying pan into the fire.

The SSHA will be replaced by a bigger bureaucracy. Scottish Homes will be the biggest landlord in Scotland. Sadly, the Minister refused to accept a succession of amendments in Committee — others were tabled for Report stage, but unfortunately were not selected—that would have introduced at least some elected representation on to the board of Scottish Homes. Instead, the membership of that board will be determined by the patronage power of the Secretary of State for Scotland. That is symptomatic of what is happening in Scotland, which is being governed by patronage rather than democracy.

We see that in the Health Service, where the Secretary of State's planted men have been put on the health boards, and those that disagree with him have been removed. I can imagine the type of pussy-footing people he will put on the board of Scottish Homes. They will be a crowd of yesmen.

Mr. Home Robertson: Ancram.

Mr. Canavan: Yes, indeed. He was quite rightly booted out of this place by his constituents. Sooner or later he will no doubt inherit a seat along the Corridor. In the meantime, as a result of the Secretary of State's abuse of patronage, Ancram is in danger of obtaining powerful positions such as membership of the board of Scottish Homes or other quangos and wreaking havoc until such time as true democracy is introduced to Scotland.

I agree with the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) about the quality of consultation—it was an absolute farce. I have yet to find one SSHA tenant in my constituency who is in favour of the proposals in the Bill. I wonder whether the Minister could give us the name and address of one SSHA tenant anywhere in Scotland who is in favour of the proposals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: How can tenants say that they are in favour of the scheme when the options have not even been put before them?

Mr. Canavan: The proposals are in the Bill. If the Minister is saying that the Bill is simply a series of options, I am afraid he has misunderstood the concrete legislative proposals contained in it. It is not a Green Paper, a White Paper or a consultation document. A consultation document was published a year ago. There were a series of phoney consultations as a result of which a White Paper was produced prior to the publication of the Bill.

As far as I am aware, no SSHA tenant is in favour of the proposals. The Minister has failed to give us the name and address of one such tenant, but perhaps his officials can give him that information. There are more than 83,000 such tenants throughout Scotland. Surely one of them has written to St. Andrew's house to say that they support the proposals.

Mr. Douglas: As my hon. Friend has great mathematical skill, would he care to evaluate the probability of not one person in more than 80,000 being in favour of the proposals?

Mr. Canavan: It is certainly formidable. It is incumbent upon the Minister to tell us why not one SSHA tenant has written to support the proposals.

Despite what the Minister may have said about listening to people, there is still a great deal of concern, particularly among SSHA tenants, about the effects that the Bill will have on their security of tenure, on future rent increases and the threat of privatisation. Tenants are also concerned about the Bill's lack of commitment to additional resources. Such a commitment is essential if we are to get to grips with the current housing crisis that besets the Scottish people.

The Government are not prepared to listen to the views of SSHA tenants. The consultative procedure has been an absolute farce because no significant concessions have been made in the Bill. The Minister has referred to Government amendments, but, by his admission, most of them were due to errors made in the original drafting of the Bill. Those amendments are technical and do not represent concessions.

On occasions I went upstairs to see how the Bill was faring. I have described the consultation process outside this House as farcical, but what took place in Committee was an insult to the Scottish people. Despite my hon. Friends' efforts to put up an excellent case, based on well-researched material and articulated arguments, there did not appear to be any meaningful dialogue. The Minister got up and read from prepared Civil Service scripts. Sometimes it appeared to me that the contents of those scripts did not even address the arguments my hon. Friends had made in Committee.

In Committee there did not appear to be any dialogue or meeting of minds. I have noticed that before, especially during Scottish questions. At Question Time, we all know that the Minister has about 12 options to answer possible supplementaries to a question put down two weeks in advance. Sometimes the answer that the Minister reads out to those supplementaries bears no relation to the question asked because he has got the wrong page. I believe that, all too often, that also happened in Committee. The Minister picked up the wrong brief and as a result there was no debate. He simply read prepared statements, some of which bore no relation to my hon. Friends' arguments.

When one is faced with such a situation it is difficult to wring concessions out of a Minister. I was not surprised on Report to discover that hardly any concessions had been made. The Government appear to treat parliamentary debates and the normal customs and traditions of the House with absolute contempt.

On one occasion when I visited the Committee I noticed an hon. Member whom I had not seen before and have not seen since. Someone told me that he represented Wanstead and Woodford. I thought Patrick Jenkin represented that constituency, but someone told me that he has been translated to another place. No doubt he is brushing his teeth in the dark, or in the sunlight of the House of Lords. The presence of not just one, but two English Tory Members, on that Committee was breaking a long-standing tradition of the House.

Mr. Home Robertson: It is not a breach of the Standing Orders of the House.

Mr. Canavan: My hon. Friend is correct. We can argue about whether that should be so, but this was certainly a breach of custom and tradition. It is more than a quarter of a century since the last precedent for drafting in English hon. Members to a Scottish Standing Committee dealing with Scottish legislation.

The Government have scant regard for long-standing parliamentary traditions. They were reduced to a discredited rump of 10 hon. Members representing Scottish constituencies at the last general election. If they had an ounce of democratic decency left in them, they would have humbly accepted defeat and admitted that they had received no democratic mandate for housing policy, or anything else, from the people of Scotland. They would have abandoned the plans to introduce this sort of Scottish legislation, which the majority of Scots clearly do not want and which is being imposed on them by a Government whom they rejected at the last election. Instead of that, the Government have abandoned long-standing traditions and customs of the House.

We are often criticised by Conservative Members for having too little respect for this place, but the Government have shown less respect for the long-standing traditions of

[Mr. Canavan]

the House than the Opposition in this case. If that were not so, the Bill would not have had the relatively smooth passage that it has had.

We shall never get good housing policy in Scotland until we have a Government who are democratically accountable to our people and who are charged with drafting and implementing Scottish housing policy. That means that continuing efforts must be made in and outside the House for the establishment of a Scottish Assembly, or a devolved Scottish parliament, with powers over housing policy and many other aspects of life that affect the people of Scotland.

8.12 pm

Mr. Andrew Welsh: The vast emptiness of the Conservative Benches sums up Conservative Members' attitude to Scottish housing and the way in which they treat our country and its housing needs. The Minister called this a most important Bill, but it is more important because of the potential damage it can cause to Scottish housing strategy and because of its failure to deal with Scottish housing needs.

The Bill disappoints. It fails to deliver anything substantial for the Scottish people or their housing. It does not live up to the worthy principles of the original White Paper and fails to meet Scotland's massive housing problems. It does nothing to combat dampness, overcrowding, growing waiting lists or any of the other all too obvious housing problems that afflict our nation.

Worse, homelessness will be exacerbated by many of the Bill's provisions. I regret that the Government have turned their back on the reasonable amendments that would have prevented further homelessness and helped local authorities to deal with the problem. The Government are making a serious and basic mistake in failing to prevent the financial haemorrhaging that will take place in council house sales at less than outstanding debt. That in turn will do great harm to house building and maintenance programmes.

I am disappointed at the Minister's failure to emulate his Welsh and English counterparts in various matters, including a clear commitment to allowing transfer back to public sector housing if that is chosen by a tenant. The Government also completely failed to accept any commitment to a housing conditions survey — an outstanding omission from the Bill.

The Government have wasted valuable legislative time that could and should have been put to better use. The Bill extends but fails to provide a real choice to tenants, and opposition to it has been well justified.

8.15 pm

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I do not want to prolong the debate, but I should respond to it.

To the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) I say that I did not have to say a word in Committee on the day when we both arrived there because he disrupted the proceedings that morning; so it is ironic that he should talk to us about the customs of the House. The doubts that he expressed about whether people would want to exercise increased choice in future were the same sort of doubts that were expressed during the passage of the Tenants' Rights, Etc. (Scotland) Act 1980 about whether there would be a take-up for the right to buy. Since that time, there is evidence that 107,000 people have taken up that right. Similar take-up will follow here in the future, provided that better detailed options are put before the tenants concerned. I take the hon. Gentleman's point that tenants will have abundant common sense and will not choose better options unless they are clearly put before them.

I agree with the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) that many amendments were tabled on Report, because he and his hon. Friends contributed to the debate in such a way that some of the points that they raised were worthy of incorporation in an amended form, and it was only fair to respond to the good points that were made in Committee.

This is not the end of the Bill. The points that have been made will be further considered in another place and will return to the Chamber, when we shall have an opportunity to consider the Bill again in due course. The point that the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire made about housing associations was important.

Question put, That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

The House divided: Ayes 229, Noes 192.

Division No. 244] **[8.17 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Boyson, Rt Hon Dr Sir Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Critchley, Julian
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Speld'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Greenway, Harry *(Ealing N)*
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David

Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irvine, Michael
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Kilfedder, James
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Wavency)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Wheeler, John
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. David Maclean and
Mr. Stephen Dorrell.

NOES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Brown, Ron *(Edinburgh Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Canavan, Dennis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lestor, Joan *(Eccles)*
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat

Wallace, James
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Andrew *(Angus E)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Wilson, Brian
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

Question accordingly agreed to.
Bill read the Third time, and passed.

Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]*

As amended (in the Standing Committee), considered.
Ordered,

That the Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]*, as amended, be considered in the following order, namely, new Clauses, new Schedules, Amendments to Clauses 1 to 9, Schedule 1, Clauses 10 to 12, Schedule 2, Clauses 13 to 20, Schedule 3, Clauses 21 to 33, Schedule 4, Clauses 34 to 44, Schedule 5, Clauses 45 to 52, Schedules 6 and 7, Clause 53, Schedule 8. — *[Mr. Channon.]*

New clause 1

POWER TO PROHIBIT PROVISION OF COASTAL SHIPPING SERVICES WHICH ARE NOT BRITISH-BASED

'(1) The Secretary of State may by order provide for the provision of shipping services to which this section applies to be prohibited except where such services are provided from one or more permanent places of business maintained in the British Islands.

(2) This section applies to the following shipping services—

(a) the carriage of goods or passengers by sea—
  (i) between ports in the United Kingdom, or
  (ii) between a port in the United Kingdom and an offshore installation in United Kingdom waters, or
  (iii) between offshore installations in United Kingdom waters;

(b) the carriage of passengers by sea on voyages or excursions beginning and ending at the same port in the United Kingdom, other than voyages or excursions which involve calling at any port or ports outside the British Islands (whether passengers disembark there or not); and

(c) shipping services (other than the carriage of goods or passengers by sea) which are—
  (i) provided by means of ships operating out of ports in the United Kingdom (whether so provided within United Kingdom waters or not), or
  (ii) provided within United Kingdom waters by means of ships operating out of ports outside the United Kingdom.

(3) An order under this section may make provision—

(a) with respect to the circumstances in which shipping services are to be regarded for the purposes of the order as being provided from one or more permanent places of business maintained in the British Islands;

(b) authorising the Secretary of State to issue licences sanctioning the provision of shipping services to which this section applies, notwithstanding that they are not provided as mentioned in paragraph (a) above, in cases where he is satisfied that there is no-one willing and able to provide the services in question as mentioned in that paragraph;

(c) requiring the payment, in connection with applications for such licences, of fees determined with the approval of the Treasury;

(d) exempting any prescribed class or description of shipping services from any prohibition imposed by virtue of subsection (1);

(e) authorising the Secretary of State, or a person appointed by him for the purpose, to serve notices requiring the production or furnishing of documents or information appearing to the Secretary of State or any such person to be necessary to enable him to determine such matters as may be prescribed;

(f) with respect to the manner of service of notices in pursuance of paragraph (e).

(4) An order under this section may—

(a) make different provision for different circumstances;

(b) make such transitional, incidental or supplementary provision as appears to the Secretary of State to be necessary or expedient.

(5) The provisions of an order under this section shall not discriminate between shipping services provided by different persons on the basis of the place of registration of the ships by means of which the services are provided.

(6) Section 728 of the 1894 Act (appointment of inspectors) shall have effect in relation to—

(a) any order under this section, or

(b) any licence issued by virtue of subsection (3)(b) above,

as it has effect in relation to any such regulations or licence as is mentioned in paragraph (b) of that section; but section 27 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1979 (powers of inspectors) shall have effect in relation to any inspector appointed by virtue of this subsection with the omission of paragraphs (f) to (h) of subsection (1) of that section.

(7) The power to make an order under this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument, but no such order shall be made unless a draft of it has been laid before and approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.

(8) In this section—

"offshore installation" has the same meaning as in the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971;

"prescribed" means prescribed by an order under this section;

"shipping services" means—

(a) the carriage of goods or passengers by sea,

(b) services provided by offshore support vessels, and

(c) such other services provided by means of ships as the Secretary of State may specify in an order under this section;

"United Kingdom waters" means waters within the seaward limits of the territorial sea of the United Kingdom and waters in any area designated under section 1(7) of the Continental Shelf Act 1964.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

8.28 pm

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Paul Channon): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): With this it will be convenient to take the following: New clause 2—*Enforcement of section (Powers to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)*—

'(1) Where—

(a) any ship is used in the course of the provision of any shipping services to which section *(Powers to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)* applies, or

(b) anything is done on board a ship with a view to its being used to provide any such services,

and the provision of those services is prohibited by virtue of subsection (1) of that section and is not sanctioned by any licence issued by virtue of subsection (3)(b) of that section, then (subject to subsections (6) and (7)), the master and the owner of the ship shall each be guilty of an offence.

(2) Where the ship—

(a) is chartered by demise, or

(b) is managed, either wholly or in part, by a person other than the owner under the terms of a management agreement,

the reference in subsection (1) to the owner of the ship shall be construed as including a reference—

(i) to the charterer under the charter by demise, or

(ii) to any such manager as is referred to in paragraph (b) above, or

(iii) (if the ship is both chartered and managed as mentioned above) to both the charterer and any such manager.

(3) Any person who—

(a) in connection with an application for such a licence as is mentioned in subsection (3)(b) of section *(Power to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)* or

(b) in purported compliance with the requirements of any notice served on him by virtue of subsection (3)(e) of that section,

knowingly or recklessly furnishes information which is false in a material particular shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) Any person who—

(a) without reasonable excuse (the proof of which lies on him) fails to comply with the requirements of any such notice, or

(b) intentionally alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys a document which he has been required to produce in pursuance of subsection (3)(e) of that section,

shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) Any person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—

(a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £50,000;

(b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine, or both.

(6) It shall be a defence in proceedings brought under subsection (1) against the master of a ship to prove—

(a) that the master did not know and had no reason to suspect that, in the circumstances of the case, the provision of the shipping services referred to in paragraph (1) or (as the case may be) paragraph (b) of that subsection was prohibited by virtue of subsection (1) of section *(Power to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)*, or

(b) that the master had reasonable grounds for believing that the provision of those services was sanctioned by a licence issued by virtue of subsection (3)(b) of that section.

(7) It shall be a defence in proceedings brought under subsection (1) against a person other than the master of a ship to prove that, under the terms of one or more charter-parties or management agreements entered into by the defendant, the right to determine the purpose for which the ship in question was being used at the time of the alleged offence was wholly vested in some other person or persons party thereto (whether or not any such other person or persons had entered into a further charter-party or management agreement providing for that right to be vested in some other person).

(8) Subsections (1), (3) and (4) apply to offences falling within those subsections wherever committed.

(9) Proceedings for an offence under this section may be taken, and the offence may for all incidental purposes be treated as having been committed, in any place in the United Kingdom.

(10) Proceedings for an offence under this section shall not be instituted—

(a) in England and Wales except by or with the consent of the Attorney General or the Secretary of State; or

(b) in Northern Ireland, except by or with the consent of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland or the Secretary of State.

(11) Any document required or authorised, by virtue of any statutory provision, to be served for the purpose of the institution of, or otherwise in connection with, proceedings for an offence under subsection (1) shall, where it is to be served on a person who was, at the time of the alleged offence—

(a) the owner of the ship in question, or

(b) such a charterer by demise or manager of that ship as is mentioned in subsection (2),

be treated as duly served on that person if—

(i) sent to him by post at his last-known address (whether of his residence or of a place where he carries on business), or

(ii) left for him at that address,

if the document is served on the master of the ship in question.

(12) In this section "management agreement" has the same meaning as in section 29.'.

Mr. Channon: The introduction of new clause 1 fulfils an obligation made in Committee. In the course of the consideration of this Bill, many hon. Members have referred to the great unfairness of the present situation on

[Mr. Channon]

cabotage. The Government's primary objective on cabotage remains liberalisation throughout the European Community and we are vigorously pursuing this aim with member states. I am well aware, however, that we face an uphill task against entrenched opposition. I have decided that it would be prudent to have powers to take alternative action in case the Community negotiations do not lead to early success.

The new clause introduces an anabling power for me to introduce a test of establishment for operators who wish to carry out cabotage in United Kingdom coastal waters. The test would apply equally to British and foreign-flagged vessels and would mean that, while non-British companies would still be allowed to compete in our cabotage trades, they would all have to be established in the British islands.

If the power is invoked, operators wishing to do United Kingdom cabotage will have to ensure that they are providing shipping services from a permanent place of business in the British islands, not merely from an agency or trading as a "brass plate company". However, the clause enables me to issue waivers where I am satisfied that there are no established companies willing and able to provide a specified service.

An order to implement the power would be subject to affirmative resolution. Before making such an order, I would consult interested parties. If the negotiations in the Community succeed, the power would then be revoked.

As I announced to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) today, in answer to a parliamentary question, in 1986, the last year for which information is available, British-flagged shipping had over 70 per cent. of the total United Kingdom cabotage market by estimated value. The total value of the United Kingdom cabotage market was estimated at approximately £440 million, so it is a substantial business and the largest in the Community. I repeat that we would far rather open up other coastal traffic to British ships than introduce restrictions of any kind on our own coasts, but, if the Community negotiations are protracted with no early prospects of success, we need to be able and ready to level the present unevenness of the playing field.

New clause 2 provides for the enforcement of new clause 1. Under this clause, the owner, master and charterer or other manager will be guilty of an offence where cabotage is provided in contravention of an order. Offenders will be liable to a fine of up to £50,000 on summary conviction and, on indictment, to imprisonment for up to two years and/or an unlimited fine. These are, of course, maximum penalties and it will be for the courts to decide the precise penalties in any particular case in the normal way.

However, I recognise that the master of the ship may have believed in good faith that the shipping company he was working for was established or had been given a waiver for the cargo in question. I have therefore provided that, if the master can prove either of these circumstances, it will be considered a defence for the purpose of proceedings. We have also introduced a defence for charterers who can prove that at the time of the offence the ship was in fact chartered wholly by another person.

These new clauses are long overdue and I invite the House to accept them.

Mr. Tony Lloyd (Stretford): Hon. Members on both sides of the House will agree that these new clauses are long overdue, and that reflects no great credit on the Department of Transport. I agree with the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) who put pressure on the Government to bring forward these new clauses. It is significant that debate took place both in the House of Lords and in Committee, yet it has taken until now to see what the Government had in mind. Although we would not intend to oppose the new clauses, we believe that they do not go far enough.

In a written answer to the hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) today, the Secretary of State said that, according to the latest available figures, the total United Kingdom cabotage market amounts to some £440 million and that of that, some 28 per cent., or almost £100 million, is now dominated by non-British vessels, with all the consequences of loss of trade and loss of jobs for British merchant seamen.

I have raised in the House previously the question of the Swansea-Cork ferry, the so-called Celtic Pride, which, far from being a matter of pride for the Celts, either in this country or in Ireland, should be more correctly named the Pride of Poland because it is a Polish vessel manned by Polish seamen. Inevitably, when Polish seamen are being paid wage rates massively below those paid to British seamen, the Poles become economically dominant on the line. Under the new clause, there will be nothing to stop the Polish operators simply registering a company in the United Kingdom and continuing to operate in our coastal waters.

I hope that the Secretary of State will clarify the position on that matter, not because of its local significance, but because it is typical of the way in which we have allowed our coastal trade to be eroded and have allowed British jobs to be given up at the expense of those many British seamen who are no longer able to serve at sea as the opportunities no longer exist. The Secretary of State must take on board the fact that the Government have promised much on the issue of cabotage and have delivered little.

I wish to refer to the Department of Transport press release No. 472. I doubt whether the Secretary of State possesses a copy, given that he did not hold that office on 29 October 1985, when his predecessor said, in a reply to the ever-assiduous hon. Member for Eastleigh, that he was pleased to announce that his Department had reached a satisfactory agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany.

In the notes for editors which explain this wonderful agreement, the Secretary of State went on to explain:

> "Discussions have taken place between the shipping authorities of the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany about access by their shipping companies to each others' coastal cabotage and offshore trades."

The German shipping industry has already had access to British waters since 1849, so we are involved in a rather one-sided negotiation. Nevertheless, if progress had been made, we would have welcomed it.

The then Secretary of State went on to say:

> "Both sides recognise that the present position, in which German vessels enjoy full access to UK trades while UK vessels do not have reciprocal rights in the Federal Republic, was inequitable and should be rectified immediately."

The press release went on to state that, as both Governments anticipate that

"the proposal will receive relatively early approval by the Council of Ministers, it seems inappropriate for the German Government to take legislative action to deal with those particular problems".

There are still barriers to British shipping in German waters. The press release issued by the then Secretary of State built up the hopes of the British industry, but it was bogus. Once again, the then Secretary of State promised much and delivered almost nothing.

Opposition Members are worried about this issue because we have seen the mass destruction of the British merchant fleet. It is interesting to note that the General Council of British Shipping has now come out in favour of some restrictions on the right of access of non-United Kingdom shippers into British waters. The council concludes that at least part of the decline of the United Kingdom merchant marine has been due to the Government's inability to take action on this issue over many years. However, it believes that the present access of foreign vessels to British waters has done serious damage to the British merchant fleet.

We are entitled to ask what the implications of the new clauses will be. We know, for example, that they will not give British vessels access to Greek, Italian, Spanish, French or Portuguese waters, from which British vessels are presently excluded. They will not stop fleets from those countries entering British waters. They will simply mean that they have to register under some kind of trading arrangement whereby a company is established in the United Kingdom. That is a minimal requirement on those operators.

As a result, some non-United Kingdom shippers will be dissuaded from entering British waters because they believe that it is not particularly convenient to establish a brass plate company. The Secretary of State said that brass plate companies will not be allowed, but I am not sure what mechanism will prevent the establishment of such companies. Individual shippers may be dissuaded by the new regime, and if that is the case, then, insofar as it refers to trade for United Kingdom shippers, we will welcome it. Nevertheless, it does not prevent access by non-British shippers into United Kingdom waters.

Over the past 12 months we have seen a further decline in the size of the British merchant fleet—an issue that has been raised many times by Labour Members. According to the Government's latest figures, in 1986 we lost 148 vessels off the British Isles part of the United Kingdom register, and in the first nine months of last year, we lost a further 30. The Government paraded that as some kind of triumph because the rate of the decline had diminished, but it is a disaster for those who work in the industry, and a disaster that could have been prevented.

We are prepared to go along with these new clauses, not because we believe that they go anything like far enough but because anything is better than nothing. If it gives the Secretary of State some ammunition when he goes in to arm-wrestle with his opposite numbers in the Mediterranean countries or the Federal German Republic, all well and good, but it is a minimal amount of power for him.

We have heard many times that agreement within the European Commission is imminent and that the British Government will leave no stone unturned until we have access to the costal waters of other nations, at least starting with the northern waters, and then in due course, they will solve the more intractable problem of the Mediterranean. However, there has been little movement. Unless we get an international framework within the European community and that transnational level of agreement, the British merchant fleet will continue to decline and the new clauses, partially welcome as they are will not stop that continuing decline.

The Secretary of State may be congratulating himself on finally mustering enough courage to take some action, but it is now incumbent on him to take real action to protect British coastal traffic for the British fleet.

Sir David Price (Eastleigh): As I have for many years been boring the House with the problems of cabotage, it would be extremely ungracious of me not to thank my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for tabling these two new clauses. As those who serve on the Committee will know, I had a different form of new clause, possibly a little more vigorous or a little more threatening to our opponents.

We would all agree with my right hon. Friend that the ideal is the traditional shipping policy of this country, which is open trade across the seven seas of the world, and that means open trade on our own coastline. This is where I must quarrel briefly with the Opposition, because they rather implied that there was a time when all our coastal trade was closed. It never was. It was always open. We want the same rights on other people's coastlines as we accord to them. I have rather more confidence than some Opposition Members that if we had that open access, we would get a far greater benefit for our seafarers than by closing access and picking up that 28 per cent. of our coastal trade which is in foreign bottoms. I sincerely believe that, and I think that Labour Members believe that too.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To allay the hon. Member's worries, I make it clear that we share his view that proper access to the Mediterranean waters and to the waters of northern Europe would be in the interests of the British merchant fleet. However, we do not have that access and we shall not get it as a result of these new clauses.

Sir David Price: I do not despair of that. I am sure that any hon. Member who has read the treaty of Rome knows that it is clearly contrary both to the spirit and letter of that treaty for these other Community countries to deny British shipping the right to trade along their coastlines. That was recognised by Brussels when it introduced, in a sort of White Paper form although with a lot of green edges, its common shipping policy. The common rights of cabotage are clearly laid down in that policy. I ask that the other member countries adhere to the spirit and letter of that treaty. They are always asking us to do it, but let it be done on their side.

8.45 pm

In 1992 we are supposed to be having completely open trade between all member states, and we would be right to hold back on that until we are given the proper rights that are being denied to us by the other member states, with a few honourable exceptions. I hope that on every occasion our Ministers, not only my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who is sturdy in defence of British industry, will be active in bringing this to the attention not only of the Commission but of the Council of Ministers. Our aim must be that all European coastlines must be open to all European ships. I will not be satisfied, and nor will the House, with some coasts being more open than others.

Mr. Robert Adley (Christchurch): I too would like to welcome these new clauses and to put on record the House's congratulations to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on grasping so many nettles in this Bill. He has established in these two new clauses an important principle of licensing. Recent events have shown a need for tighter controls, and not just stiffer penalties. Therefore, I hope that my right hon. Friend will be giving an enthusiastic welcome to new clause 12 when we reach it.

Mr. Channon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) for his first remarks, and I will come to his second remarks when new clause 12 is debated, which I hope will be soon. I also thank my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price). He is right to say that this situation existed for many years. It is a little hard of the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) to criticise us and say that these measures are long overdue — I have used that phrase myself — because the situation has existed since at least the reign of George I. There have been one or two Labour Governments since then, so it is not entirely the fault of Conservative Governments that this has not been changed before now.

I agree with the hon. Gentleman on the opportunities before us, apart from the general principle that the coast should be open to all if there is to be a common market after 1992. The total cabotage market in the Community is worth about £1,450 million, so the sheer mathematical opportunities open to us would be greater than those offered by closing our coasts to Community vessels.

I am grateful for the persuasive arguments put by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh in Committee and over many years. They have contributed greatly in persuading the Government to take this new stand.

I am grateful for the hon. Member for Stretford's welcome for the new clauses. He raised a couple of points. The Swansea-Cork ferry is not cabotaged, as he will know. That is an international service between Ireland and Wales, so it would not be covered by any cabotage arrangements that might be made now or in the future. If he wants to give me details of the problems on that line I will examine them. Manning is another matter. The ship is under a United Kingdom flag and must abide by the requirements of the officer manning certification. If it became established, I can assure the House that brass plate presence will not be sufficient.

I will not give details about the regulations that I would be minded to put forward. If we have to introduce them, they will be subject to affirmative resolution, and the House will have an opportunity to debate them in detail. However, I shall not show my hand tonight as to what they might be, because I hope that I shall not have to introduce them, although I may.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: We will not insist that the Secretary of State shows his hand, because it might be inappropriate, but perhaps he might answer a far more important question. When will he be minded to begin to show his hand?

Mr. Channon: I intend to see what progress we can make during the period of the German presidency, then I shall review the matter again; we shall see. The hon. Gentleman is a little unfair to the German Government because in practice there are few restrictions, if any, on British ships doing cabotage in Germany. There is no longer a problem, or if there is, it is very small. In most respects the German market is now free, in practice, to British ships.

I am grateful to the House for its reception of the new clauses. If we have to implement the provisions, we shall come forward with more details and the House will have an opportunity to examine them.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time and added to the Bill.

New clause 2

ENFORCEMENT OF SECTION (POWER TO PROHIBIT PROVISION OF COASTAL SHIPPING SERVICES WHICH ARE NOT BRITISH-BASED)

'(1) Where—

(a) any ship is used in the course of the provision of any shipping services to which section *(Power to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)* applies, or

(b) anything done on board a ship with a view to its being used to provide any such services,

and the provision of those services is prohibited by virtue of subsection (1) of that section and is not sanctioned by any licence issued by virtue of subsection (3)(b) of that section, then (subject to subsections (6) and (7), the master and the owner of the ship shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) Where the ship—

(a) is chartered by demise, or

(b) is managed, either wholly or in part, by a person other than the owner under the terms of a management agreement.

the reference in subsection (1) to the owner of the ship shall be construed as including a reference—

(i) to the charterer under the charter by demise, or

(ii) to any such manager as is referred to in paragraph (b) above, or

(iii) (if the ship is both chartered and managed as mentioned above) to both the charterer and any such manager.

(3) Any person who—

(a) in connection with an application for such a licence as is mentioned in subsection (3) (b) of section *(Power to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)* or

(b) in purported compliance with the requirements of any notice served on him by virtue of subsection (3) (e) of that section,

knowingly or recklessly furnishes information which is false in a material particular shall be guilty of an offence.

(4) Any person who—

(a) without reasonable excuse (the proof of which lies on him) fails to comply with the requirements of any such notice, or

(b) intentionally alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys a document which he has been required to produce in pursuance of subsection (3)(e) of that section,

shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) Any person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—

(a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £50,000;

(b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine, or both.

(6) It shall be a defence in proceedings brought under subsection (1) against the master of a ship to prove—

(a) that the master did not know and had no reason to suspect that, in the circumstances of the case, the provision of the shipping services referred to in paragraph (a) or (as the case may be) paragraph (b) of that subsection was prohibited by virtue of subsection (1) of section *(Power to prohibit provision of coastal shipping services which are not British-based)*, or

(b) that the master had reasonable grounds for

believing that the provision of those services was sanctioned by a licence issued by virtue of subsection (3)(b) of that section.

(7) It shall be a defence in proceedings brought under subsection (1) against a person other than the master of a ship to prove that, under the terms of one or more charter-parties or management agreements entered into by the defendant, the right to determine the purpose for which the ship in question was being used at the time of the alleged offence was wholly vested in some other person or persons party thereto (whether or not any such other person or persons had entered into a further charter-party or management agreement providing for that right to be vested in some other person).

(8) Subsections (1), (3) and (4) apply to offences falling within those subsections wherever committed.

(9) Proceedings for an offence under this section may be taken, and the offence may for all incidental purposes be treated as having been committed, in any place in the United Kingdom.

(10) Proceedings for an offence under this section shall not be instituted—

(a) in England and Wales except by or with the consent of the Attorney General or the Secretary of State; or

(b) in Northern Ireland, except by or with the consent of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland or the Secretary of State.

(11) Any document required or authorised, by virtue of any statutory provision, to be served for the purpose of the institution of, or otherwise in connection with, proceedings for an offence under subsection (1) shall, where it is to be served on a person who was, at the time of the alleged offence—

(a) the owner of the ship in question, or

(b) such a charterer by demise or manager of that ship as is mentioned in subsection (2),

be treated as duly served on that person if—

(i) sent to him by post at his last-known address (whether of his residence or of a place where he carries on business), or

(ii) left for him at that address,

if the document is served on the master of the ship in question.

(12) In this section "management agreement" has the same meaning as in section 29.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.

New clause 7

APPLICATION OF MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS TO SHIPS CHARTERED BY DEMISE TO THE CROWN

To move the following Clause:—

'(1) This section applies to a ship if for the time being—

(a) the ship is—

(i) registered in the United Kingdom, and

(ii) in the service of a government department ("the relevant department") by reason of a charter by demise to the Crown; and

(b) there is in force under section 80 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1906 (Government ships) an Order in Council providing for the registration of Government ships in the service of the relevant department.

(2) Where this section applies to any ship, the following statutory provisions, namely—

(a) the provisions of the Order in Council referred to in subsection (1)(b) (excluding those relating to registration under the Order), and

(b) the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Acts (as they apply by virtue of the Merchant Shipping Act 1906 and that Order in Council),

shall (subject to subsections (3) and (4)) have the same effect in relation to that ship as they have in relation to a Government ship in the service of the relevant department (whether referred to as such or as such a ship registered in pursuance of that Order in Council).

(3) Subject to subsection (4), the registration enactments shall have effect in relation to a ship to which this section applies in like manner as if it were not, for the purposes of the Merchant Shipping Acts, a ship belonging to Her Majesty.

(4) Her Majesty may by Order in Council provide that any statutory provision falling within subsection (2) or (3) and specified in the Order—

(a) shall not have effect in accordance with that subsection in relation to a ship to which this section applies, or

(b) shall so have effect in relation to such a ship, but subject to such modifications as are specified in the Order.

(5) In the application of any provision of the Merchant Shipping Act, (other than a provision of the registration enactments) in relation to a ship to which this section applies, any reference to the owner of the ship shall be construed as a reference to the relevant department.

(6) An Order in Council under this section—

(a) may make such transitional, incidental or supplementary provision as appears to Her Majesty to be necessary or expedient: and

(b) shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.

(7) In this section—

"government department" includes a Northern Ireland department;

"Government ship" means a Government ship within the meaning of section 80 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1906;

"the registration enactment" means—

(a) the provisions of Part I of the 1984 Act down to and including section 67 of that Act;

(b) section 5 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1983; and

(c) Parts I and II of this Act.'. — *[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

The Minister for Public Transport (Mr. David Mitchell): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The purpose of the new clause is to clarify the position of British-registered ships chartered by demise to the Crown and in the service of Government Departments.

The point of difficulty arises in connection with demise-chartered ships. For those not familiar with the phrase, it refers to the lease of the whole ship. The problem arises because there is some uncertainty concerning the application of the Merchant Shipping Acts. It is arguable that they are in the position of fully registered British ships or that, for the purposes of the Merchant Shipping Acts, they are in the position of unregistered "ships belonging to Her Majesty" and therefore may be outside the scope of the Merchant Shipping Acts. It is clearly of benefit to remove any such doubts, and the new clause will clarify the legal position of all demise-chartered ships in the service of any Government Department.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read a Second time and added to the Bill.

New clause 8

DUTY OF OWNER OF REGISTERED SHIP TO SECURE TERMINATION OF ANY OVERSEAS REGISTRATION

'(1) Where a ship becomes registered at a time when it is already registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom, the owner of the ship shall take all reasonable steps to secure the termination of the ship's registration under the law of that country.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding the third level on the standard scale.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply to a ship which becomes registered in pursuance of section 53B of the 1894 Act (transfer of registration under that Act from overseas territory).'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

[Mr. David Mitchell]

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this, we may take Government amendments Nos. 2, 43, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 58.

Mr. Mitchell: The new clause and amendments are principally concerned with making it clearer in United Kingdom law that a ship or fishing vessel should not be registered both in the United Kingdom and in a foreign country.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause read the Second time, and added to the Bill.

New Clause 9

APPLICATION TO UNREGISTERED SHIPS

'(1) The Secretary of State may make regulations specifying any description of unregistered ships and directing that such of the provisions of sections 29, 30 and 32 as may be specified in the regulations—

(a) shall extend to unregistered ships of that description, or

(b) shall so extend in such circumstances as may be so specified.

with such modifications (if any) as may be so specified.

(2) Subsection (1) shall not be construed as prejudicing the application to unregistered ships of section 29(1)(a) or section 32(2)(a)(iii).

(3) In this section "unregistered ship" means a ship which is not registered in the United Kingdom or elsewhere.'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Mr. Mitchell: The purpose of the amendments is to tidy up the application of clauses 29 to 32 to unregistered ships, particularly the application to ships that might be termed "unregistered United Kingdom ships" when outside United Kingdom ports and territorial waters.

I should make it clear that the vast majority of unregistered ships are in fact pleasure craft. Although many pleasure craft are registered, because it is a common requirement imposed by banks in order to mortgage a ship, the smaller ones are often not. A more famous—or infamous—category of unregistered ships are pirate radio ships and there are occasional irregularities involving ships that have been removed from one register and not placed on another.

The House will note that the amendments make no change to the existing application of clauses 29 to 32 to any ship, whether registered or not, when in United Kingdom ports or territorial waters. Their primary aim is to enable all four clauses to be applied to unregistered ships with a United Kingdom connection when outside United Kingdom waters, in the same way as United Kingdom registered ships are so covered. In fact, there are provisions in clause 30(2)(b) and clause 32(2)(a)(ii) which attempt to do that, but they are unsatisfactory because, for example, clause 30(2)(b) would catch ships owned entirely by citizens of a dependent territory that had no United Kingdom connection at all. Those two provisions are therefore deleted and an order-making power substituted by the new clause. We anticipate laying orders in that respect later in the year.

New clause 3

APPLICATION OF CIVIL JURISDICTION AND JUDGEMENTS ACT 1982

'The provisions of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgements Act 1982 shall not apply to vessels registered pursuant to section 12 of this Act where such application would mean that a vessel would pass from the jurisdiction of a Scottish Court to that of a Welsh court.'.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Alex Salmond (Banff and Buchan): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The new clause arises from concern about the impact of the Bill on jurisdiction of the Scottish courts over Scottish fishing vessels. We are worried about the establishment of the centralised register in Cardiff as it relates to the provisions of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgements Act 1982, schedule 8, paragraph 4 of which provides that for proceedings

"which have as their object the validity of entries in public registers"

the appropriate court in which to pursue the action is that for the place where the register is kept. Obviously that raises grave doubts about the jurisdiction of Scottish courts over Scottish fishing vessels, given the establishment of the centralised register in Cardiff.

I hope that the Minister will allay the fears that have been expressed over three specific matters. First, can there be a challenge to the validity of entries in the register and would that take place in the Scottish or in the Welsh courts? Secondly, will a challenge to the refusal of an entry on the register — which could take place by judicial review — still be able to take place in Scottish courts? The third question is whether Scottish courts will retain jurisdiction over the affairs of Scottish fishing vessels.

9 pm

These are not minor matters of legal nicety but concern about an individual's right of redress. I recently came across somebody—a constituent of the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie)—who was pursuing a considerable case against British Telecom because his Cellnet machine was not working properly. He was at a fairly advanced stage of preparing his case when BT told him imperiously that it would not answer to his case in any Scottish court because it is registered in London.

Mrs. Ray Michie (Argyll and Bute): There is a great danger that, if there is a dispute involving Scottish fishing vessels, the relevant parties might, unbelievably, have to travel to Wales to fight the case. Clause 20 of BT's contract provides that any dispute must be taken in an English court. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman agrees that that is utterly unacceptable to the people of Scotland.

Mr. Salmond: That is a helpful intervention and it emphasises the general support for the proposition that the Bill should not inadvertently remove legal affairs involving Scottish fishing vessels from the jurisdiction of Scottish courts.

I am sure that that was not the Government's intention and that if there is any threat to the jurisdiction of Scottish courts, it is an accident. The Government are, however, responsible for persuading the House that they intend to

tackle the matter. They can either accept new clause 3, which would remove from the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgements Act 1982 the registration of Scottish fishing vessels and prevent jurisdiction from being moved to Welsh courts, or the matter could be tackled by regulation. The Government could thus provide that the port of registration is where the register is kept, rather than there being a central register in Cardiff. Whichever route the Government choose, they have a responsibility to allay the anxieties which arise out of the transfer of jurisdiction affecting Scottish fishing vessels from Scottish to Welsh courts.

Mr. Calum MacDonald (Western Isles): I also am worried about the possible effect of the Bill on Scottish fishing vessels. I wrote to the Minister, who reassured me that disputes involving registration would be decided in a Scottish court and that matters such as those which would arise out of a collision could also be dealt with in a Scottish court. He said, however, that disputes about the validity of registration, which I took to mean the particulars of a vessel, would still be decided in a Welsh court.

I should like the Minister to confirm that my impression is correct. He said that disputes about the validity of a register entry are rare. Will he take on board the worries that have been expressed by Opposition Members and fishermen? Fishermen are worried that in, for example, a dispute about the particulars of an entry, they would have to go down to Wales. If such disputes became fairly common, perhaps the Minister would be willing to reconsider what the Bill proposes.

Mr. David Mitchell: As the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) has explained, under the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982, it is a requirement, in proceedings about the validity of entries in a public register, for the courts where the register is held to have exclusive jurisdiction. That means that when the central register of fishing vessels is established in Cardiff, it will be for the courts in England and Wales to exercise jurisdiction in any such proceedings related to that register.

I do not believe that it would be sensible to depart from established practice in these matters, but I can reassure the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan, the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) and the hon. Member for Western Isles (Mr. MacDonald), who made inquiries a few weeks ago, that actions that challenge the validity of entries in the register are extremely rare, and that jurisdiction of the Scottish courts over other matters concerning fishing vessels will not be affected by the establishment of the register for fishing in Cardiff.

The more important and more likely challenge concerning registration would be a challenge to a decision by the Secretary of State to refuse registration, or to deregister a vessel. Such a challenge would be by way of a request for judicial review and could be brought in courts anywhere in the United Kingdom. In such cases, it would therefore be open to a fishing vessel owner to sue in Scotland if he so wished. In a whole host of other cases involving fishing boats, such as collision actions and wage disputes, the jurisdiction of the Scottish courts is not affected.

Mr. Robert Hughes (Aberdeen, North): What would be the position if mortgages were registered against a ship in the Welsh courts and there was a dispute about that? Would that have to be done in the Welsh courts?

Mr. Mitchell: If a dispute arises over the question of mortgages, that is for the Scottish courts, because that is where the issue arises. If it is a dispute about the register, then it would be a matter for the English or Welsh courts.

Mr. Salmond: Is it possible for the Minister of State to qualify how rare is rare? How rare are challenges of the validity of entries? It would help if the House were to know how minor is the matter we are discussing.

Mr. Mitchell: How rare is rare is a question that often exercises one's mind, but not in the precise circumstances that the hon. Gentleman has in mind. Such challenges are so rare that I am not aware of a case.

Mr. Salmond: I thank the Minister for going into such detail and for attempting to quantify how rare is rare. The House is broadly assured by what the Minister has said. I hope that he will keep the matter under review to make sure that no inconvenience to Scottish fishermen arises out of the legislation.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause 4

TRADE DISPUTES INVOLVING SEAMEN

"1.—That section 42 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1970 be amended to include the following at the end:—

"3. — That notwithstanding anything in any agreement, seamen in any ship registered in the United Kingdom and securely moored in a safe berth, shall have the right to combine with other seamen in contemplation of furtherance of a trade dispute and to refuse to go to sea until such time as a ballot has been held for the furtherance of that dispute. Furthermore that any action taken under this section shall not render a seaman liable for breach of contract, and that:—

(a) a seamen shall be entitled to disobey any order that would require him to go to sea.

(b) it shall be an offence for any person to issue an order to go to sea after the giving of such a notice, and prior to either, the holding of a ballot, or the withdrawal of the notice.".". — *[Mr. Robert Hughes.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Robert Hughes: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Speaker: With this, it will be convenient to take new clause 6—*Trade disputes involving seamen*—

"1. That the Merchant Shipping Act 1970 be amended in accordance with the following provisions of this section.

2. In section 42 shall be inserted a new subsection as follows:—

"(3) Notwithstanding anything in any agreement, a seaman employed in a ship registered in the United Kingdom may terminate his employment in that ship by leaving the ship in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute after giving the master not less than forty-eight hours notice of his intention to do so, and shall not be compelled (unless the notice is withdrawn) to go to sea in the forty-eight hours following the giving of such a notice; but such a notice shall have no effect unless at the time it is given the ship is securely moored in a safe berth."

3. In section 30 for the words from the beginning of paragraph (c) to the end there shall be substituted

"(c) combines with other seamen employed in that ship—

[Mr. Speaker]

(i) to disobey lawful commands which are required to be obeyed at a time when the ship is at sea;

(ii) to neglect any duty which is required to be discharged at such a time; or

(iii) to impede, at such a time, the progress of a voyage or the navigation of the ship,

But not when the ship is securely moored, under which circumstances any such actions that may be taken in furtherance of a trade dispute, will not render a seaman liable to action for breach of contract.

He shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £100.

For the purposes of this section a ship shall be treated as being at sea at any time when it is not securely moored in a safe berth."

4. That section 19(4) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1974, be deleted and replaced by subsection (3) above.'.

Mr. Hughes: New clause 4 deals with trade disputes involving seamen. It might be helpful to the House if I set out some of the background as to why we believe new clause 4 is necessary.

Those with long memories will recall that in 1966 there was a series of industrial disputes involving seamen. As a result, the Pearson committee was set up. Arising out of the report of the Pearson committee, the Merchant Shipping Act 1970 included section 42(2) which conceded for the first time a legal right for seafarers to strike. Admittedly, that concession was in a convoluted form. Section 42(2) effectively allows seafarers to terminate their contracts of employment on a ship by giving the master 48 hours notice. During those 48 hours, provided that the notice was given in furtherance of an industrial dispute, seamen could not be compelled to go to sea.

It is interesting that the General Council of British Shipping argued that it was perfectly possible for seamen to be compelled to take ferries to sea within those 48 hours if the journey could be completed within 48 hours. Some limitation was placed on the 48 hours' notice. First, the ship had to be securely moored in a safe berth, and no one would object to that. Secondly, the vessel had to be securely moored in a safe berth in the United Kingdom. The provision applied only to the United Kingdom.

Ther Merchant Shipping Act 1974, in section 19, extended the right to strike in an even more convoluted way. Section 19 exempts a seaman from disciplinary action for disregarding a master's lawful command if he is combining with other seamen for an industrial dispute. Again, that right is limited to the secure berth of the ship. Section 19 extends the right to strike to any place in the world, unlike section 42(2) of the 1970 Act which is limited to the United Kingdom.

That is how matters stood until, regrettably, in another place, Lord Brabazon of Tara accepted a Back-Bench amendment to delete section 42(2) of the 1970 Act. Section 19 of the 1974 Act remains in being.

There were a number of debates in the other place. We also had a debate in Committee. I emphasise that no firm evidence was produced either in the other place or in Committee to justify the removal of section 42(2) from the 1970 Act. There was anecdotal evidence from Lord Mottistone and the Earl of Inchcape. They said that the system was being abused. I am afraid that the gullible Lord Brabazon of Tara accepted his colleagues' tales and was persuaded by his noble Friends to accept the amendment.

We objected to that on Second Reading. We believe that the amendment was smuggled in at the last moment. We warned the Government that we would raise the matter in Committee and we pressed them very strongly on it. I expected that in Committee the Government would be extremely well briefed and that they would provide many examples of the Act having been used. Even if the civil servants were unable to produce evidence, we expected that the Minister's friends in the shipping industry would be able to provide reasons for this change in the law.

We pressed the Minister extremely hard, because he resisted the restoration of the original text. Finally, we were told why the change had been made. He said:

"The hon. Gentleman asks me for examples and I shall give him some. There were such abuses by the National Union of Seamen at Dover during the 1981 pay dispute and by crews of P & O ships at Portsmouth in 1984 when they were taken over by Townsend Thoresen. I trust that the hon. Gentleman would not wish to defend such actions."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee B*, 1 March 1988; c. 204-5.]

That was all the evidence that he could produce after having had all the time in the world to examine the matter. His explanation was pretty limp, even by his standards.

It would be foolish of me to say that section 42(2) has not been used recently. I know that it has been used. It was used in Aberdeen, for example, to prevent a P and O vessel, the St. Sunniva, from going to sea. It has never been part of the Opposition's case that section 42 has not been used. It does not matter how much the Government claim that people have the right to strike and take industrial action if, when they exercise that right, they describe it as an abuse.

The Government are guilty of equating the words "use" and "abuse" with industrial relations. They do not really believe in the rights of free trade unions—at least, not in the United Kingdom. Perhaps they believe in free trade unions if they are established in Poland. Perhaps the Prime Minister supports Solidarity in Poland. If she does, it is only rhetorical support from a very safe distance. If it is close to home, we know how matters stand.

Industrial relations have moved on a great deal since 1970, but they have not moved on in any good sense for seamen. Matters have come to a pretty pass. A trade union that wishes to hold a ballot on industrial action is taken to court to decide whether it is legal to hold that ballot. Furthermore, if a trade union holds a ballot, it can be taken to court and prevented from counting the votes. I do not know where we are going; it is hammering the trade unions very hard. Shipowners are allowed to make provocative statements that I would class as secondary action, but the National Union of Seamen is not allowed to take industrial action if it is regarded as secondary action.

I recognise that people's minds are concentrated on the fact that there is a dispute at Dover and that their travel plans will be disrupted. Inevitably, given the nature of society, the National Union of Seamen is under severe attack for its part in the dispute.

9.15 pm

I regret very much the disruption of the Easter holiday traffic. [HON. MEMBERS: "Crocodile tears."] There are no crocodile tears. I genuinely believe that it is a great pity that the dispute is taking place. The seamen also regret it. They would far rather be at sea at a time of year when they are expecting good returns for their work.

I do not believe—this is reflected in the remarks of the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris)—that the seamen's case has been given a fair hearing. It is all too easy to portray them as strikers trying to hold back the tide—trying to hold up the progress of the ferry service, and to neglect the seriousness of the position. That is clearly not the case. It must be made clear that the National Union of Seamen accepts that the Channel tunnel will lead to a rationalisation of cross-Channel ferry services.

The National Union of Seamen has agreed that P and O's proposals on manning—which are what the dispute is about—can be implemented over three years. It is prepared to do that, first, to minimise the effects on crews—that, after all, is why it is in business—and, secondly, to allow the effects on safety of the new manning systems to be monitored. That is an extremely responsible attitude for a trade union to take.

The union accepts that the company must show a healthy profit and face the challenges ahead. In those circumstances, it is perfectly reasonable to ask, "Why the current impasse in the industrial dispute?" Again, it is necessary to set the scene.

In October 1987, Jeffrey Sterling met the Dover P and O port committee — the shop stewards — and, after discussion, gave them an undertaking that any redundancies and changes in terms and conditions of employment would be phased in with the opening of the Channel tunnel, which is forecast for 1992-93.

Suddenly, on 4 December 1987, P and O reneged on that promise. It notified the National Union of Seamen that the existing agreement would end on 4 March. That would mean 400 redundancies, 10 days' loss of annual leave with no compensatory payments, the loss of various payments for additional hours worked—which would cost the seamen between £8·25 and £40 a week—and an increase in shipboard working from 12 to 16 hours a day. Currently, the shift pattern is 24 hours on and 24 hours off. It is now being asked that that should change to 72 hours on and 72 hours off, over a longer period.

In debates such as this, we should be fair. Let me put the case for P and O. P and O argues that the changes are necessary to meet the challenge of the Channel tunnel—which is still a long way off, but we will leave that aside. P and O says that it is also necessary to prepare for loss of earnings to the company because of the loss of the duty-free concessions due to come in in 1992. We are still four years away from that.

What interests me particularly is that the company says that it needs the changes because it must prepare for the effects of the introduction of value added tax on passenger transport. Apparently, the company knows something that the Government will not admit. We have been pressing the Minister of State for nearly a year to give an absolute guarantee that he will veto the imposition of VAT on passenger fares, whether on bus services, railways, ferries or aircraft, but he sits quiet and will not concede the point. He pushes the matter over to his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State or to the Chancellor. Any excuse will do. He says that it is nothing to do with him.

Mr. David Mitchell *indicated assent.*

Mr. Hughes: The hon. Gentleman nods. [HON. MEMBERS: "He has given in."] But P and O knows, and it is using the imposition of VAT as part of its case.

P and O also states that it wishes to increase its return on investment from 10 to 12 per cent. at present to 25 to 27 per cent. It wants to double its profit margin. So far, it has done extremely well. It has declared an additional £100 million profit this year. We cannot bargain on these issues across the Floor of the House and I do not seek to usurp the negotiating rights of the National Union of Seamen, but the information that we have published shows clearly that the seamen have a very fair and reasonable case. They are right to be angry that their only weapon of self-defence—industrial action—has been whittled away and eroded.

I hope that the Government will accept the principle of the new clauses. The Minister of State is a reasonable man and will have studied the arguments carefully since the Committee stage. If he has done that, I am sure that he will see the merit of our case.

Dr. Norman A. Godman (Greenock and Port Glasgow): May we take it that the new clauses embrace fishermen employed by trawler companies? As a Member from Aberdeen, my hon. Friend will know as well as I that there are rarely trade disputes involving what are colloquially known as share fishermen, but that is not the case in relation to those employed by trawler companies. As my hon. Friend knows, those companies have made something of a comeback in the British fishing industry. It is important, therefore, to be sure that the term "seamen" includes fishermen employed by trawler companies.

Mr. Hughes: So far as I am aware, people employed by trawler companies in Aberdeen are covered in all aspects by the Merchant Shipping Act, so there is no doubt at all that the new clause would apply to them. Over the years, we have seen the necessity of protecting the rights of fishermen and seamen of all kinds. We intend to enhance their right to strike and to take industrial action in their defence.

If there are technical drafting deficiencies—that is always the first port of call of a Minister who wishes to resist an amendment or a new clause—all the new clauses and amendments, of which volumes have been tabled by the Government, will have to be ratified in another place, so any drafting deficiencies could be put right at that stage.

I wish to make the principles in the new clauses clear. We seek to restore to the Bill section 42 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1970. We also seek to go further than that. In our view, that section is so important that it should apply to ports outside the United Kingdom. We do not see why that right to take industrial action should be confined to United Kingdom ports. We want to see that right extended, although I emphasise that we retain the safeguard that the ship must be securely moored in a safe berth.

I should also make it clear that when action is taken in furtherance of an industrial dispute, neither the seamen nor the union should be made liable for damages in terms of breach of contract so long as a ballot is under way or has been taken. The right of employers to free and easy access to the courts to take action against unions for damages has seriously damaged the trade union movement and it does not help industrial relations. If new clauses 4 and 6 were accepted, that would go a long way towards

[Mr. Hughes]

redressing the balance between employers and employees, which has been tilted far too much to the employers' advantage.

Seamen, especially those working on ferries, are under intense pressure. I accept that to some extent the Channel tunnel will pose problems for the ferries, although I do not believe that the damage will be as great as many people fear. I object to the way in which the employers are maximising the fears of the effects of the tunnel to seek terms advantageous for themselves and disadvantageous for their employees.

The current problem with industrial relations on ferries is not helped by the astonishingly intemperate remarks by Mr. Sherwood of Sealink, who said that if P and O succeeded in imposing conditions on its employees, Sealink intended to do the same.

Mr. Roger Stott (Wigan): Secondary action.

Mr. Hughes: Yes, it is secondary action. If Sealink seamen take action to prevent their employer forcing conditions on them, the employer's response will be, "I can ride on the back of P and O's success." They are not allowed to help the P and O seamen and, as a consequence, help themselves.

Mr. Adley: I do not disagree with the hon. Gentleman's comments about Mr. Sherwood, but we should not necessarily believe that he is typical. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that it would be hard to find a worse employer in the whole of British industry?

Mr. Hughes: That is a very fair comment. On transport, if not on other matters, the hon. Gentleman can generally be relied upon to bring some sense to our discussions. He has a keen interest in the subject. Whether or not Mr. Sherwood is typical, he is nevertheless issuing threats to his employees. Surely they have the right to defend themselves. They cannot wait until P and O has succeeded in imposing conditions on its employees, because by then the P and O dispute will have ended and its workers will be unable to strike to help the Sealink workers.

It is quite wrong to believe that there are separate disputes in the ferry business, with primary and secondary action. It is all one series of actions. It is intolerable that seamen, especially those on the ferries, should be put under such intense pressure. We must give them the best possible defence. They should have the best possible law to assist them to protect their reasonable and valid interests in their employment, their prospects, their wages and their conditions. New clauses 4 and 6 would achieve that, and I ask the House to accept them.

Sir David Price: I should like to respond briefly to the comments of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes). I think that he will agree that it was not clear from the way in which he moved the new clause whether he was arguing in general terms about improving industrial relations and about the machinery for consultation in the industry, or whether he is arguing the case of the National Union of Seamen in the P and O dispute. I found his arguments fairly mixed up.

Mr. Robert Hughes: I am grateful to have the opportunity to make the record clear. First, I believe that, in general terms, our new clauses are right. Secondly, it is perfectly legitimate in this debate to put the case of the seamen which, regrettably, has not been properly presented by the public press.

Sir David Price: On that latter point, I do not think that hon. Members do well in trying to settle industrial disputes across the Floor of the House on the Report stage of a Bill. It has been my own industrial experience that we are not the best forum for doing that. Therefore, I shall say no more about that dispute, other than very much to regret it.

In the present state of the British merchant shipping industry, we should be talking about how we meet competition from other countries and about the ways in which we could work closely together, rather than about the way in which we enhance disputes. I should like us to spend our time examining how we can get rid of disputes and achieve instead agreement and co-operation.

9.30 pm

Of course the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North is perfectly right about the problem about holding ballots when ships are at sea. That is remarkably difficult. To that extent it is perfectly proper to discuss the way in which ballots for seamen are to be arranged, if we are to have them. I do not believe that either of the new clauses makes that proposition any easier. Indeed, it seems that, if put into the Bill in the form in which they appear on the Order Paper, both new clauses would give seafarers rights which no other trade unionists have in any other industry in the country. We should be trying to put seafarers in the same position as the remainder of British industry. That goes for both sides—the employers and the employees.

I do not want to go through a critique of the new clauses, because I know that the House wants to proceed with the Bill. However, I do not want it to go unrecorded that one could make quite a long critique of them. I hope that the spirit with which we have been handling the Bill —one of seeking co-operation between all parties—will continue. I accept entirely that not every shipowner and not everyone in management is what I would regard as the ideal spokesman that I would invite if I were running a conference on good co-operation in industry. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) has raised that point. It is important that this House tells all parties in the British shipping industry that some of us have been shouting the odds for the British Merchant Navy for a long time in the House.

I hope that the sufficient response will be that everyone in the industry gets together and works together; otherwise, the competition will continue to take trade away from us. Much of that competition comes not from Europe, but from the far east. Perhaps I will be accused of racialism, but personally I do not want to see all this country's trade being run from the far east. I am sure that that is the general mood of the House. I hope that we can achieve a spirit of co-operation, not of conflict.

Mr. Michael J. Martin (Glasgow, Springburn): I have listened to the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), whom I have heard before on matters relating to industry and have always found interesting. However, I think that he would agree that we are talking about a different industry from the day-to-day work experience of most people. I worked in the engineering industry and if I had to put up with bad conditions there, it was for only eight hours of the day. However, seamen are sometimes at sea

for six to seven months, and the ship is home to them for 24 hours a day, so fair's fair. Yes, in the new clauses we are asking for something different from the provisions relating to other industries, but we are dealing with a different industry.

Captains can be tyrants and hopeless individuals who would not last 10 minutes in other industries. Seamen often have to put up with indignities and with the captain having many powers over them.

I am the son of a seaman. My father was a member of the National Union of Seamen all his working life. He had to go to sea because of the great depression; it was the only work that he could find. So bad were the conditions that he was given a voucher in the port of Glasgow to buy his bedding to take to sea. As a stoker, he had a filthy job and at the end of his watch he received one bucket of hot water with which to wash himself. Men worked in those conditions, and the National Union of Seamen had to fight against them.

When my father was taken ill abroad, he was put ashore in places such as Canada, Egypt and countries in the far east, and the company did not even have the decency to let my mother know that her seaman's allotment would not be paid into the post office for a while. The union looked after the family and it looked after my father, who was regarded as a distressed British seaman.

I recall my mother telling me that on his first trip my father was put ashore in Canada because he had a poisoned hand. He was put ashore because the captain received a bonus for having a healthy crew. To its credit, the union made sure that he was looked after in Canada for six months, and I put it on record that the Canadian people looked after a young seaman much better than the British Government or the shipping company did.

My father's ships were torpedoed three times, and many of the boys with whom he was brought up were lost during the war. I know that he would like me to say that, as a civilian community and a work force, the merchant marine lost more members during the war than any other. When I went out for a walk today, outside the Tower of London I saw a monument to British merchant seamen and fishermen.

I am not a member of the National Union of Seamen, but I am proud of its record. It fought against a system whereby captains were allowed to keep one third of seamen's basic pay so that they could discipline them if they got up to any mischief. The union fought against the voucher system. It fought for better pay and conditions. It is a sad day when we start to consider that industry in the same light as other industries. The Government must always consider new ways of helping seamen.

The new clause would not create bad industrial relations — anything but. Evening considering some of the conditions in which seamen must work, I believe that industrial relations between the NUS and employers are good. I remember what seamen had to put up with in the past. I support the new clauses, and I hope that we can all remember that British seamen deserve a better deal.

Mr. David Shaw (Dover): As I understand it, the new clause is about whether it is safe to have an industrial dispute on board ship. The seamen to whom I have spoken believe that it is safe and I hope that when my hon. Friend the Minister replies he will say whether the Government believe that that is the case. It is noteworthy that this new clause is amending an Act that has been in existence under both Conservative and Labour Governments.

I believe that the Floor of the House is the wrong place to raise an industrial dispute between a company and—

Mr. Robert Hughes: Will the hon. Gentleman clarify what he said at the beginning of his speech about it being safe to have an industrial dispute on board ship? As the law stood and as our new clause has made clear, an industrial dispute can take place only when the vessel is safely moored at a berth.

Mr. Shaw: I accept that, but the key issue is not whether it is safe for the men and for the officers, but for any passengers who may or may not be on board or anyone in the port area involved with that ship. I trust that my hon. Friend the Minister will comment upon that. I believe that that is the important question and I have no doubt that the public share my concern.

I do not believe that the Floor of the House is the right place to raise an industrial dispute that has severely affected my constituency in the past three months. I believe that such a course of action could inflame the dispute and make matters worse rather than improve the situation. When the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) spoke about the industrial dispute, I trust that he was not seeking to make matters worse because that would be the greatest tragedy of the dispute.

The seamen have put a strong case to me with regard to safety. I was sorry that the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North did not say much about safety. I believe that there are important issues concerning the safety of the crew, passengers and all those involved in putting ships to sea.

Mr. Robert Hughes *rose*—

Mr. Shaw: I did not seek to intervene in the hon. Gentleman's speech, and I should like to continue.

I fervently hope that an agreement is reached in the dispute. I have no vested interest in an agreement not being reached, unlike some other hon. Members. My interest in representing my constituency is that such an agreement should be reached as soon as possible and that it will not only be of benefit to the seamen and to officers, but of benefit to the public, the passengers and the company. Surely that must be good for everyone.

Such an agreement must be safe for the seamen and for the passengers. It must also be fair. A number of seamen have said that an agreement with the officers may be unfair in relation to their agreement. Any agreement reached must be fair to the seamen and to the officers — both agreements should stand side by side.

During the speech of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North I was extremely upset. He said that he wanted to be fair to the company, but I do not believe that anything he said was fair to the company. I hold no brief for the company, but I hold a brief for the consituency of Dover.

Dr. Godman: Declare your interest.

9.45 pm

Mr. Shaw: I have only a constituency interest.

I have a brief that requires everyone to be given a fair hearing, so that it is in the interests of the seamen to go to sea and of the company to run the ships. If either side is given an unfair advantage over the other, the other will withdraw from the negotiations, which is not satisfactory.

[Mr. Shaw]

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North gave profit figures of more than £100 million. He should look at the company results of Townsend Thoresen and Sealink. The turnover of each of those companies is only slightly more than £100 million, but their profits are considerably less. In the meetings that I have had with seamen they have not suggested that profits were so high.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North talked about the problems of the Channel tunnel being deferred until 1993. The Channel tunnel company has just raised £5 billion. The company and the seamen must be able to compete in 1993 against a project for which I hold no brief, which I do not like and which I have been against since 1973. Many Opposition Members voted for the Channel tunnel, which was appalling enough. Not only will it come into being in 1993 but there is a real risk that duty-free sales will be lost. We in Dover must face these facts.

It is no good saying that we can wait until 1 January 1990, or until 1 July. In Dover, the local authority, the shipping companies and the seamen have to plan today for the future. We cannot delay.

Without balanced argument and discussion on both sides, the company will be forced into a political debate, rather than a discussion based on common sense. People should have the opportunity to get together; all parties in Dover need to get together. The company needs to be able to survive and trade successfully and the seamen and officers should be able to work in reasonable conditions and reasonable safety. Speeches that bash any side in the dispute will get us nowhere.

Mr. Eddie Loyden (Liverpool, Garston): The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) is the first basher that we have heard during the debate.

The new clause deals with the rights of seamen under the conditions that my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) outlined. It deals with whether seamen should have the right, which other workers have, to withdraw their labour in certain circumstances — for example, when a vessel is berthed. If the hon. Member for Dover considered the matter, he might realise that one of those circumstances could arise if a vessel was not safe, in the opinion of its crew. If they felt that it should not be taken to sea because it was in an unsafe condition, they would then have the right not to sail it. At present, there is no right to object to sailing a vessel in that way, or to take such action.

We ought to examine the Government's attitude to trade unions in general and seamen in particular. I spent the whole war at sea. I went to sea before and after the war, so I know what happened at sea in the pre-war period, when we sailed in rust buckets and old tubs that were often not safe to be at sea at all.

The father of my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) was lucky to have a bucket of hot water — such a thing was unavailable on many of the vessels on which I sailed in the pre-war period. We had to bring our own bunks aboard — straw mattresses covered with a piece of hessian that cost half-a-crown on the dock in Liverpool before we joined the vessel. Those were the conditions that prevailed for seamen. A tin of condensed milk had to last a month, and a seaman had to whittle two pieces of wood and peg them through two holes to keep out the jaspers for the rest of the voyage.

Seamen worked in such conditions before and during the war. There may have been reasons for that during the war because everyone was affected by the war. The ships and tramps that I served on were taken over for cargo, which was stowed in the very cabins in which we were living. We accepted such conditions during the war because seamen and people on shore just had to put up with them.

There is a press-gang mentality which says that seamen are a different breed and can be treated in a second, third or fourth-class way by their employers and by the Government who allegedly legislate on their behalf. It is about time that the Government started to take an interest in seamen. Seamen were the first to be affected by the war. On 3 September 1939, seamen were killed. They were the only group of people in Britain who were immediately affected by the war, and that continued right through the war. One would have thought that after the war the Government would have altered their mental attitude and that seamen would have been treated as other workers and given the same rights. Many of the constraints and restrictions that are part of the seaman's life should have been removed.

A seagoing vessel must be safe, because seamen carry burdens that would not be borne by people on shore. People working in power stations and firemen have to respond to emergencies. Those workers have seen changes that give them rights, but seamen are still excluded from almost every piece of progressive industrial legislation affecting health and safety. For some reason unknown to me, to seamen and to the National Union of Seamen, seafarers are excluded from the rights and privileges that almost every other worker enjoys. My hon. Friends were right to press that point.

The hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) talked about industrial relations. How can industrial relations improve when the balance has shifted so heavily in favour of the employer? How are workers to respond when they have hanging over them the penalty of sequestration of union funds? How will seamen respond to the fact that, before a ballot is taken, an employer can go to the court? It is a denial of democracy when employers can go to court and demand that seamen should be constrained in their attempts to fight for better conditions.

People do not get round a table today to negotiate; they go to the courts. Discussions round a table have been eroded not by seamen but by legislation. The Government have taken the trade union away from the negotiating table and into the courts. The fact that that is welcomed by Conservative Members means that the future is dim for trade unions.

Seamen should have the same rights as other workers to take action when they know that the working conditions that obtain on a vessel are unacceptable. When the ship is in a safe berth, the seamen on board should have the right to withdraw their labour. Seamen should not be denied that right, and there is no justification for denying it.

Hon. Members should seriously consider the matter of discrimination against seamen who do a dangerous job in normal times and a far more dangerous one in time of war. Their only reward has been to be discriminated against by legislation and by employers. I hope that the House recognises that it is about time that that discrimination was ended and that seamen were given the rights that they deserve.

Mr. Adley: I shall be extremely brief. We have enjoyed the nostalgic reminiscences of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden).

Mr. Loyden: They are not nostalgic.

Mr. Adley: The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) was kind enough to suggest that I try to take a reasonably impartial view of these matters. However, if the hon. Member for Garston recalls the words of a former leader of his party, Lord Wilson, in 1966, about the National Union of Seamen being a tightly knit group of politically motivated men, he will appreciate that the balance is probably about right as the Bill stands.

Mr. Stott: In response to the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley), I wish to say that I was one of those politically motivated men in the 1960s. The hon. Gentleman knows me well enough to know that, if I were one of them, there might have been an element of justice on their side during those years.

I listened with interest to the comments of the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw). The premier ferry port in the United Kingdom is in his constituency and some of his constituents are members of the National Union of Seamen. I accept some of his comments. I have a little sympathy with the hon. Gentleman when he says that we should not progress this industrial dispute in the House of Commons because it is not the right place to do so, but, in one line of the Bill, the Government are withdrawing seamen's rights to take industrial action. The forum for this issue is therefore this Chamber this evening. It is here and now.

In one line of a schedule, the Government are removing the democratic rights of seamen to progress an industrial dispute. If the hon. Gentleman is in favour of the Government's proposals, I suggest that he goes back to Dover tomorrow and tells the members of the NUS in his constituency that the Government are revoking their democratic rights.

I do not want to detain the House very long. Like my hon. Friends the Members for Garston, for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney), I was a member of the NUS in my formative years. I have to say to my hon. Friend the Member for Garston that, in my time, we got two tins of Coni Onie a week, not just one a month.

Mr. Loyden: Two tins a month.

Mr. Stott: The Navy was benevolent in those days.

The hon. Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) and I have had this conversation many times in the Chamber over the years. In any port in the world, one could see the red duster. The British merchant fleet was the world's premier merchant fleet. The hon. Gentleman and I and Sir Edward du Cann and Lord Callaghan have lamented the fact that the British merchant fleet has sunk so low and is but a pale shadow of its former self. The hon. Gentleman and I both know that, for an island trading nation such as ours, with our maritime history, that is an unsatisfactory state of affairs.

The hon. Gentleman and I have told the Government that something should be done to stop the rot and the way in which our Merchant Navy has been reduced over the years. The other people in the vanguard of the defence of the merchant marine have been the NUS. In document after document, the NUS has defended its service and told the Government that there should be a different way in which to stop the fleet being diminished.

I pay tribute to the NUS, because it has at heart the best interests of this country, this trading nation. I listened to my hon. Friend the Member for Garston talking about the war, when many merchant seamen lost their lives. We can recount an occasion that is a little nearer to home. Only a few years ago, during the Falklands dispute——

It being Ten o'clock, further consideration of the Bill stood adjourned.

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Merchant Shipping Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

Question again proposed, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Stott: That was a minor Exocet.

During the Falklands dispute, which lives in our memory, the British merchant marine and members of the National Union of Seamen, were the first to come to the colours. These men, constituents of the hon. Member for Dover and other hon. Members, are the people from whom the House, by the passage of the Bill, is seeking to withdraw rights.

Mr. David Mitchell *indicated dissent.*

Mr. Stott: Never mind the Minister shaking his head. I have told the hon. Gentleman for the past eight years that the truth is not what he thinks it is but what is in writing. What is in writing is the fact that seamen will not be able to take the industrial action that they might want to.

My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) is a reasonable man, and he has drafted the new clauses before the House. They are in line with what the Government have been doing in terms of trade union legislation. My hon. Friend wants a ballot. He does not want a dispute at sea. Disputes have to occur when the ship is moored. What could be more reasonable?

My hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) has shown how seamen are different from other industrial workers. The records of the Merchant Navy and the NUS over 50 years show that industrial disputes were not needed. There were few of them. We do not have a great militant group of people, but reasonable people who are prepared to come to the defence of their country in time of war. Their reward is that this Conservative Government will, by this one Bill, deny them the basic democratic rights that are afforded to almost everyone else in the civilised world. That is why I shall vote for this new clause.

Mr. Dennis Skinner (Bolsover): One or two other hon. Members wish to speak, so I shall try to be brief. I begin by congratulating my hon. Friends who have spoken already about the right to strike. That is one of the few freedoms — the most important freedom — for working men and women. If the Government continue down this road much further, that right will be removed from more groups of workers than the seamen. In the cause of trying to abolish Socialism—the Prime Minister's words—they would like to remove completely the right to strike from every section of the working class. Therefore, this is an extremely important debate.

The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) comes in here and talks about how we should not discuss industrial

[Mr. Dennis Skinner]

relations on the Floor of the House. I have sat in here over the past fortnight, Mr. Speaker, and you and I have had to bear it all, day in, day out, listening to the Tory yobboes talking about Dundee. Industrial relations are coming out of their earholes and we have had industrial disputes by the bucketful.

Now Conservative Members have the hypocrisy to say, "Don't talk about industrial relations on the Floor of the House." My hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) put it in context when he said that later on, in a schedule, the Government will be wiping out the right to strike. What is wrong with ordinary men and women having the right to strike? We have it in the House of Commons. Some have already exercised it this week — before we have even started our Easter holiday. In the last Division, 420 people clocked on, which means that more than 200 had gone on strike. The Government's majority dropped to 31.

A lot of the Tories have already packed up for Easter, yet they condemn the men and women at Dover for stopping people going on holiday. Where are Conservative Members going? Are they going to Klosters in the Swiss Alps? Conservative Members attack working men and women and say that they should not have the right to withdraw their labour. We have go-slows in here; they call it filibuster. Just imagine if they did that at the seaports. They would be making Standing Order 20 applications every day. So let us have less of this hypocrisy.

The dispute is also about overmanning. I read a report about a fellow called Peter Ford of P and O who had the gall to attack the workers at Dover. He said that there was overmanning. The report refers to a 94-day year. The only thing is that when one reads the small print it is 94 multiplied by 24 hours, which is three shifts, which is more than they work here. We are told about overmanning, but what about judges? They stand need telling working people that they cannot have a ballot when they do only 40 weeks in the year and have to be dragged from the Caribbean to turn up for work.

We have unelected judges telling working men and women that they cannot even have a ballot. They stand need talking in the Houses of Parliament about overmanning, attacking people who provide the wealth of this country. The other place has 1,100 people eligible to attend it. I have checked out the figures and discovered that the House of Lords has never got more than 500 people to clock on for work in my 18 years here. The other place has been overmanned by 50 per cent., even on major votes, yet the Tories have the cheek to talk about overmanning in industry.

I am pleased that my hon. Friends have stayed to vote for the new clause. It is very important to show that we are determined not to allow the Government to go any further towards removing working people's rights and liberties. The more we do that, the more we shall register accord outside.

I have come here tonight perhaps for another reason. I want to thank the seamen for all that they did to support the miners in their struggle in 1984-85. I want to give them the same right to take on their management, which is making a small fortune, supported by Conservative Members, many of whom are directors of the company lining its pockets out of the disputes. There ought to be a law in this place to stope those making money out of the dispute marching into the Lobby to carry the Government's decisions which will lead to lower wages and to slave labour in the industry. That is what the Tory Government are after.

Yesterday we heard the appalling statement that the same Government who are trying to cut the wages of the seamen are to give £650 million to British Aerospace on the advice of the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit), who is the adviser to the chairman of that company. That is the sort of society that we have. We are on the side of those who are battling for better safety conditions at sea and for the right to withdraw their labour. I say to my hon. Friends that we need to be on the Government Benches after the next election to reverse this obnoxious clause.

Dr. Godman: My hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is a very difficult act to follow, but I should like to make a plea on behalf of our fishermen.

The two new clauses use the definition

"seaman employed in a ship registered in the United Kingdom".

I hope that that definition includes fishermen. My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) is an old friend and represents many fishermen admirably, but I have some reservations about new clause 6. It seems that my hon. Friend agrees with some Conservative Members when he talks in terms of an industrial dispute that takes place when a ship is "securely moored" to the quay. I shall ignore what the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) said, as he evidently knows nothing about industrial relations in trawler companies on the Humber and elsewhere. Fishermen may be forced into an industrial dispute while the vessel is fishing.

Historically, share fishermen have rarely, if ever, been involved in industrial disputes. Disputes are foreign to them and have been for six or seven decades. Labour relations in the British trawler companies, however, are dramatically different. That sector is characterised by poor industrial relations and lousy management. Some trawler company managing directors could not manage an ice cream co-op or, as we say in Scotland, run a manadge.

I welcome the revival of trawler companies on Humberside and elsewhere, but my plea to the Government is that the trawler fishermen who are being employed should not be subjected to the disgraceful management that they, their brothers and fathers suffered even until recently.

I shall give one example of what I mean. It involves declaring loyal servants redundant. Several fishing companies received substantial decommissioning grants when they sold off their vessels. One company received more than £500,000 in decommissioning grants for a trawler which it sold for £900,000-odd. The trawler was built with a grant from the then White Fish Authority.

The crew were treated objectionably and squalidly. One of them — my brother Leslie — was employed by the company for 19 years and received £515 in redundancy. He got much more than many of his comrades who served on that trawler in their dangerous occupation. Fishermen may wish to refuse an order when a trawler is fishing and the skipper orders the deck hands to shoot the trawl in worsening weather.

No hon. Member can dispute that that has often happened in the Arctic. Sometimes, fishermen have died because they have obeyed an order and gone on to the

dangerous deck of a side trawler and been swept overboard. They should have been below deck in that worsening weather. I would not want a single recurrence of such an incident in the south Atlantic or anywhere because of the revival of the trawler companies. The Minister of State and his ministerial colleagues must protect those fishermen, because they deserve no less.

10.15 pm

Mr. Ian McCartney (Makerfield): I rise in support of my hon. Friends in both new clauses. As my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) said, I am a former member of the National Union of Seamen. In addition to that, for six years I worked in the port of Dover with the NUS and the Port of Dover harbour board.

At that time, major developments were taking place in the port, paid for by the then Labour Government, which allowed the port of Dover to expand to provide job opportunities in that part of east Kent. I was involved with the former Member of Parliament for Dorking, the late Keith Wickenden, for four years as a member of the organisation that campaigned for the protection of the port, proposals for the Channel tunnel and other aspects of the port's development.

I was more than surprised that the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) did not make one comment indicating that he would support the 2,000 seafarers at Dover who were sacked by that company. He made no reproach whatsoever about the company's tactics and the threat of disinvestment by Sealink and by the company, yet at the end of his speech he said that he did not want to debate industrial relations. He really means that he wants industrial relations and seafarers' rights decided behind closed doors at Downing street and through the special relationship that has been built up between P and O and the Government.

That is what is behind this pernicious piece of legislation. The removal of section 42 did not simply wander into the other place late at night, proposed by a noble Lord. It was a deliberate strike against the National Union of Seamen.

The current dispute is only one of a series of incidents that have taken place within the shipping industry over a number of years. The shipping industry is fighting a battle about the right of seamen to negotiate working conditions, and the right to some say in the deregulation of the industry and the effects of deregulation on wages and conditions, health and safety at sea and among passengers and the role of the NUS.

I should like to examine the connections between the legislation and Conservative Members. The hon. Member for Dover said that he had no interest in P and O. However, he was one of the Conservative Members who spent 25 hours backing P and O, as he was involved scurrilously in attempting to force through the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Bill. He was involved in wining and dining that took place in relation to that Bill.

Mr. David Shaw: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) has told a complete and utter lie. I have not taken any wine or food in relation to the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Bill. I insist on you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, insisting on him withdrawing that statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. The hon. Gentleman must first withdraw his reference to a lie. Then the hon. Gentleman who had the Floor might respond. The hon. Member must withdraw that expression.

Mr. Shaw: I will only withdraw if the hon. Member for Makerfield is prepared to withdraw.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Gentleman must withdraw. We are all hon. Members.

Mr. Shaw: Based on the advice which I have received, it would seem appropriate, in the circumstances, despite the fact that an unfair and untrue allegation has been made, for me to withdraw the word "lie".

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the hon. Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney) will withdraw.

Mr. McCartney: I said that the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) was one of the Members who had offered wining and dining until the fact that this was going on was exposed. If it had not been exposed, it would have continued. During the debate, hon. Members raised points of order. What I have said is legitimate, and I do not intend to withdraw what I said.

Mr. Shaw: I request you, please, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to ask the hon. Member to be honourable and to comply with your request.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thought I heard the hon. Gentleman say that wining and dining had been offered. I do not think that that necessarily reflects on the character of the hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw). What was offered and what was accepted are two quite different matters.

Mr. McCartney: I am sorry that there has been so much objection to what I said. I have here a copy of the invitation.

The company has recently given donations to the Conservative party. They amount to a considerable sum of money. Board members have relationships with Lord Young in terms of political advice, and Jeffrey Sterling is being canvassed for chairmanship of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. Many Conservative Members are known to have relationships with the company. Therefore, this aspect has been introduced at the behest of the company and of others who wish the negotiating rights of the National Union of Seamen to be diminished and in many respects destroyed and neutered. The company wants to introduce certain types of practice at Dover and throughout the British merchant fleet.

It is essential that the Government should come clean. Either they believe that seafarers should have the right to strike or they should admit that they have a cosy relationship with this company. The Government intend to allow it to purchase another piece of legislation that will deny to seamen the right to take industrial action to defend the health and safety of their members and of passengers who travel daily by sea from the port of Dover. The Government have not protected health and safety if one considers the iniquitous activities of the company. Seafarers have campaigned for the health and safety of passengers. The union wants to retain the right to take industrial action to defend themselves and the health and safety of the passengers whom they take daily to sea.

Mr. David Mitchell: As the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) said, there was a lengthy debate in Committee on the Bill's repeal of section 42(2) of the 1970

[Mr. David Mitchell]

Act. Having been defeated there, the hon. Gentleman has returned with two variants of the section, each of which gives seamen quite unjustified immunity from the provisions of employment legislation as it applies to employees in other industries, and to each of which the Government are opposed.

It might help the House if I say a word or two about section 42(2) and why the Government accepted that it should be repealed. I should explain that, before 1970, seamen had no lawful method of taking industrial action. In the aftermath of the 1966 seamen's strike, the Pearson committee commented that a provision enabling industrial action to be taken by seamen within the law was desirable. In due course, section 42(2) was included in the Merchant Shipping Act 1970. It permits seamen to give not fewer than 48 hours' notice of termination of their employment in furtherance of an industrial dispute, provided that the ship is safely moored in a United Kingdom port. It also provides that a shipowner is not able to circumvent matters by ordering the ship to sea while that notice is being worked out.

Unfortunately, those who drafted section 42(2) did not foresee that it would be abused. Crews of short sea ferries have in the past given notice in sequence by departments, each group of seamen then withdrawing their notice before it expired. In that way, they have been able to immobilise the ship while, because they are still available for work, they are still being paid. This device, which I am sure the House will agree is indefensible, was adopted, for example, in Portsmouth in January 1985 following European Ferries' takeover of P and O's Portsmouth operation. However, even if section 42(2) were not open to abuse in that way, there would be a good case for its repeal, in that it has been largely overtaken.

The hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) suggested that the seamen's right to strike was being removed. That is just not true. The hon. Gentleman then saw me shaking my head, and said, "Never mind shaking your head." What he meant was, "Never mind confusing me with facts." That is what he is worried about.

Let me tell the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) —who made up in volume what he lacked in accuracy— that the facts are very simple. The Merchant Shipping Act 1974 legitimised industrial action by seafarers while their ship was not at sea. Without section 42(2), seafarers will still be able to give notice of their intention to take industrial action in accordance with their terms of employment, in the same way as employees in other industries.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) said that there had not been many examples of abuse of the system. We do not have to experience a break-in before we lock our doors. The provision closes a massive loophole that is open to abuse on a major scale.

The hon. Gentleman went on to suggest—as did the hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden)— that the courts had forbidden the National Union of Seamen to ballot its members on a strike, and implied that that right to ballot had been removed. The High Court has ruled that, in balloting its members about a national strike, the union was in breach of injunctions made a month ago, covering the last illegal action, and was thus in contempt of court. The judge described the ballot as an "ingenious but ingenuous" attempt to get round the law. The hon. Gentleman should not try to pull the wool over the eyes of the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) is right: the House is not the place in which to seek to negotiate any trade disputes. The talks were adjourned by ACAS last Friday, until such time as it would be profitable for them to be resumed. I feel that we should leave the matter there.

The hon. Member for Glasgow, Springburn (Mr. Martin) spoke with passion of the conditions of seamen between the wars. No one wants to return to those conditions. His remarks might be relevant if the new clauses introduced the right to strike, but they do not. That right is established in law, and there is no intention to remove it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Dover sought clarification of the position of seamen in dispute, on ships and ferries and at sea. The safety of passengers is assured, because for the right to strike is limited to when a ship is securely moored in a safe berth. There is no question of seamen going on strike in mid-Channel.

Each of the two new clauses, far from recognising that section 42(2) has been overtaken and is open to abuse, go considerably beyond it. New clause 4 would enable seafarers to immobilise a ship—for example, whenever the local trade union leadership considered that it had a trade dispute with one or more employers—during the holding of a ballot on the matter. No time limit is imposed on the conduct of the ballot, and, if the crews of foreign-going vessels are to be consulted, it would be well over two weeks. Even then, if the ballot failed to produce the desired result, there would be nothing to prevent another ballot from being called immediately, thereby maintaining the embargo on ships sailing.

Meanwhile, the crew would be available for work. It would have only given notice to strike; it would not have gone on strike. The crew would remain on full pay while immobilising the ship. Anyone who votes in favour of the new clause will vote for a charter for abuse. That would be an outrage, and I urge the House to reject the clause.

10.30 pm

Mr. Tony Lloyd: The outrage is that the Government, in introducing the Bill, made no reference to the removal of legitimate trade union rights from seamen. It was only because of Back-Bench pressure in another place that the Government caved in and accepted the argument of the General Council of British Shipping and others.

The Minister might have the advantage over my hon. Friends and me in not understanding the Bill. He talks about a massive loophole, but it has not been used over the past 15 or 18 years. He referred to ferries sailing from Portsmouth in advancing his argument, but it is the opinion of the General Council of British Shipping that under existing law it is possible for a master to order his crew to take his ship to sea within the 48-hour period of notice, provided that it will be engaged in a voyage and back in port before expiry of the notice. The Minister does not understand that his example does not come within current legislation.

We cannot accept that the position of seamen is analogous to that of workers in other industries, and my right hon. and hon. Friends and I will press the new clause to a Division.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 183, Noes 225.

Division No. 245] **[10.30 pm**

AYES

Abbott, Ms Diane
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Allen, Graham
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Armstrong, Hilary
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Barron, Kevin
Battle, John
Beckett, Margaret
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. F. *(D'nt'n & R'dish)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Tony
Boyes, Roland
Bradley, Keith
Brown, Gordon *(D'mline E)*
Brown, Nicholas *(Newcastle E)*
Buchan, Norman
Buckley, George J.
Callaghan, Jim
Campbell, Ron *(Blyth Valley)*
Campbell-Savours, D. N.
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Tom *(Monklands W)*
Clay, Bob
Clelland, David
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cohen, Harry
Cook, Frank *(Stockton N)*
Cook, Robin *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Cousins, Jim
Cox, Tom
Crowther, Stan
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Darling, Alistair
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(Llanelli)*
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham Hodge H'l)*
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Don
Dobson, Frank
Doran, Frank
Douglas, Dick
Dunnachie, Jimmy
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs Gwyneth
Eadie, Alexander
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St Helens N)*
Ewing, Harry *(Falkirk E)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Flannery, Martin
Flynn, Paul
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forsythe, Clifford *(Antrim S)*
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, John
Galbraith, Sam
Galloway, George
Garrett, John *(Norwich South)*
Garrett, Ted *(Wallsend)*
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Gordon, Mildred
Gould, Bryan
Graham, Thomas
Griffiths, Nigel *(Edinburgh S)*
Griffiths, Win *(Bridgend)*
Grocott, Bruce
Hardy, Peter
Harman, Ms Harriet
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Henderson, Doug
Hinchliffe, David
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Home Robertson, John
Hood, Jimmy
Howarth, George *(Knowsley N)*
Hoyle, Doug
Hughes, John *(Coventry NE)*
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport E)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Illsley, Eric
Ingram, Adam
Janner, Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Lewis, Terry
Litherland, Robert
Livingstone, Ken
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McAllion, John
McAvoy, Thomas
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
McFall, John
McKelvey, William
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Bob
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael J. *(Springburn)*
Maxton, John
Meale, Alan
Michael, Alun
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Moonie, Dr Lewis
Morgan, Rhodri
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Mullin, Chris
Murphy, Paul
Nellist, Dave
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter L.
Powell, Ray *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Primarolo, Dawn
Quin, Ms Joyce
Randall, Stuart
Richardson, Jo
Robertson, George
Robinson, Geoffrey
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, Jeff
Ruddock, Joan
Salmond, Alex
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Andrew *(Oxford E)*
Smith, C. *(Isl'ton & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(Monk'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steinberg, Gerry
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Taylor, Mrs Ann *(Dewsbury)*
Taylor, Rt Hon J. D. *(S'ford)*
Turner, Dennis
Vaz, Keith
Wall, Pat
Walley, Joan
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael *(Doncaster N)*
Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Williams, Alan W. *(Carm'then)*
Winnick, David
Wise, Mrs Audrey
Worthington, Tony
Wray, Jimmy
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mrs. Llin Golding.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Alton, David
Amess, David
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bendall, Vivian
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Benyon, W.
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A *(Brighton K'pto'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Browne, John *(Winchester)*
Bruce, Ian *(Dorset South)*
Burns, Simon
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Chris
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Carlisle, John, *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Devlin, Tim
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Eggar, Tim
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodlad, Alastair
Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Harris, David
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, G. *(Cannock & B'wd)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lilley, Peter

Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(E Berkshire)*
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(Newbury)*
Madel, David
Malins, Humfrey
Mans, Keith
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, John *(Hendon S)*
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Miller, Hal
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon Sir Charles
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Pawsey, James
Porter, Barry *(Wirral S)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Price, Sir David
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Riddick, Graham
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shephard, Mrs G. *(Norfolk SW)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertfordshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Tracey, Richard
Tredinnick, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Wallace, James
Waller, Gary
Wardle, Charles *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Mike

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and
Mr. David Lightbown.

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 5

SAFETY AT SEA

'1. That the Secretary of State shall annually report to Parliament on matters affecting safety at sea and that in particular such a report must include:

(a) all actions taken by the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents.

(b) all discussions with representatives of other nations concerning safety at sea.

(c) all changes in primary and secondary legislation intended to improve safety at sea.

(d) all voluntary agreements concerning safety at sea reached by, or with, private companies.

(e) an assessment of the need for change in the design of ships, in the furtherance of safety at sea.

(f) an assessment of the effect of the working practices or seamen, masters and companies, on safety at sea.

2. That the duty on the Secretary of State in sub-section (1) above, shall not be deemed to be fulfilled, until the report has been accepted by affirmation of both Houses of Parliament.'.

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Robert Hughes: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider the following: Amendment (a) to the new clause, after subsection 1(f), insert—

'(g) an assessment of the impact of Safety at Sea legislation covering registered British fishing vessels;

(h) an account of the financial assistance provided from public funds to defray expenses incurred in meeting statutory training requirements on skippers and crew members of registered British fishing vessels'

New clause 13 — *Safety at Sea of British fishing vessels*—

'(1) The Secretary of State shall report annually to Parliament on matters affecting the safety at sea of registered British fishing vessels and that such a report will include an account of the financial assistance provided from public funds to support the training costs of skippers and crew members of registered British fishing vessels incurred in meeting statutory training requirements.

(2) The duty on the Secretary of State imposed by subsection (1) above, shall not be deemed to be fulfilled until the report has been accepted by affirmation of both Houses of Parliament.'.

Mr. Hughes: The new clause relates to safety at sea. It is, tragically, just over a year since the Zeebrugge disaster — a night that none of us will ever forget. We heard first that the vessel had gone down and the grave danger that all the passengers had been lost, along with the crew. There was then a partial sense of relief when the news came through that the vessel had capsized and was on a sandbank. Then came the awful news about the number of people who had lost their lives.

Part of the reason for the new clause is to make absolutely sure that the issue of safety at sea is kept in the front of our minds on every possible occasion. Those of us who have seaport connections or who have a family history of seafaring, know that all too often people make the right noises about death at sea. In some cases, collections are taken and funds set up. People give generously, but then they forget all about safety at sea until the next major incident. Sadly, "out of sight, out of mind" is a phrase that applies all too often to merchant shipping.

It is essential that we keep the issue to the fore, and that is the intention of the new clause. We should consider two aspects of safety at sea. The first is the design of ships, their seaworthiness and maintenance. The second is manning and how proper management and crew practices can assist safety. Despite what the Government have done since the Herald of Free Enterprise sank — I concede that things have been done to improve safety — the bulk of the Government's actions have been in relation to the human element of safety.

10.45 pm

There is a major disagreement between the Secretary of State and myself, and between the General Council of British Shipping and the organisers of the Herald of Free Enterprise Families Association, on the safety of the basic design of ro-ro ferries. In a letter to me on 13 January, the Secretary of State said that the Government do not regard existing ro-ro ferries as unsafe.

None of us wishes to be alarmist, and to some extent I accept the statistics that are given. They are always comparative statistics. The number of deaths at sea was comparatively small before the Herald of Free Enterprise sank. It was a benchmark in disaster for ro-ro ferries. It is true to say that more people have been killed because of Boeing 747s crashing than because of ro-ro ferries sinking, but that does not alter the fact that there are serious grounds for doubting the inherent safety and stability of ro-ro ferries.

It is commonplace to say — the Minister said it on Second Reading and it has been said since — that ro-ro ferries are perfectly safe as long as they do not sail with their bow doors open and water does not get in. That goes without saying. But one could say with equal truth and emphasis that the Titanic was a perfectly safe ship as long as it did not hit an iceberg. To say that a ship is safe as long as water does not get in proves nothing at all. The problem with ro-ro ferries is that once water gets in they become unstable and can capsize quickly.

The statistics on ro-ro ferries are alarming. There are about 2,500 ro-ro ferries in the world, 400 of which have been involved in serious incidents. In 1981, a Norwegian organisation reported on 243 ro-ro ferries that had been involved in incidents at sea over a 20-year period, and it found that 60 per cent. of them had sunk in less than 10 minutes. That is a very short time. In 1981, when the German ship the Ems sank, it was the 19th incident involving ro-ro ferries in two and a half years. The insurers were so worried that they began to add premiums to the insurance. Since then there have been many incidents. In 1980, the Tollan and the Zenobia capsized. Nearer to home, in 1981, the Arion beached, European Gateway keeled over in 1982, and on 5 Ma[illegible] this year the Vinca Gorthon capsized in the North sea.

For many years people have warned about the dangers of capsizing. Indeed, the International Maritime Organisation has been discussing the problems of large, open-deck ships since the 1960s. Several reports on the danger of capsizing have been published. One could go through all the reports that have been published, but it is late, so I shall consider reports that are immediately to hand in Britain. In February, the Nautical Institute warned of the "inherent vulnerability" of ro-ro ferries. It recommended that bulkheads should be fitted, that there should be moveable shutters and protection for the rear bow in terms of water ingress.

I am not one of those people who often refer to what they have said before, but on the day that we had the

[Mr. Hughes]

statement from the Secretary of State about the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise many of my hon. Friends, and I argued that we needed some method to provide stability for much longer than is currently the case.

A few days ago, the Royal Institute of Naval Architects said:

"ro-ro passenger ships . . despite their full adherence to the law and regulations, are unacceptably vulnerable in that there is a likelihood of rapid capsize"

and that could lead to "catastrophic loss of life." The International Maritime Organisation is the only organisation that appears to support the Government's view that there is no real need to do anything. As long ago as 1977, that organisation said that it did not think that ro-ro ferries required special consideration.

I accept that there has been consultation about closed-circuit television, draught gauges, escape windows, deck doors, and so on. That is welcome, but it has been rather slow in coming. I do not believe that the Government have addressed the central issue of design with sufficient urgency.

I accept that if the modifications that we regard as necessary are put in place they will be expensive. It has been argued that such modifications could cost between £250,000 and £500,000. That price must be paid. If the Secretary of State thought it necessary to provide Government assistance to carry out the necessary safety requirements, I would not argue against that. I still believe that it might be the responsibility of the ferry companies to make the ships safe, but I would support the Secretary of State were he to say that, in the interests of safety, such things had to be done and that, to protect the competitive edge of British shipping, he wanted to inject some money into the industry.

This is an important matter. The Secretary of State, however—I want to be as fair to him as I can—gives the impression that he is laid back and does not want to get too excited about it. In a letter to the General Council of British Shipping, he said:

"The Government is not interested in making rules that fail in their basic objective."

That is one of the major quarrels between us. I believe that it is absolutely necessary to make the modifications to make the ships safe. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will take a stronger line when he replies.

The hon. Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) made a characteristically vigorous speech, and I do not object to that. However, I object to him giving the impression in a previous debate that I am not concerned about the safety of ferries or their passengers. In case there is any doubt in his mind or in anyone else's, I want to emphasise that I believe that the safety of ships, passengers and crew is paramount. That is why we want improvements to be made.

So far, I have concentrated on ferries because, naturally, they are in the forefront of discussion at the moment, but deep sea vessels should also be considered. I know that the Secretary of State is bound to be concerned about that. Indeed, the father of my hon. Friend the Member for Makerfield (Mr. McCartney)—he is not in the Chamber at the moment—who was a Front-Bench spokesman on transport for many years, tried to persuade the Government to set up an inquiry into the loss of the motor vessel Derbyshire. I am glad that the Government set up that inquiry, but it took I forget how many years for it to happen. The Secretary of State should have a duty in law to report to the House on ferry safety.

Other issues might be discussed tonight, and perhaps my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) will be able to deal with some of them later. Crew hours and fatigue are important issues. If a crew are overworked and tired because they do not have proper off-duty hours they cannot be expected to be up to the mark on ferry safety. I hope the Secretary of State will accept that the new clause is intended to be helpful. No sensible person in the shipping industry would object to his reporting annually to the House on safety at sea.

Mr. Salmond: I subscribe to the remarks of the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes). I also want to extend the debate to considering the crucial issue of safety at sea in the fishing industry.

The amendment and the new clauses would require the Secretary of State to account to Parliament annually for safety at sea in the fishing industry, particularly as it is affected by public funds for training for safety. Such accountability is needed to expose the scandal of the lack of support for such training to meet mandatory training requirements that are shortly to be imposed on the industry—requirements to do with fire fighting, survival and first aid.

The House has been made aware many times that sea fishing is an extremely dangerous industry—four times as dangerous as mining. When my predecessor, Sir Albert McQuarrie, introduced his Safety At Sea Bill in 1986, he enjoyed general support from all sides of the House. Hon. Members considered it an important measure, but talk is cheap. That support was not backed by a guarantee or offer of public provision. The Safety At Sea Act 1986 was passed with no Government undertaking to provide public funds to support the mandatory training that was required by the legislation.

Support for training in the fishing industry is under pressure in the Sea Fish Industry Authority—first, because it is extending training to the onshore sector, which hon. Members will agree is a valuable exercise. Secondly, the authority is under pressure because support under the authority's development programme is not guaranteed by MAFF beyond next year. The third cause of pressure is the additional training that will be required by the mandatory requirements of the Safety At Sea Act.

The Government say that, because the Act was a private Member's Bill, it involved no Government commitment to funding. That might be true, were it not for two important facts. In 1986, the mandatory provisions on training in clause 2 of the Bill were drafted by the Government. It was, in effect, a Government clause within a private Member's measure, and the Government brought it forward on Report.

Serious questions must be asked about how the clause on mandatory training was introduced. The Minister of State said of the requirements:

"In Committee, I also said that it was right for the fishing industry, not the taxpayer, to meet the cost of training. It was most encouraging, therefore, to learn that at the meeting the following day of the fishing industry safety group the body representative of the views of fishermen's organisations on safety matters, no objections were expressed to the proposal to introduce a new clause dealing with training on this basis."—[*Official Report*, 9 May 1986; Vol. 97, c. 382.]

I looked back at the minutes of that meeting of the Fishing Industry Safety Group held on 24 April 1986. Far

from no objections being raised, I found that in the last part of the minutes both Mr. William Hay, president of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, and Mr. Gregg of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, made it clear that they had reservations about the lack of public financial support for the mandatory training requirements in the Safety at Sea Act 1986. I do not know whether the Minister of State was being economical with the truth, but he was most certainly being economical with those minutes.

11 pm

We have an impasse that is reflected in the response to the industry by Lord Brabazon of Tara in a telex of 25 March. In that telex he justified the injustice in the Bill. The Bill provides for £3·5 million to meet the annual training costs of the merchant shipping industry. No one would deny that that is a good measure, but in no measure are the Government willing to introduce public support for mandatory training and safety in the fishing industry, which would cost less than a tenth of what is proposed for the merchant shipping industry.

In his telex to the fishing industry representatives on 25 March, Lord Brabazon of Tara would not even concede a meeting to those representatives to discuss the future public provision for training in the industry. That is a measure of the Government's contemptuous attitude to this important matter. We need an annual report to Parliament so that we can have an account of the intransigent and contemptuous attitude that the Government are taking towards safety at sea as it affects the fishing industry.

I do not know whether the Minister is aware of the anger and frustration caused in the fishing industry by the Government's intransigence in this matter. To provide fully public funded support for mandatory training would cost about £250,000 a year. In the wholeness of Government funds, that is not a large sum. Can the Minister not find it within himself to say that the Government will look again at this matter and offer some public support for safety training in the fishing industry? That would show that they regard the lives of fishermen as being as important as the lives of people in other industries.

Mr. Adley: I am grateful to have this opportunity to speak to the new clauses. The fishermen of Mudeford in my constituency would doubtless benefit from the annual report suggested in the amendment to the new clause. Oil exploration has given rise to hitherto unforseen hazards for many fishermen, certainly in the comparatively crowded waters of Christchurch bay. The mere fact that a report would be presented to Parliament could concentrate the minds of those undertaking oil exploration on the potential hazards that that could create for fishermen.

I should like to speak to the opening sentence of new clause 5, which says that the Secretary of State

"shall annually report to Parliament on matters affecting safety at sea".

Her Majesty's Coastguard training school is in Highcliffe in my constituency. I recently visited that excellent establishment and I am afraid that I found some rather unhappy and uneasy men, who feel that the Department of Transport, which is their lord and master, has no long-term plan for that establishment. There is no more dedicated body of men in the ranks of the Civil Service than those in the coastguard. It was therefore disquieting to receive a letter from a constituent who works at the coastguard training school. He was constrained to write:

"We do feel pawns in some large scale game about which no-one bothers to inform us."

He went on to refer to a telex, and this might interest the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond). That telex, received a few days ago from the Department of Transport, refers to the closure of the sub-centres for maritime rescue at Hartland Point, Moray and at Ramsey on the Isle of Man. My constituents say that the district controller of one of those sections knew nothing about the closure until he received the telex. That is a thoroughly unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Perhaps the reason why I cannot reveal the name of my constituent's name to the House might appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken). The letter goes on to say:

"After all, the Government expects us to show loyalty and accountability to our Minister and not to discuss policy with the media or even MPs under threat of the Official Secrets Act, and yet the Minister is allowed to treat his own staff in this cavalier way. All we are asking for is better communication and a little consideration."

I make my few remarks in an attempt to put those points on the record. Let me give the Secretary of State another example. My constituents were asked to prepare a report on the breeches buoy and spent many months preparing that report. On the very day that they sent it off to the Department, a message arrived saying that the Department would no longer use the breeches buoys. I can think of no better illustration of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

The excellent establishment at Highcliffe has substantial facilities.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will tell the House whether he knows what conclusions that report drew on the question of maintaining the breeches buoy?

Mr. Adley: I should be happy to discuss that matter with the hon. Gentleman, but, at this late hour, it would be unfair to hon. Members who wish to speak in the debate to enter into a technical discussion for the reasons for the Department's decision. I hope that the hon. Gentleman does not think that I am discourteous. I am more than happy to pass on to him any information in my possession on that subject.

Facilities for training overseas staff at Highcliffe coastguard training centre are undoubtedly the most up-to-date in Europe and revenue could undoubtedly be earned by doing so. My constituents are simply asking that the Department gives them some indication of its thinking on the matter.

Much of the equipment is at best antediluvian and only experienced, determined and courageous men could make proper and effective use of it. Coupled with that, there are technical changes in communications equipment. Decisions are now taken by people in the Department who are far away from the coastline and often have no practical experience. One is left with the uneasy feeling that money is the main priority, rather than safety. Decisions taken on communications equipment get the priorities the wrong way round for those who might find themselves in the unfortunate position of having to use that equipment.

Local authorities are being canvassed for their views on taking over the cliff rescue service, an important part of

[Mr. Adley]

coastguard work. Again, my constituents running that excellent establishment simply wish to know what is the Government's thinking on this matter.

If my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is unable to accept new clause 5, I hope that he will at least reply in detail to my recent letter as soon as possible and do everything possible to allay my constituents' fears and to produce a five-year plan so that this fine body of men may know that they have a firm and secure future.

Mr. Bob Clay (Sunderland, North): The hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) referred to a constituent who said that he had the impression that money is a more important consideration then safety. That sums up the attitude of shipowners and the Government to this matter.

I am particularly concerned about the roll-on/roll-off ferry system, which sums up the choice facing the Government and shipowners—that between money and safety. If they were not putting money before safety, the Government would already have legislated. My hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) quoted from the report of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects. It does not have an axe to grind against this Government, and is not great friend of the Opposition and the trade unions, but that report makes interesting reading.

Apart from what my hon. Friend has already quoted, it says:

> "In the light of circumstances which now pertain it is considered that current designs of Ro-Ro passenger ships now in service, despite their full adherence to the law and regulations, are unacceptably vulnerable in that there is a likelihood of rapid capsize under certain conditions, particularly collision."

That should be the end of the matter, unless the Government can produce overwhelming evidence that the National Institute of Naval Architects does not know what it is talking about. If there is a risk, why take it?.

Let us spell out the scale of the risk. I understand from talking to professionals, some of whom were associated with the production of this report, horrific as it is to say this, that the Zeebrugge disaster could have been worse. The loss of life on the ironically named Herald of Free Enterprise would have been a small incident compared with the potential catastrophe that could happen with roll-on/roll-off ferries. The Herald of Free Enterprise was on its own. It was not in collision with another vessel. It was in shallow water, and it was not one of the largest of the modern generation of the roll-on/roll-off ferries. I am not an alarmist, but if two ferries larger than that one collided in mid-Channel, in deep water, there would be a loss of 4,000 to 5,000, so quickly would everybody go down. That is the size of the potential disaster.

The Government's attitude is extraordinarily complacent. What needs to be done? According to the Royal Institute of Naval Architects:

> "Longer term research will refine solutions, but the means of reducing the likelihood of rapid capsize should be adopted now. These include the fitting of door or shutter-type transverse bulkheads on vehicle decks; the judicious use of longitudinal bulkheads; the addition of sponsons or bulges; the reduction of permeability by filling spaces with buoyant material and various similar improvements."

If the shipowners will not carry out such measures immediately, and argue that they will lose the competitive edge and cannot afford to have ferries out of service, the Government should oblige them to do it, and they could start that process by accepting this new clause.

Furthermore, if the Government were to provide grants to compensate ferry owners for the loss of service while the ferries were being adapted, and for the cost of the adaptation, it would be reasonable for the Government to do so in exchange for an obligation on the part of the ferry owners to have the work done in British ship repair yards. All of them are screaming out for work and are placed in areas of high unemployment, like my constituency. We could place contracts for all the work that needs to be done to all these ferries without the need for competition between one yard and another. If the work is placed in all the different shipyards, it would be done more quickly.

The only argument against this logical and sane proposal, apart from its cost, is that it will give foreign ferry owners a competitive edge. That seems to me to be an illogical argument. The Government should come down from cloud-cuckoo-land and accept that the work needs to be done to make the ferries safe. They would find that British ferries that had the work done would have a very considerable competitive edge over their foreign counterparts. If not only the ferry owners but the British Government could point out that we now had the only safe roll-on, roll-off ferries in the world, that would be a popular unilateral move with passengers not only in Britain but universally.

11.15 pm

There is every reason for doing the work; it is crying out to be done. Thousands of lives may be at stake, because a greater tragedy than that involving the Herald of Free Enterprise could still happen. The amount of money required is not enormous, yet the Government will not do the work. In the recent Budget, the Government gave away £2·1 billion in tax cuts to those paying over the 40 per cent. mark. They are making a £650 million handout to British Aerospace for taking over Rover. The cost of this proposal is chickenfeed in comparison; the mere millions of pounds needed could be made available tomorrow, and we could start making the ferries safe, which is our main concern. As a useful side product, socially useful work would be provided in shipyards and ship repair yards in areas of desperately high unemployment.

Mr. Jonathan Aitken (Thanet, South): New clause 5 is a well-intentioned new clause, and the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) was absolutely right to remind us all that the memories of the Zeebrugge disaster still cast a long shadow over our proceedings. They cast a longer shadow still over the east Kent coastal communities, which my hon. Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Shaw) and I have the honour to represent. They have suffered sad losses, and the scars may not heal in people's lifetimes.

Against that background, there is one aspect of safety that the House should ask the Government to comment upon, because it has an effect on the current dispute which has troubled the House this evening and which is causing so much anxiety in the communities of east Kent and to travellers this Easter. There is a fierce—even bitter—feeling that safety is being jeopardised by some of the proposals that are being put forward. That may be a very unfair suggestion, but I have no doubt that the many officers and seamen who have advanced that argument to me at constituency surgeries have done so with complete

sincerity and not because they are trying to protect their jobs or defend their livelihoods, even though that may be part of their obvious posture in such a dispute. There is a genuine and sincere feeling that some of the proposals advanced by P and O Ferries will have an impact on the safety not only of crews but of passengers. I hope that the Secretary of State can be persuaded to comment on that and perhaps reassure us on it.

There are two sides to the question. On the one hand, P and O says, "In order to save money and make ourselves competitive with the Channel tunnel, and so on, we need new manning levels." On a purely commercial basis, few people can disagree with that suggestion. It is the company's right to make such changes, unless, of course, they affect safety. But P and O says, "Don't be ridiculous. We are doing no more than bringing in manning levels that exist on many other ferries plying several other routes—foreign ferries in particular. We have two and half crews per ship, which is in line with other companies. It is ridiculous to suggest that we are jeopardising safety merely by introducing the same manning levels as other companies."

The ferry men, on the other hand, say, "We are suddenly being asked to work 72-hour shifts — three days on the trot—and we are being allowed rest periods of only six hours per 24-hour shift. We will be very tired officers if such shift patterns are allowed to prevail." The one thing that the Zeebrugge disaster and the findings that flowed from it have told us is that a tired seaman can be a dangerous one. Thereafter, one listens to representations about fatigue. Moreover, a short sea route seaman is likely, when trying to get his six hours sleep, to be disturbed by a cacophony of noise — klaxons, lorries moving and anchor chains being drawn up. It is therefore not easy to obtain proper rest periods on such routes.

The Secretary of State's officials must have given some consideration to this matter. The Government have a clear duty to ensure that safety at sea prevails. What I want to hear is that the Government have considered representations such as I have described. Are they satisfied that the proposed shift arrangements will not adversely affect safety at sea? I think that that is a reasonable question and the right one to ask tonight.

The fundamental concern is not whether the ferry company has a right to manage in its best commercial interests — of course it does — nor whether the seamen have a right to put forward their own arguments about manning levels — of course they do. Only the Government can say whether a certain pattern of sleep and rest periods is adequate. I was pleased to see that the new clause requires the Secretary of State to report annually to Parliament on the voluntary agreements reached at sea and on the pattern of work and their effect on safety and fatigue.

Is the Secretary of State happy with the new rostering proposals? I do not mean that he should interfere in the company's right to manage, but he should ensure that safety is not affected. That is what I hope to hear from him in his winding-up speech.

Mr. Terry Fields (Liverpool, Broadgreen): Before I came to this debate, I was given a note from the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), who asked me to say that he could not be here because he is involved with some other business in the House. I do not usually carry on as a fag for the Tories or anyone else, but at least the hon. Gentleman had the decency to see the families of people who died in the Herald of Free Enterprise and arranged a meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss some of their problems. I therefore do not mind passing on a message from the hon. Member, which is more than I can say for the few Conservative Members present who were members of the Committee but made no valuable contributions to our debates, in spite of the widely known fact that the vessels we are discussing are unsafe. They just sat there like dummies and, at the appropriate time, voted with the Government.

When my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) was talking about the unions, I heard the hon. Member for St. Ives (Mr. Harris), who is no longer present, say, from a sedentary position, something about crocodile tears. In Committee, he had a lot to say about training fishermen. He explained that he had only recently been down at his local seaport and that the men who had gone to sea had not come back. There had been an accident. I feel sorry for them. I feel sorry for any group of workers who suffer injury or death in the course of duty. When he was making that contribution, the local television fellow and the press were there. Immediately after making his speech, he went out and gave a press report.

At the next sitting, the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) moved an amendment asking for finance for training the crews of the various fishing boats. The hon. Member for St. Ives stood up in Committee and said that he was attracted to what the hon. Gentleman had proposed and he would support the amendment. However, when it came to the vote, the Minister spoke against the amendment and the hon. Member for St. Ives turned tail and voted with the Government, having made a wonderful speech about his committment to his constituents. Conservative Members give support only in words.

In the Lobbies, hon. Members said that new clause 4 was the most important one under discussion. From the point of view of trade unions it was important. But if there is no safety at sea, it does not matter if one has a union card in one's back pocket. The new clause is important for the seafarers and their families.

We hesitate to express an opinion as to why, in Committee, the Government, through the Minister, refused time and again to acknowledge the instability of the ro-ro ferries, despite the evidence that was presented to them.

On 12 March, the *New Scientist* reported:

"When Margaret Thatcher visited the rescue effort at Zeebrugge last weekend she spoke about design failures. She told reporters: 'It is the fundamental design of the ferry that I understand is the problem. That is a factor that will have to be looked at very quickly because public confidence has been very severely jolted.'

A spokesman from the Department of Transport reiterated the point, adding that it was 'well known' that ro-ro ferries had design problems. By Monday afternoon the Government had changed its view to coincide with that of Townsend Thoresen's management, which claimed that the issue was one of operating procedures, not design.

John Moore, the Transport Secretary, told the House of Commons: 'I have no evidence to support that this [the accident] was due to any fault in the design of the ship.' However, he suggested that, in future, ferries should have alarm lights on their bridges to warn of open sea doors."

The current Secretary of State was asked whether improvements will take into account the fact that such vessels sink so quickly. He replied that the sinking of such vessels is, fortunately, exceedingly rare. Yet we have a

[Mr. Terry Fields]

catalogue of such ferries sinking over a period of five or 10 years. That is a fact, whether we are talking about the Herald of Free Enterprise or the European Gateway. Lord Justice Sheen was critical of the tardiness of the Department of Transport. When told that the recommendations of the European Gateway inquiry, which reported in 1984, had not been implemented, he said:

"I cannot understand the reluctance to lead in the field of safety."

In Committee, I made certain statements about the cosy relationship between the Government, P and O and other parties. P and O is trying to screw the workers, take away their trade union rights through the courts, drive down their living standards, reduce their numbers and extend their working hours. Why are the Government doing nothing to stop the carnage for which Townsend Thoresen and P and O are responsible? I would have liked to include in the Bill the liability of the Government, because they know about the ineffectuality of the reporting and the unsafety of the ro-ro ferries, but they have done nothing about it.

A little investigation shows that the chairman of P and O, Sir Jeffrey Sterling, in the 1988 edition of "Who's Who", lists as his clubs the Garrick club, which has on its books the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Carlton club, which has on its books the Thatchers, Lord Whitelaw and Tony Brooks, who used to work for MI5 and was involved in the scandal with the Wilson Government. I did not know that the Secretary of State for Transport is also a member of the Carlton club. Sir Jeffrey Sterling was the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry's adviser. The Prime Minister appointed Lord Justice Sheen to head the inquiry into the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster. Sir Jeffrey Sterling is a member of the Hurlingham club; so is Lord Justice Sheen.

In 1985, 1986 and 1987, P and O made large financial donations to the Tory party. If I went to the Liverpool, Broadgreen masonic lodge I should find that although these people wring their hands and beat their breasts they do not give a damn for those who lost their lives on the Herald of Free Enterprise. If Conservative Members were interested in safety at sea, they would join us in the Lobby.

11.30 pm

I could give the names of 20 or 30 experts in maritime affairs who have said that the ro-ro ferries are unsafe, but Conservative Members refuse to accept what they say. They stand condemned by their inactivity. It is no use them telling the families of the 200 people who died in the Zeebrugge disaster that they are interested in safety. A personal friend of mine and a good comrade, Geoff Haney, a cook from Manchester, went down with that ship.

If the Government are sincere when they say that they want to provide better safety for the travelling public, they should join us in the Lobby when we divide on the new clause. Millions will be condemned to death if the Government take no action. If they do not introduce legislation to provide better safety at sea, they will be exposed as having failed to deal with the needs of ordinary people.

Captain Spencer, a member of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners and managing director of Baltic Control UK Ltd., wrote to *Lloyd's List International* and said:

"Needless to say, the class societies are still servant of the owner and subject also to the will of government giving them the usual conflict of interest."

There is a conflict of interest. The Government had better come clean. If Conservative Members want to do something positive tonight, they should vote for new clause 5.

Mrs. Ray Michie: I support the new clause because safety at sea is so important. I regret that no provision has been made for financial assistance to fishermen who take survival courses. I referred to this point on Second Reading. I am sorry that the Secretary of State for Transport has been unable to incorporate that provision in the Bill. I am even more sorry that between Second Reading and today there was no meeting to discuss the matter with the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. The peremptory manner in which the Under-Secretary of State for Transport dismissed the idea of holding a meeting with the Scottish Fishermen's Federation was disturbing.

I wish to refer briefly to the withdrawal of the breeches buoy rescue equipment. I have received a number of letters from the islands off my constituency. Not all of them are from coastguards: many of them are from community councils, whose members are deeply disturbed about the matter. Many hon. Members visit the islands, and will know what I am talking about. On the island of Tiree, for example, the water around the shore is very shallow. There are many inshore fishermen, whose number is vastly increased in summer, and wind-surfing is a popular sport. There are, however, no other rescue facilities to operate in the event of an inshore accident. On the island of Coll, helicopter and lifeboat services are at least an hour away.

Deep concern has been voiced by the people on those islands, particularly about the short notice given of the withdrawal. I believe that a statement was made about five weeks ago, and the equipment is to be withdrawn on 31 March. I hope that the Minister can give me some reassurance about how rescues will be carried out when helicopters and lifeboats are not easily available.

Mr. Loyden: I spoke earlier about the state of vessels that went to sea in the pre-war period, and indeed during the war, and the degree of safety and maintenance then prevalent on merchant ships. I do not wish to dwell on that topic. Let me say, however, that we are now in an entirely different position. We are now talking about modern technology in both the building and the design of ships, and we are bound to take into account not only design but manning when considering the question of safety.

Before I came to the House, when I earned a decent, honest living, I remember being involved in negotiations with an employer about manning of vessels in the bay and river of the Mersey. The company's view was that, because it owned the vessels, it had the right to determine the necessary insurance for their safety. It considered the manning scale to be part of the premium, and so had to determine manning levels in accordance with safety requirements.

There was a certain logic in the argument that the owners of the vessels should determine the premiums, whether in literal, insurance terms or in manning terms. The two are, in fact, inextricably bound up. I said, "Yes, you own the vessels, and you have a right to determine how much risk you are prepared to take in relation to those vessels. But you do not own the lives of the people who work on them." If a passenger vessel had been

involved, I would have added "and the lives of the passengers." The company, I said, had no right to determine manning levels in a way that put lives in jeopardy.

Our demands are minimal, but I recognise the problems that face my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Opposition Front Bench in securing a response from the Government that will enhance safety. My demands would have gone much further, but I accept that we are facing one of the most reactionary Governments of my lifetime. Indeed, they are probably the most reactionary Government to have been in office for many years before that.

We have every right to be concerned about the design and manning of vessels. These are issues that the Government can no longer ignore. They cannot be left to those who own and run shipping companies.

Over the years, naval architecture has been an honourable profession. The members of the profession have been concerned with safety and they have applied themselves to enhancing it with diligence and sincerity. Vessels that go to sea must be considered safe, but I am not suggesting that an unsinkable vessel can be designed. The Titanic was considered to be unsinkable until it hit an iceberg. The Bismark was unsinkable until it was caught in a Norwegian fjord. In the foreseeable future, we shall not see an unsinkable ship.

Instead, we must consider what is avoidable and what is not. There is little that we can do about unavoidable accidents. However, when avoidable marine disasters occur, we must examine the Government's legislative response. It is unfortunate that the Government have failed to intervene so far. Instead, they have allowed more and more deregulation to take place. This means that everything is left to market forces, including the safety of crews and passengers.

There is no doubt in my mind that roll-on, roll-off vessels are unsafe in every sense of the word. Those who design them come under pressure from the companies that build them. The vessels are built under the constraints of profit margins, commercial judgments and quick turn-rounds. Those are the main requirements that a designer has to fulfil.

Naval architects and their honourable profession are under pressure to design ships that will meet the standards of their owners, who do not regard as paramount the safety of the crew and the passengers. Their interests lie in profitability and commercial considerations generally.

Safety is a Government responsibility and the Government should intervene. They must understand that roll-on, roll-off vessels have to be modified and that future building must take into account their vulnerability and the possibility of further marine tragedies that will result in loss of life and injury to passengers and crews. If they fail to reach this understanding, none of us has any right, especially Conservative Members, to mouth condolences and shed tears for the families of the bereaved when marine tragedies take place. We must eliminate the cause of these disasters. If we fail to do that, we have no right to carry out a ritual in this place.

The Secretary of State has a clear responsibility to consider the arguments put forward in Committee and on Report. He should recognise that some matters are above commercial or profitable arguments. There is a point where so-called competition has to be viewed against the backdrop of what effect such a policy has on the safety of crews and passengers on United Kingdom vessels.

11.45 pm

Mr. Barry Field (Isle of Wight): The hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) mentioned the withdrawal of the breeches buoy equipment. Had she taken the trouble to consult the coastguard service, she would have realised that it agrees with its withdrawal. I am reliably informed that it has not saved lives in recent years and has been used in anger only once since 1981. The replacement cost of the equipment is about £250,000. Given the frequency with which the equipment is used, it is hardly an effective way to spend taxpayers' money. Indeed, the search and rescue service, especially that based in the north of Scotland, is now operated by the coastguard service.

When my right hon. Friend deals with the point raised by the hon. Lady, will he consider the retention of the 41 mm pistol and rocket with the floating head? It serves a useful purpose as it is a small arms weapon that fires a light line into the surf. It has been used on a number of occasions to rescue people inshore and to put a light line aboad inshore vessels and yachting craft.

Mrs. Ray Michie: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman did not quite hear what I said, which was that I had heard from the coastguard service, and not just from community councils. It voiced its concern about the withdrawal of that life-saving equipment.

Mr. Field: The professional coastguards in my constituency take the opposite view and welcome the withdrawal of that equipment because it has not been used frequently and does not represent good value for the taxpayers. The search and rescue helicopter service now provide the service that that outdated equipment used to provide.

Mr. Adley: I do not know whether my hon. Friend was present when I spoke——

Mr. Field: No, I was not.

Mr. Adley: In that case, I must inform my hon. Friend that the coastguard training centre is in my constituency, which is not too far from his. My constituents have clearly expressed the view that there was inadequate consultation about the withdrawal of the breeches buoy. There is by no means unanimity among the coastguards around the coast that it should be withdrawn. Its replacement by helicopter would consume such a large percentage of the budget of the coastguard service that it would be virtually incapable of providing a proper service. Perhaps my hon. Friend will join me in asking the Government to provide it with additional funds for the helicopter rescue service.

Mr. Field: I have actually witnessed the firing of the Lager rocket on the breeches buoy. The manufacturers, Schemuli, will only guarantee that rocket to fire into the wind at force 6 and below. Above that, they cannot guarantee that it will reach its destination. I am sure that my hon. Friend appreciates that the equipment is usually required in above a force 8 wind. The last time that it was used on the Isle of Wight in anger was in Sandown bay, when the wind was above force 8 and the rocket kept returning over the heads of the coastguards firing it. Eventually the crew were rescued by wading ashore the following morning.

[Mr. Field]

I do not believe that the equipment, which has a capability of slightly over half a mile, is relevant to the size of today's ships. In fact, if the large ships were to come ashore in a situation in which a breeches buoy would be required, I do not believe that that equipment would reach them today.

Dr. Godman: I rise in support of the new clauses and amendment (a). I refer first to the questions that have been asked of the Secretary of State about the stability of large vessels, especially ferries. Is his Department satisfied with the stability dynamics of small fishing vessels which have had shelter decks added to them after their construction? It seems to me that that raises some issues to which he should attend.

With regard to new clause 5(b), referring to discussions with representatives of other nations concerning safety at sea, I should like to ask the Secretary of State whether any account is paid to the deliberations of the European Community's joint committee into conditions in the sea fishing industry. Is it not the case that from time to time that committee debates issues relating to the occupational safety of fishermen?

I have a great deal of sympathy for the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond). I was privileged to be a sponsor of the Safety at Sea Act 1986 which was proposed by his predecessor, the then Mr. Albert McQuarrie, now Sir Albert.

If I can catch the attention of the Secretary of State, I should like to ask him a question concerning line 12 of that amendment. My question relates to the carriage of immersion suits on United Kingdom-registered fishing vessels. What progress has his Department made in that important respect? I remind him that the carriage of immersion suits, especially the latest, such as those used by French fishermen, can lead to the saving of lives.

I remind him also of the terrible tragedy that overtook a French trawler that foundered west of St. Kilda in February. He will recall that 27 men went over the side in something of a desperate hurry. My figures may be slightly inaccurate but I believe that about 13 of those men had the time in which to don their immersion suits. Their 13 or 14 colleagues did not have the time to put on their immersion suits and went over the side in shirts and trousers. The 13 men wearing immersion suits all survived immersion in the freezing water. Their comrades all died quite quickly, which was not surprising given the appalling weather conditions. I repeat that the men wearing the immersion suits survived.

The Secretary of State may contradict me, but I believe that French maritime law stipulates that no registered fishing vessel of a certain overall length and above may leave a French port without sufficient immersion suits for all the crew. Is that the case, or is it not? If that is the case for French fishermen, why should it not be the case for fishermen on United Kingdom-registered fishing vessels?

I remind the Secretary of State of the appalling tragedy that overtook the three Hull trawlers in 1968, when 59 men died and one survived—the mate of the Ross Cleveland, Harry Eddom. He was the only man wearing an immersion suit, which he had purchased himself. I do not say that all the other men would have survived the appalling conditions off north-west Iceland in February 1968, but Harry Eddom went over the side in an inflatable dinghy with two comrades from the crew of his vessel. They, dressed only in vests and trousers, died quickly. Harry Eddom survived that appalling experience for several hours.

What is the likelihood of a similar instruction, which the French industry now accepts without question, being given to the United Kingdom fishing industry? I am not referring to the small vessels—the creel vessels—that one finds in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Western Isles (Mr. Macdonald). But even boats with two or three crew members should carry immersion suits. That view does not make me popular with fishermen, whether at Scarborough, Whitby or Barrow, but despite the anger that I have aroused by calling for the carriage of immersion suits, I stand by that demand. I moved an amendment to Mr. McQuarrie's Bill, but I withdrew it rather than damage the interests of the Bill. I genuinely believe that some fishermen would be alive today had their vessels carried immersion suits.

Despite the opposition of some fishermen, the Secretary of State must introduce such an instruction. I think I am right to say that it does not require legislation. Such an instruction could be issued to the industry by way of the fishing vessel safety rules. The Secretary of State and his officials must stop pussyfooting round. The instruction must be given to the industry. I know the father of a Scottish fisherman who was drowned, who is now a keen advocate of immersion suits. It is a disgrace that Ministers duck that unpopular decision.

Finally, may I refer to the financial assistance which the catching sector of the industry demands, rightly, that the Government give to meet statutory training requirements? We have heard of the peremptory way, as the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) described it, in which Lord Brabazon treated Bob Allan, the chief executive, and Willie Hay, the president, of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation. Similar treatment was meted out to senior members of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations.

The United Kingdom leads other maritime nations in the training of fishermen. It has a good record. The implementation of the training was not welcomed by many fishermen, especially in the inshore sector among share fishermen, but now they are stout defenders of training——

Mr. Aitken: Oh, come on!

Dr. Godman: I shall ignore the malicious comment of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken). This is an important issue for fishermen, and we should be debating it in prime time. He offers his sedentary intervention with his characteristic mixture of dim-wittedness and exhuberant malice.

We are discussing extremely important issues. Financial assistance should be given for the training of fisherman, and fishing vessels should carry immersion suits for their crews.

12 midnight

Mr. Macdonald: I should like to lend my support to the new clauses and amendment (a).

New clause 13 relates to safety at sea for fishing vessels and fishermen. I share the dismay of the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) at the attitude of the Under-Secretary of State to the reasonable request from

the Scottish Fishing Federation to meet and discuss safety at sea and the implementation of the McQuarrie Act. It is disturbing that the Government would not agree to discuss the matter.

I understand that the Government's attitude is that the McQuarrie Act started as a private Member's Bill and that therefore they do not take any responsibility for it. But it is part of the law of the land. The Government cannot simply wash their hands of the Act's financial implications for the fishing industry, especially the small-scale fishermen in my constituency who are already hard hit by other Government impositions, such as lighthouse dues. It is asking too much to expect fishermen to bear the entire cost of the safety at sea legislation.

Mr. Salmond: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the impasse that has been reached regarding the implementation of the safety at sea training provisions is a direct result of the Government's refusal to offer any public assistance to the industry?

Mr. Macdonald: That is true.

The fishing industry cannot be expected to bear the costs entirely on its shoulders; the Government must step in. The McQuarrie Act is the law of the land and the Government have a duty to implement that law.

When the Secretary of State replies, I hope that he does not repeat the arguments made in Committee—that the ro-ro ferries are entirely safe so long as they do not collide with another ship or sail with the bow doors open. One must distinguish between the immediate cause of accidents that have befallen ro-ro ferries and the factors that have contributed to the gravity of such accidents once they have occurred.

A parallel is presented by inflammable foam furniture. I do not seek to make such a parallel in a light-hearted sense. The Government neglected to solve that problem before it was too late, with similar tragic consequences. They have maintained that such furniture is perfectly safe so long as no one drops a match on it. That is exactly the attitude that the Government have adopted to ro-ro ferries: they are safe so long as they are not involved in an accident. When such accidents occur, the very nature of ro-ro ferries makes those accidents much worse than they would be otherwise.

This month, the Royal Institute of Naval Architects said that ro-ro ferries are

"unacceptably vulnerable in that there is a likelihood of rapid capsize"

once an accident occurs.

In 1983, the Norwegian classification organisation reported that of 243 ro-ro vessels involved in accidents at sea over a 20-year period, 60 per cent. had sunk in less than 10 minutes. That supports our point that the very design of such vessels is unacceptably unsafe. It is not good enough for the Secretary of State to say that if they are not involved in accidents they are safe. They are involved in accidents, particularly in areas such as the English Channel, which is full of shipping.

Ro-ro ferries must be judged not only by how well they sail when nothing happens to them, but by how well they respond in accidents, which are inevitable in waterways such as the Channel.

Mr. Channon: This has been an extremely important debate. I recognise that the issue of safety—of ro-ro vessels and in other areas—is of deep concern to all hon. Members. So much has been clear from the wide-ranging debate.

I could speak for about an hour on this issue, but I have a feeling that that not might not be appropriate now. I shall try to deal with the essential points that have been raised; if I omit any, I guarantee that I shall carefully study hon. Members' speeches in *Hansard* and write to them.

Before I come to the main issue in the debate—the safety of ro-ro vessels—I want to speak about two other important matters. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) and others raised the subject of the coastguard. I shall examine everything he said about that. I share his admiration for the coastguards, and anyone who knows anything of their work will know that they are a wonderful body of men who do the country a great service. I assure my hon. Friend that if I thought there was any question of endangering safety with any of our new measures, I would not have authorised them.

I have already been in touch with my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) about this matter. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch can be assured that I shall examine the points he raised about his constituency.

The figures given me about breeches buoys bear out what my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) said: they have been used only twice in the past five years. I shall write to other hon. Members and to the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mrs. Michie) about this. The hon. Lady spoke about the difficulties created by the remoteness of her constituency. I hope I shall be able to convince her, as we are convinced, that all our proposed measures for the coastguard represent an improvement, not a deterioration. If I had not thought that, I should not have agreed to the proposals.

A quick word about the training of fishermen, about which the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) and other hon. Members spoke. The proposal that the Government should take powers to provide financial assistance towards the training of fishermen was discussed in Committee. The proposals for assistance in the Bill are born of the Government's concern at the sharp decline in the number of merchant seamen being trained and the implications which that has for the number of seafarers likely to be available for service in future in an emergency.

There are already a number of different sources of assistance available for training fishermen—for example, the Sea Fish Industry Authority currently spends about £800,000 a year on training. I would outline some of the other contributions to training to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan, but I am sure he knows them well. It was fair enough for him to say that, at the time the Safety At Sea Act 1986 was passed. The Government made it quite clear that the cost of safety training introduced as a result of the Act would have to be met by the industry and not by the taxpayer, and that the Government would not introduce any new regulations unless there was a prior undertaking from the industry that it would meet the cost of the new requirements. That is not, therefore, a great surprise to the industry.

There is still some disagreement in the industry about the scope and content of new training requirements. It is difficult to deal with this until we know the industry's agreed view, and until the industry is in a position to give the necessary undertakings on finance. I undertake to

[Mr. Channon]

consult my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, who are primarily responsible for fishing matters. I shall make sure that their attention is drawn to the remarks of the hon. Gentleman and of other hon. Members who have spoken about this issue.

Mr. Salmond: Total funding of the mandatory safety requirements under the Safety at Sea Act 1986 would be only about £250,000 a year. In the context of the importance of this matter, does the Minister not feel that funding at this level would be appropriate?

Mr. Channon: I note what the hon. Gentleman says, but as I said a few moments ago, and as he said in his speech, the Government's position was made perfectly clear about the Safety at Sea Act 1986. Nothing has changed about that point of principle. I shall draw to the attention of my right hon. Friend and my right hon. and learned Friend what the hon. Gentleman has said about the costs and ensure that the point is carefully studied. I cannot go further than that tonight.

I should like now to deal with the important question of safety and ro-ro ferries. I entirely agree with what the hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) said about the importance of the issue and the absolute necessity for it to be taken seriously. I am aware of the views held by all hon. Members about the appalling tragedy of Zeebrugge. I do not think that that is a matter of controversy between us—at least, I hope it is not.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden) asked for more Government intervention. With respect, I have been more interventionist during my few months on this front than practically any other Minister in the history of dealing with these matters. I have here a long list of the measures that we have already taken in respect of ferry safety. The list mentions indicator lights, boarding cards, change in the law, draught gauges, loading computers, reinclining and other matters. I shall not read out all of them because hon. Members are aware of them and many answers have been given in the House about this matter. There are also legal requirements on shipowners and managers and others to exercise due diligence and to take responsible steps to ensure safe operation.

Hon. Members asked about inherent stability and the fundamental design of ro-ro ferries. Two major accidents have befallen British registered passenger ro-ro ships since the mid-1950s. They involved the European Gateway and the Herald of Free Enterprise. I think that it is common ground that both accidents resulted not from the design of the ships but from the way in which they were operated.

Mr. Terry Fields: Rubbish.

Mr. Channon: I am surprised that the hon. Member will not accept that point.

It is clear that the Herald of Free Enterprise sank because the bow doors were left open. However, that is not to say that substantial improvement in the design of ro-ro ferries is not possible. In response to Mr. Justice Sheen's report on the Herald of Free Enterprise, a ro-ro research steering committee was set up in my Department under the Surveyor-General. It consists of six qualified naval architects, including the immediate past president of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects, Professor Caldwell. I have made available more money for research over a three-year period.

Work has so far been done to assess improved standards of residual stability of passenger ships and we shall put that to the International Maritime Organisation next month. We have a project on risk analysis, and some possible design improvements must be considered. For example, longitudinal and transverse bulkheads on the vehicle deck, raising the vehicle deck or adopting unconventional deck arrangements, sponsons and improved water dumping arrangements are being assessed. I shall place a note describing the programme in the Libraries of both Houses.

I have had meetings with all those involved and I understand the views of the general council of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects. My noble Friend had a meeting with the institute earlier this month and there was a great deal of common ground. I think that the only difference between us relates to the perception of the council that technology for preventing capsizes can be put into effect immediately.

There must be a period of assessment. The institute has identified five possible improvements and all five are part of my Department's programme. We have to assess the feasability of these and of other approaches and take rational decisions about which, if any, of the options should be chosen. It would be quite wrong for me to say that they have to be chosen before proper research has taken place.

Mr. Terry Fields: Will the Minister give way?

Mr. Channon: I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman, but I know that the House wants to get on.

Mr. Fields: The Secretary of State said that all this takes time. Lord Justice Sheen said in his report that the Department of Transport had not acted since the European Gateway disaster in 1983. Why has the Secretary of State done nothing about that?

12.15 am

Mr. Channon: That is not so. I could weary the House, if hon. Members were sufficiently interested, with all that has been done since that incident in 1983. Mr. Justice Sheen made very few criticisms of the Department. The hon. Gentleman is misleading the House when he says that the Department was much criticised in the Sheen report. To save time, I shall write to the hon. Gentleman about those important points.

The Government's research programme into fundamental design improvements is similar to the suggestions of the Royal Institute of Naval Architects. I hope that we shall have some results from that research by the end of the year and we shall then have to decide whether it is necessary to use models. The research will go ahead with all urgency and I hope that it will be completed by the end of the year, except possibly for model tests. We shall then review the matter and discuss it with other European Governments.

From time to time, hon. Members say that, if ro-ro ferries have a hole in them, they are in great danger. Of course they are in some danger, but ro-ro ferries are like other ships in that they have to be able to take the so-called prescribed level of damage. That means that they have to be designed to take a gash in the hull, extending above and

below the water line for one tenth of the length of the ship, without capsizing or sinking. Much work has therefore already been done.

Of course, if more severe damage occurs, the ship may capsize or sink, but, with steady improvements in design, we can achieve better survivability. That has been the aim of the Government's research programme and of work in the International Maritime Organisation and other bodies in recent years.

We must put the matter in perspective and make it clear to the House that we are already carrying out a fundamental programme of research into all the points raised by the Royal Institute of Naval Architects and by hon. Members tonight. I should like to assure the House that the Department takes the matter with the utmost seriousness. I am sure that the House will take a continuing interest in the matter, and I shall keep it in touch with our progress.

The Department will set up a marine investigation branch as soon as the Bill is enacted. I shall ensure that it produces an annual report, which will be laid before the House. The House will decide whether it chooses to debate the report.

I cannot accept the new clause because it goes far further than would be reasonable. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) will accept that there are many technical points wrong with the clause. For example, it would be an extremely unusual concept to require an affirmative resolution for the report, but the House will be able to debate the report if it wishes. I shall initiate a report and place a copy in the Library. I am carrying out the fundamental research that the House wants.

In the light of that, I hope that the House will not press the amendment to a Division. If it does, I shall have to ask my hon. Friends to vote against it.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: The Secretary of State tells us that the new clause contains extraordinary measures, but we are dealing with extraordinary matters—the safety of people at sea, in the light of the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, and, in the long term, the question of operational safety at sea.

My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Garston (Mr. Loyden) said that, in his opinion, the Opposition were being a little modest in putting forward these minimal demands. Many of the measures that we are seeking do not require primary legislation in the form of a Bill, but they do require the Government's concentration on these issues. That is why it is important to ensure that safety is constantly at the top of the political agenda.

Secondary legislation can be formulated in Committee on a regular basis. That would include, for example, limitation on hours of work at sea and adequate structural changes to ro-ro ferries. All that can be done by secondary legislation. There is no limitation on the Government doing that. We want to put safety firmly on the political agenda to make sure that no Government, and particularly this Government with their disastrous record on safety, can avoid the political consequences.

Mr. Loyden: I was not criticising my hon. Friends who are Front-Bench spokesmen, because I know the strain under which they work. I was merely pointing out that the demands that are being made to the Secretary of State are limited by what we can extract from him.

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend raises an important point about what we can extract from the Government. Therefore, it is a matter of great regret that the Secretary of State has not accepted the need for a continuing debate on safety. The right hon. Gentleman is always vociferous with claims that the Department and the Government insist on the primacy of safety, but his deeds are few. The progress that he claimed was made before the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise was in direct contradiction to the actions and activities of the Department in the years before that event.

My hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) drew attention to certain criticisms. Whatever the Secretary of State may say about this, Lord Justice Sheen criticised his Department during the inquiry into the sinking of the European Gateway. As recently as March last year, a couple of weeks after the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, the then Secretary of State answered a question about the official inquiry into the capsize of the European Gateway in 1982. He said:

> "These recommendations have been implemented for all new ships and virtually implemented or are being discussed internationally for existing ships." — [*Official Report*, 19 March 1987, Vol. 112, c. *568*.]

Five years after the sinking of the European Gateway, the matter was being discussed only with regard to older ships. For these matters to go through the Secretary of State's research think tank and then to be discussed in the international forum is not good enough. It is also not good enough that the marine survey department was constantly cut by his predecessors so that they could make savings.

Mr. Barry Field: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that, since the terrible sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, all the offshore ferries working from United Kingdom ports under the United Kingdom flag have been required to rework stability characteristics as a result of the directive from the Department of Transport?

Mr. Lloyd: The hon. Gentleman may be surprised to hear me say that I was fully aware of that, but that does not stop criticism of these ferries by reputable organisations such as the Nautical Institute and the Royal Institute of Naval Architects, which are firmly of the opinion that even these changes of calculations are not sufficient. These recalculations had to be made because of the way in which these ferries were being maloperated by the operators. Even with those recalculations, reputable bodies and experts said that the extent of the instability of the ferries was unacceptable in terms of protection of human lives and safety at sea.

The Secretary of State says that there is continuing research, but that is not satisfactory when there have been reports from expert bodies that things can be done now. Jesse Jackson recently said that if one were in barracuda waters, one would not turn round to ask for a research programme to look into the problem—one would act. The Secretary of State and the Department have failed to act on this issue. That is a major condemnation of the way in which the Government tackle problems.

The Government are irresponsible when it comes to safety, and they have been culpable. Ministers may shake their heads in disagreement, but in recent replies to questions they could not tell me how often roll-on/roll-off ferries were inspected at sea or in port before the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise. They did not have records available; they did not know what inspections had

[Mr. Lloyd]

been conducted. Yet the Government claim that they have a great record on safety and that they are concerned about what happens at sea.

They have given the lie to their claims about safety in answer to parliamentary question after parliamentary question. For example, a written answer from the Minister this week showed that the Herald of Free Enterprise was never inspected while at sea. We know why the ferry sank. The Secretary of State was right, that the primary cause was operational failure. Yet not once during the ship's life did the marine surveyor's department attempt to find out what the ship was like under operational circumstances. It is true that it was inspected in port, but in port there was no way of knowing whether the bow doors would or would not be closed in a routine or non-routine fashion. The Government simply did not make the necessary surveyors available to undertake this important work. That is the record of a Government who claim that they care about safety.

The Secretary of State is right to say that, since the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, there has been a massive turnround. It would have been fundamentally morally derelict had there not been a rethink. The failure of the Department to rethink matters following the sinking would have shown not only contempt before the tragedy but indifference after it. I will say one thing for the Secretary of State: I do not think that he views human suffering with indifference. Nevertheless, some of the practice that built up in his Department in the past quite simply showed indifference.

The hon. Member for Thanet (Mr. Aitken) made a very reasonable speech. He questioned whether adequate consideration had been given in the present dispute at Dover to ferry manning levels and wondered whether fatigue might be a problem. The hon. Gentleman suggested that seamen might now be operating 72-hour shifts. The reality is a little different. In some cases, they will be operating 168-hour shifts for a period of two weeks with a one-week rest period at the end of it. I submit that that represents a level of employee commitment above and beyond anything that would be accepted in any shore-based job. That will lead to loss of performance, and ultimately a serious risk of tragedy.

While on the subject of fatigue, let me cite the schedule of one chief officer. We had a debate in Committee about the Government's intentions to regulate hours of work. I have information from the schedule of a chief officer on board a very large crude oil carrier—a carrier weighing 270,000 tonnes. Of a total working period of 228 hours, the chief officer concerned worked 176 hours. He had 52 hours rest, including four periods of seven hours each, which were the longest rest periods that he had.

To ask people to work such schedules is totally unacceptable, yet when I raised the matter in Committee, the Minister said that it was not the time to legislate. When he was kind enough to respond by letter to the same point, he said:

"as you know, hours of work for seafarers are not specifically regulated at present. My Department did issue for comment in 1982 draft regulations which would have established detailed duty and rest requirements for watchkeepers. There were objections to these proposals (including some from the unions) and they would not as drafted have applied to ferries (for which alternative arrangements were proposed). We have not abandoned the draft regulations and will continue to keep them under consideration."

Four years after the draft regulations appeared, we still have chief officers, who do a very important, very responsible job with serious implications for safety, undertaking a 228-hour working period with 176 hours of active service. A Government who will not legislate to prevent that are irresponsible in the extreme.

The Secretary of State had an exchange of correspondence with Kerry St. Johnston, the president of the General Council of British Shipping, who asked what the Government intended to do about the cost of modifying or phasing out ro-ro ferries if it proved necessary. The Secretary of State replied:

"Perhaps this question, too, is premature until we know what is involved. But I think I would be misleading you if I were to suggest that there was a chance of the Government paying for this. It is the practice, throughout industry and the transport industry in particular, that industrialists and operators themselves must pay the cost of meeting the Government's safety requirements. I see no prospect of departing from this principle in this particular case."

The Secretary of State may take some comfort from my saying that when companies such as P and O are making vast profits, they canot come to the Government with a begging bowl and say that the future of their operations will be jeopardised if the Government do not stump up the money. If, however, the Secretary of State is saying that the Government are not prepared to pay anything to ensure safety at sea, their culpability of the past is multiplied.

We want the new clause because, in the past, progress on safety at sea has been made only after tragedy at sea. We want to establish a vehicle that will enable us to debate safety rationally and without loss of life. It is the Secretary of State and the Government who are not prepared to do that. They are therefore not prepared to guarantee the safety of the travelling public and those who work at sea.

12.30 am

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): I know that the House wants to come to a conclusion on this matter—I shall not keep it for long.

I came to the Chamber to listen to the debate because, just over one year ago, a most appalling tragedy affected the maritime activity of the nation. It was a source of horror to our European neighbours and no doubt it made world news. It was but chance that the ship did not take less water rather less quickly and go down a mile or two further on in deeper water. Had that happened, there would have been an even greater outcry and it might have been recorded in history as the equivalent—perhaps it is, psychologically—of the Titanic, which still grips the imagination.

As a consumer, I have been disappointed in the debate. This nation is a maritime nation, or it ought to be. We are debating late at night, with a hurried and inadequate reply from the Secretary of State, a matter of supreme importance to the safety of our citizens and the confidence of those who travel across the sea, who include many of us during the summer. I do not believe that the timing of the debate or the manner in which it has been conducted is commensurate with the importance of the topic and the role that the House should play in discussing serious affairs of the nation. I do not blame my hon. Friends or the Secretary of State, because he does not make the timetable.

The nation would expect us to have a much better and higher quality debate than we have had on this very important topic.

Mr. Adley: The hon. Gentleman has not been here long.

Mr. Spearing: I have been here most of the time.

Mr. Barry Field: Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

Mr. Spearing: No. I shall save the time of the House.

The basis of the debate is the age-old one of the adequacy of statute in relation to safety and operating or movement costs. That has been the theme of safety at sea from the time of Samuel Plimsoll. It is also the theme of similar problems, such as flights to and from London City airport and those at King's Cross. I know that the Secretary of State has considered all these problems with sympathy and would-be understanding. To some extent, the technical problems have overtaken him. They could have overtaken any other Secretary of State. I thank him for the courtesy and attention that he has paid. In his reply to this matter, however, he has not understood what I understand to be the fundamental problem.

It is known that the basic design of the vessels is not what it should be and that there is an inherent risk in he way in which they are designed, constructed and operated. If any Conservative Member—including the Ministers on the Front Bench — does not agree with that statement, I should be most grateful if he would rise and contradict what I have said.

It is no good the Secretary of State saying that he has set up a committee to carry out research into the whole problem. We know what the problem is. If there is to be research, it should be research into how that problem is to be solved in an international way. The Secretary of State's efforts must go into seeing how the known and inherent faults in the design of the vessels can be dealt with on an international basis and in such a way that there is no intervention or disequilibrium in the market. That would relate to the way in which Conservative Members think at the moment. As far as we know, there have been no signs of that. I do not believe that the Secretary of State, try as he might, has really understood the nub of the problem.

In conclusion, I express dissatisfaction with the way in which the debate has been conducted, its timing and in the degree to which Conservative Members—some of whom made good speeches — did not give safety at sea the importance due to it. I hope that the Government will arrange future debates on such matters at a time which is better for everyone, and that the Secretary of State will not be constrained and rushed in his reply. If we in Parliament do not take these matters as seriously as the nation does, the nation will not take Parliament as seriously as it ought.

Question put, That the clause be read a Second time:—

The House divided: Ayes 27, Noes 147.

Division No. 246] **[12.36 am**

AYES

Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*
Clay, Bob
Cryer, Bob
Cummings, John
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*
Ewing, Mrs Margaret *(Moray)*
Fields, Terry *(L'pool B G'n)*
Foster, Derek
Godman, Dr Norman A.
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Loyden, Eddie
McCartney, Ian
Macdonald, Calum A.
Michie, Bill *(Sheffield Heeley)*
Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Prescott, John
Salmond, Alex
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel
Taylor, Matthew *(Truro)*
Wallace, James
Wilson, Brian
Wise, Mrs Audrey

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Allen McKay and
Mr. Tony Banks.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Allason, Rupert
Amos, Alan
Arbuthnot, James
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Valley)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Bowis, John
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brazier, Julian
Bright, Graham
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*
Burns, Simon
Carrington, Matthew
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chope, Christopher
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*
Cope, John
Cran, James
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Curry, David
Davies, Q. *(Staml'd & Spald'g)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*
Day, Stephen
Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
Dunn, Bob
Durant, Tony
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Tony
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
French, Douglas
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gill, Christopher
Glyn, Dr Alan
Grant, Sir Anthony *(CambsSW)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn
Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayward, Robert
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Hughes, Robert G. *(Harrow W)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunter, Andrew
King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
King, Rt Hon Tom *(Bridgwater)*
Knapman, Roger
Knight, Greg *(Derby North)*
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Maclean, David
McLoughlin, Patrick
Mans, Keith
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal
Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Moss, Malcolm
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Page, Richard
Patten, Chris *(Bath)*
Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Redwood, John
Renton, Tim
Riddick, Graham
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Tom
Sainsbury, Hon Tim
Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael
Stewart, Andy *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Summerson, Hugo
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side North)*
Waller, Gary
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen
Whitney, Ray
Widdecombe, Ann
Wilkinson, John
Wilshire, David
Wolfson, Mark

Wood, Timothy

Mr. Mark Lennox-Boyd and Mr. Kenneth Carlisle

Tellers for the Noes

Question accordingly negatived.

New clause 12

LICENSING OF FERRY SERVICES

"The Secretary of State shall have power to introduce regulations to require ferry operators plying to and from the United Kingdom ports to be licensed in accordance with such terms and conditions as he may from time to time lay down.".—*[Mr. Adley.]*

Brought up, and read the First time.

Mr. Adley: I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

I am very conscious that, at this late hour, my hon. Friends, at least, will expect me to be brief, and to try not to repeat any of the arguments already advanced on other clauses.

I tabled the new clause because I feel that the threat of prosecution as outlined in the Bill provides insufficient inducement for the involvement of senior management in ferry safety. I believe that, with a system of licensing, the threat of loss of licence by a major ferry operator would give a far greater guarantee of safety.

The new clause would merely give the Secretary of State powers — along with a possibility for involving the Treasury—to charge substantial fees for the granting of such a licence. I hope that new clause 1, tabled by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, will be considered by the Government as a precedent for introducing a full licensing system.

Let me read two sentences from the report of the Sheen inquiry into the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster:

"The Court has not heard sufficient evidence to express any firm view upon it, but is conscious that the standards in many other industries have been improved by licensing. The court draws attention to this suggestion and expresses the hope that serious consideration will be given to it."

That is my earnest hope too, and I cannot understand—perhaps my right hon. Friend will enlighten me—why it is considered necessary to license hovercraft and aircraft, but not ferries.

I understand that heretofore the Department's view has been that, as licensing is an international matter, it would be difficult to introduce a licensing system. I cannot accept that argument. International air service agreements show that bilateral licensing is the norm in that mode of transport. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I will be boarding an aeroplane at Gatwick in a few hours to take us to Toulouse, and neither he nor I would wish to contemplate the proposition of an inadequate system of licensing of any aircraft on which we shall be travelling.

The Herald of Free Enterprise disaster was one of the first magnitude. It was an example of gross negligence, but it was an accident. On the other hand, the Horsa affair of Sealink, which attracted perhaps a little less publicity, was in many ways a considerably worse example of unacceptable behaviour by a ferry company, although mercifully there was no loss of life. There was nothing less than a deliberate and wilful decision to disregard safety for profit. The crime was compounded by a farrago of lies about the event which was put out in Sealink's press releases.

I shall not weary the House with quotations from letters that I received at the time from passengers on the Horsa. I shall merely say that the Horsa affair gave a new meaning to "flexilink". In terms of Sealink, we can think of flexiboats with bulging sides, designed to enable as many passengers as possible to cram on regardless of safety. Mr. Sherwood of Sealink is, in my view, nothing more than a spiv. He, singlehandedly, has dragged down the standard of management of the United Kingdom shipping industry. That is one of the reasons why many of us feel that a licensing system is becoming essential.

I understand that there are views about the safety of roll-on/roll-off vessels and doubts as to whether they are ships in the conventional sense. Sir Jeffrey Sterling was quoted in *Lloyd's List* of 19 December 1987. He said:

"We are not in shipping. Shipping is not a business, it is a method."

He described P and O as being in the

"transport of freight and human beings."

That is an unusual view of the industry. If Sir Jeffrey is in the method business, not the shipping business, that lends additional strength to my call for a licensing system.

I have received a great deal of worrying correspondence. Standards of management in the shipping industry are far too low and the introduction of a licensing system would be a powerful sanction. It would provide the Secretary of State, the Government, the House and the British people with a powerful additional weapon in the armoury of safety enforcement.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: I wish to associate the Opposition with the remarks of the hon. Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley). The hon. Gentleman rightly drew the attention of the House to the Horsa, and I remember him saying at the time of that disaster that there should be a method of licensing and revocation of licences. I remember also that I supported that concept. In any equivalent form of international transport, it is inconceivable that there would be no form of licensing. If some of the practices that have been revealed over the past 12 months in the shipping industry had been found to take place in the aviation industry, for example, licences would have been revoked.

It has been said, although I do not necessarily agree, that if we institute some form of safety regime specifically for British-based or owned ferries, that could result in an unfair competitive disadvantage to British ferries and an advantage to foreign ferries. If there were a system of licensing, anyone who travelled to United Kingdom ports would be subject to that authority and to the potential revocation of his licence. There is much to recommend such regulation, and I shall listen with considerable interest to the Minister's response. I urge him seriously to consider accepting that helpful suggestion.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Government have given very careful consideration to this proposal, but have concluded that there would be no great benefits from, and quite severe problems in, introducing such a system.

Perhaps the most appealing argument is by analogy with other modes of transport — public service vehicle operation or, especially, aviation. My hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) mentioned that. The analogy does not really stand up to close examination. Licensing of air operators is used, first, as a means of economic regulation. That does not apply in shipping where, thankfully, there is an open market.

Secondly, it is used to ensure that the operator has the appropriate technical facilities and personnel to ensure that his aircraft can be maintained and operated safely. That is not really a problem with ships, whose safety does not depend, crucially, on the reliability of masses of technically complex equipment, and there is no evidence that the reliability of such equipment is a major factor in shipping accidents. Safety at sea depends much more, in fact, on the sensible and conscientious handling of the ship by its qualified officers and, up to a point, of its shore management. Thirdly, licensing of air and coach operators allows their financial standing to be checked, but that is not a significant factor in ferry operations.

The Herald families have suggested that a threat to withhold or suspend a licence might be a more effective deterrent against misbehaviour than a threat to prosecute, and my hon. Friend took a similar view. But that is really rather doubtful. Any Minister who sought to withhold a ship operator's licence would very quickly be taken to court for injunctive relief to be granted and the operator would continue to operate until the case against him was proved. In short, nothing less than criminal failings would allow a suspension to be upheld, and if criminality could be proved, prosecution would be available.

Clauses 29 and 30 provide for fines of £50,000 on summary convictions, two years in prison and unlimited fines on indictment. Clause 46 provides for the personal liability of the directors if they have consented to or connived at a breach. On the basis of that information, I do not think that the House would wish to accept the new clause.

I remind the House that shipping is an international business. To impose a licensing requirement, when one does not exist in other countries to which ferries sail, would simply be a further incentive to operators to flag out.

For those reasons, I cannot recommend the new clause to the House.

Mr. Adley: In view of what my hon. Friend has said and because of the lateness of the hour, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause 2

British ships

Mr. David Mitchell: I beg to move amendment No. 16, in page 2, line 15, at end insert—

'(aa) the ship is registered in the United Kingdom in pursuance of an Order in Council under section 80 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1906 (Government ships); or'.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Miss Betty Boothroyd): I understand that it will be for the convenience of the House if we also consider Government amendments Nos. 17, 18, 56, 7, 19 to 29, 44 to 48, 54, 49, 30, 31, 57, 51, 32 to 34, 15, and 35 to 38.

I am

Mr. Mitchell: All these amendments are technical and designed to clarify the operation of the Bill. I think that the House will find it perfectly acceptable to take them en bloc.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment made: No. 17, in page 2, line 15, at end insert—

'(ab) the ship is a fishing vessel within the meaning of Part II of the Act which is eligible to be registered under that Part of that Act by virtue of section 13 below, but—

(i) is excluded from registration under that Part of that Act by regulations made under section 12 below, and

(ii) is not registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom; or'. — *[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 4

Entitlement to registration under Part I of 1894 Act

Amendments made: No. 56, in page 4, line 2, at end insert—

'(5A) A ship shall, in accordance with section 12(2)(a) below, not be entitled to be registered if it is a fishing vessel within the meaning of Part II.'.

No. 57, in page 4, line 17 leave out from 'ships)' to end of line 19.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 5

Representative persons

Amendments made: No. 19, in page 5, line 9, leave out from 'authorised' to 'under' in line 10 and insert

', by virtue of any statutory provision, to be served for the purpose of the institution of, or otherwise in connection with, proceedings for an offence'.

No. 20, in page 5, line 12, leave out

'be treated as duly served on the owner'

and insert

',where the person to be served is the owner of a registered ship, be treated as duly served on him'.

No. 21, in page 5, line 19, leave out subsection (6). — *[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 6

Refusal of registration

Amendments made: No. 22, in page 5, line 42, leave out from 'notice,' to 'not' in line 45 and insert

'give to registrars of British ships generally a direction requiring them'.

No. 23, in page 6, line 3, leave out from 'may' to 'is' in line 5 and insert

'give to registrars of British ships generally a direction requiring them not to register the ship if he'. — *[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 7

Power of Secretary of State to direct removal from the register

Amendment made: No. 24, in page 6, line 13, leave out

'require the owner of the ship'

and insert

'served on—

(a) the owner of the ship, or

(b) any representative person for the time being appointed in relation to the ship, require that person'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Schedule 1

AMENDMENTS OF PART I OF MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT 1894

Amendments made: No. 2, in page 45, line 35, at end insert—

'" (vi) In the case of a ship which is for the time being registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom, a declaration that, if the ship is still so registered at the time when it becomes registered under this Part of this Act, he will take all reasonable steps to secure the termination of the ship's registration under the law of that country.'.

No. 43, in page 46, leave out lines 35 to 39 and insert—

'(i) for the words from "ceasing" to "every owner" substitute "in the event of such a ship—

(a) ceasing to be entitled to be registered (whether because a majority interest in the ship is no longer owned by persons qualified to be owners of British ships or for any other reason), or

(b) becoming registered otherwise than under this Part of this Act in the United Kingdom,

every registered owner", and

(ii) for the words from "book and" onwards substitute "and the registry of the ship shall terminate forthwith."';'.

No. 44, in page 47, line 1, leave out

'in the manner provided by subsection (1) of this section'.

No. 45, in page 47, line 8, leave out

'and in any such case'

and insert—

'(5) Where the registry of a ship terminates by reason of—

(a) any notice given in pursuance of subsection (4) of this section, or

(b) any direction given by the Secretary of State under section 7(5) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988 (power to direct removal from register in certain cases),'.

No. 46, in page 47, line 10, after 'notice' insert 'or direction'.

No. 47, in page 47, line 11, at end insert—

'(6) Where the registry of a ship terminates—

(a) under subsection (1) or (4) of this section, or

(b) as mentioned in subsection (5)(b) of this section,

the termination of its registry shall not affect any entry made in the register so far as relating to any undischarged registered mortgage, or any existing certificate of mortgage, of that ship or of any share in it.

(7) Subsection (6) of this section shall not apply to an entry in the register in a case where—

(a) the mortgage in question becomes registered under Part II of the Merchant Shipping Act 1988, or

(b) the registrar is satisfied that every person appearing on the register to be interested as a mortgagee under the mortgage in question has consented to the entry ceasing to have effect."'.

No. 3, in page 50, line 19, at end insert—

'(3A) The registrar of the former port of registry shall, on being notified by the registrar of the new port of registry of the grant of the new certificate of registry, terminate the registration of the ship in his register.'.

No. 4, in page 50, line 46, at end insert—

'(subject to subsection (4) of this section)'.

No. 5, in page 50, line 49, leave out

'(subject to subsection (4))'.

No. 6, in page 50, line 54, at end insert—

'(3A) The registrar of the new port of registry shall notify the registrar of the former port of registry of the grant of the new certificate of registry.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 12

SEPARATE REGISTRATION OF FISHING VESSELS

Amendment made: No. 58, in page 10, line 7, at end insert—

'(4A) Where a fishing vessel becomes registered under this Part at a time when it is already registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom, the owner of the vessel shall take all reasonable steps to secure the termination of the vessel's registration under the law of that country.

(4B) Any person who contravenes subsection (4A) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding the third level on the standard scale.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Schedule 2

REGISTRATION OF FISHING VESSELS: SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS

Amendment made: No. 18, in page 56, line 24, at end insert—

'Construction of references in other enactments to fishing vessels excluded from registration

8. References in any statutory provision (apart from section 2(1)(ab)) to fishing vessels excluded from registration by regulations under section 12 shall be construed as references to fishing vessels which, being eligible to be registered under this Part by virtue of section 13, are excluded from registration by such regulations (and are not registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom).'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 13

ELIGIBILITY FOR REGISTRATION AS BRITISH FISHING VESSEL

Amendments made: No. 30, in page 11, line 35, after 'means', insert '(a)'.

No. 31, in page 11, line 36, after 'Kingdom', insert—

', or

(b) a local authority in the United Kingdom'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Schedule 3

MORTGAGES OF REGISTERED FISHING VESSELS

Interpretation

Amendments made: No. 50, in page 58, line 3, leave out 'when the mortgage money has become'

and insert

'if the mortgage money or any part of it is'.

No. 51, in page 58, line 29, at end insert—

'Transfer of mortgages from one system of registration to another

9.—(1) Regulations may provide—

(a) for the transfer to the register of undischarged mortgages that have been registered under Part I of the 1894 Act and affect ships registered under that Part of that Act which become registered vessels otherwise than in pursuance of paragraph 4 of Schedule 2 to this Act; and

(b) for any provisions of this Part to have effect in relation to any such mortgages, or in relation to any mortgages transferred in pursuance of paragraph 4 of that Schedule, subject to such modifications as may be specified in the regulations.

(2) Regulations may also provide—

(a) for the transfer to registers kept under Part I of the 1894 Act of undischarged registered mortgages affecting registered vessels which become ships registered under that Part of that Act; and

(b) for any provisions of that Part of that Act to have effect in relation to any such mortgages subject to such modifications as may be specified in the regulations.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of sub-paragraphs (1) and (2)—

(a) regulations made by virtue of sub-paragraph (1) may make provision, in connection with the transfer of mortgages in pursuance of that sub-paragraph, for the transmission of information relating to such mortgages which is recorded in registers kept under Part I of the 1894 Act, and for the recording of such information in the register kept under this Part; and

(b) regulations made by virtue of sub-paragraph (2) may make corresponding provision, in connection with the transfer of mortgages in pursuance of that sub-paragraph, for the transmission and recording of information relating to such mortgages which is recorded in the register kept under this Part.

(4) In this paragraph "regulations" means regulations made under section 12.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 21

OFFENCES RELATING TO, AND LIABILITIES OF, UNREGISTERED FISHING VESSELS

Amendments made: No. 32, in page 16, line 15, at end insert—

'(2A) Subsection (1) also applies to any fishing vessel which (notwithstanding that it is not entitled to be so registered) is for the time being registered in the United Kingdom under Part I of the 1894 Act or section 5 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1983 (registration of small ships).'.

No. 33, in page 16, line 26, leave out 'registered under this Part' and insert

'a British ship and is not registered under the law of any country outside the United Kingdom'.

No. 34, in page 16, line 27, leave out 'so registered' and insert 'registered under this Part'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Clause 29

OWNER AND MASTER LIABLE IN RESPECT OF DANGEROUSLY UNSAFE SHIP

Amendments made: No. 15, in page 22, line 11, after 'ought', insert 'reasonably'.

No. 35, in page 22, line 35, leave out from 'sea' to end of line 36 and insert

'shall, in a case where the service for which a ship is intended consists of going on voyages or excursions that do not involve going to sea, be construed as a reference to going on such a voyage or excursion.'.—*[Mr. Channon.]*

Mr. Terry Fields: I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 22, line 41, at end insert

'The provisions of this section and of sections 30 and 31 below shall apply to all cases where, after 1st January 1987, investigators of marine accidents appointed by the Secretary of State have found owners or masters liable as specified in those sections'.

I am grateful to the tenth of our parliamentary number who have supported this amendment, although they do not all appear on the Order Paper. I want to make it clear from the start that we are dealing with retrospective legislation. This is an important matter, and if I had not wanted to appear serious about it, I would not have tabled the amendment. I do not move the amendment vindictively. I know that I am not Sir Jeffrey Sterling or of his ilk, but I know people who have lost loved ones in the terrible disasters of the past 12 to 18 months, and I know people who are constantly in fear of their loved ones going to sea. Especially now, with the horror stories of the ro-ro ferries, I am conscious of the responsibility that we have.

I know that people will raise eyebrows and say that restrospective legislation is just not on, but in a brief that I have received from the Library, I note that the Acts of Parliament (Commencement) Act 1793 in no way prevents Parliament from making an Act retrospective if the intention to do so is apparent. The intention of this amendment to do so is apparent. It is stated:

"'It is obviously competent for the legislature, in its wisdom, to make the provisions of an Act of Parliament retrospective,' said Lord Ashbourne in *Smith* v. *Callander*[42] and 'No one denies,' said Dr. Lushington in *The Ironsides*,[43] 'the competency of the legislature to pass retrospective statutes if they think fit,[44] and many times they have done so.'"

On eight occasions since 1980, the Government have introduced retrospective legislation, such as the National Health Service (Invalid Direction) Act 1980, the Employment Act 1982, the London Regional Transport (Amendment) Act 1985, the Housing and Planning Act 1986, the Rate Support Grants Act 1986, the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act 1987, the Local Government Finance Act 1987, and the Local Government Finance Bill 1987-88, clause 113.

Those are eight instances of the Government using retrospective legislation. I am seeking to use retrospective legislation tonight on behalf of people who lost members of their families in the Zeebrugge disaster. As my amendment states, it goes back to 1 January 1987, which would take in the Zeebrugge disaster, and take those people within the province of other sections of the Bill to which we have already agreed tonight.

In Committee we tried to differentiate between the master's liability and that of the owners, but our choice has been limited because of the stonewalling of the Government. To prove that this legislation is necessary, the amendment states:

"the investigators of marine accidents appointed by the Secretary of State have found owners or masters liable as specified in those sections."

We are talking about criminal negligence, unsafe practices of the vessels and allowing unsafe vessels to go to sea. It is still the contention of Opposition Members —despite what the Minister, the Secretary of State and others have said—that the ro-ro ferries are inherently unstable. In that respect, the Sheen report states:

"'But a full investigation into the circumstances of the disaster leads inexorably to the conclusion that the underlying or cardinal faults lay higher up in the Company"—

not with the lower ranks of the company, but higher up.

"The Board of Directors did not appreciate their responsibility for the safe management of their ships. They did not apply their minds to the question: What orders should be given for the safety of our ships? The directors did not have any proper comprehension of what their duties were. There appears to have been a lack of thought about the way in which the *HERALD* ought to have been organised for the Dover/Zeebrugge run. All concerned in management, from the members of the Board of Directors down to the junior superintendents, were guilty of fault in that all must be regarded as sharing responsibility for the failure of management. From top to bottom the body corporate was infected with the disease of sloppiness.

The failure on the part of the shore management to give proper and clear directions was a contributory cause of the disaster. This is a serious finding which must be explained in some detail."

On 18 March 1986, there was a meeting between senior masters and management, at which Mr. Develin took the

[Mr. Terry Fields]

chair. One topic discussed was the recognition of the chief officer as head of department and the roles of the maintenance master and chief officer. Mr. Develin said that, although he was still considering writing definitions of the different roles, he thought that

"it was more preferable not to define the roles but to allow them to evolve."

Mr. Justice Sheen said:

"It was the failure to give clear orders about the duties of the Officers on the Zeebrugge run which contributed so greatly to the causes of this disaster . . . The Board of Directors must accept a heavy responsibility for their lamentable lack of directions. Individually and collectively they lacked a sense of responsibility. This left what Mr. Owen so aptly described as, 'a vacuum at the centre' . . . It is also right to say that the Company has recognised its causative faults. On the eighth day of this Investigation Mr. Clarke"—

he was a representative of the company—

"said 'Townsend Car Ferries recognise that long before the 6th March 1987 both their sea and shore staff should have given proper consideration to the adequacy of the whole system relating to the closing of doors on this class of ship with their clam doors.'"

The Guardian of 28 and 29 April, reporting from the inquiry, said that there were clear signs of the culpability of the company in its running of the ferry service and its inactivity in correcting some of the practices that had come to light during the previous decade.

I wish to deal with three factors. The first is the overloading with passengers, which is criminal negligence on the part of the company. It became apparent from the documents given in evidence to the inquiry that seven different masters had found that, from time to time, their ships were carrying passengers substantially in excess of the permitted number.

The documents revealed that the senior master of the Pride of Free Enterprise, Captain Blowers, sent a memorandum dated not 1987 or 1986 but 16 August 1982, to Mr. A. P. Young, the operations director, with a copy to Mr. Develin. The relevant passages of the memorandum state that on 28 July 1982 there were 250 passengers over the prescribed limit; on 6 August 1982, there were 40 passengers over the limit; on 8 August 1982, there were 100 passengers too many; and on 18 August 1982 there were 171 passengers too many.

That was reported consistently to the company. It consistently broke the law. The overloading of passengers and vehicles on the ferry contributed to the loss of the vessel. Year after year, reports were given to the company, but no action was taken. Through 1982, 1983 and 1984 the inadequacies of the system were reported to the company.

Matters reached such a stage that in 1986, an officer reporting on passenger numbers said:

"This total is way over the life-saving capacity of the vessel. The fine on the Master for this offence is £50,000 and probably confiscation of certificate. May I please know what steps the company intend to take to protect my career from the mistakes of this nature."

Everyone in the company knew about the overloading of passengers. It was part and parcel of the ethics of Townsend Thoresen, like a latter-day railway service in India, pushing the people on and making as much profit as possible no matter how great the risk to the passengers and crew.

In 1986, in reply to Captain Stoker, Mr. Young, for the company, said:

"I accept that the present method of obtaining the correct number of passengers boarding vessels is liable to error but I feel that everyone must accept that, whatever system is operated, there will always be the possibility of human error".

Reports continued to flood in in 1986 and 1987. Everyone was informing the company of what was wrong. At the end of the day, the court reluctantly had to conclude:

"Mr. Young made no proper or sincere effort to solve the problem. The Court takes a most serious view of the fact that so many of the Company's ferries were carrying an excessive number of passengers on so many occasions."

Townsend Thoresen and P and O stand condemned of overloading their vessels with passengers. We believe that the Sheen report suggests criminality on their part and Parliament has a responsibility to act on that.

Indicator lights would have given clear warning that the bow doors on the Herald of Free Enterprise were not closed. Indicator lights were not a new feature, but were part and parcel of an ongoing programme. As far back as 1983 people knew about the defect, but the company did nothing about it.

On 28 June 1985 Captain Blowers of the Pride sent a sensible memorandum to Mr. Develin of the company. The relevant part of it stated:

"In the hope that there might be one or two ideas worthy of consideration I am forwarding some points that have been suggested on this ship and with reference to any future new-building programme. Many of the items are mentioned because of the excessive amounts of maintenance, time and money spent on them."

He spoke about a mimic panel:

"There is no indication on the bridge as to whether the most important watertight doors are closed or not. That is the bow or stern doors. With the very short distance between the berth and the open sea on both sides of the channel this can be a problem if the operator is delayed or having problems with closing the doors. Indicator lights on the very excellent mimic panel could enable the bridge team to monitor the situation in such circumstances."

Since the disaster, the Secretary of State has come to the House and said that action has been taken in that regard. We applaud that, but the company knew about it since 1983 and did nothing about it. Therefore, in respect of the Herald of Free Enterprise, the company should be charged with criminal negligence.

On 9 October 1986, Captain de Ste Croix sent the following memorandum to the senior electrical officer:

"Another incident has occurred to remind me of my request of some time ago for bridge indication of the position of the bow and stern watertight doors. I still feel that although it is the duty of a crew member to check the position of the doors visually prior to proceeding to sea, it is so important to the safety of the ship that they are closed that we should have bridge indication."

The reports were sent in and passed round from one member of management to another. At the end of the day those reports came to nothing. Mr. Develin did not appreciate the importance of the reported incidents and dismissed them as exaggeration on the part of those officers and crew members who reported such inadequacies.

Another important consideration is ascertaining the draughts of the ships and their ballast. On the stability of the vessels, the Sheen report states:

"Mr. Develin did not appreciate that the stability of the Herald could be significantly affected if the ship was trimmed by the head. Mr. Develin is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects and has been a Government Marine Surveyor in Hong Kong. Accordingly he should have appreciated this. Whether the ship had sailed overloaded

before the 6th March 1987 is not known, but it seems likely . . . In subsequent answers Mr. Develin made it clear that he thought that every complaint was an exaggeration."

In reply to a further question about masters taking ships out in an unstable condition, Mr. Develin said:

"If he was that concerned he would not have sailed."

He washed his hands of responsibility despite requests, and information about the bad practices. He took no action and the company again stands condemned.

1.15 am

It is now necessary to go back in time briefly. In 1982 the passenger ferry European Gateway, which was also owned by the company, capsized after a collision off Harwich. Following that casualty, the company instituted an investigation into passenger safety. As a result of that investigation, on 10 February 1983, Captain Martin sent a report to Mr. Develin. That report was seen by Mr. Ayres. It begins with the words:

"The Company and ships' Masters could be considered negligent on the following points . . .

(a) the ship's draught is not read before sailing, and the draught entered into the Official Log Book is completely erroneous;

(b) It is not standard practice to inform the Master of his passenger figure before sailing.

(The written comment was 'system informs Master, who often does not agree the truth of the information.')

(c) The tonnage of cargo is not declared to the Master before sailing.

(d) Full speed is maintained in dense fog."

All those features were continually reported to the company but it did nothing about them. Of course, its inactivity over the years was shielded by the Government.

Mr. Ayres was subjected to 10 questions by the inquiry. The final one was:

"Would it be unfair of me to suggest that your investigation was pretty superficial?"

to which he replied:

"With hindsight it can be said."

"Mr. Ayres may be a competent Naval Architect,"

Mr. Justice Sheen said,

"but the Court formed the view that he did not carry out his managerial duties, whatever they may have been."

The report said that even the tragic disaster of the Gateway did not result in any immediate improvement. On 7 May 1987, Mr. A. P. Young sent a memorandum to Mr. A. Black, who is a director of P and O, in which he said:

"Shore loading personnel expect ships' officers to advise if actual ship sinkage is ahead of estimated cargo tonnages. At this stage, the loading personnel will decide the shut-off priorities."

In other words, the master is aboard his ship, passengers and vehicles are pouring on to it, the figures are being fiddled and the weight coming on is uncontrolled. The log is false, the amount of water on board unknown.

Later, the masters and those whom they represented applied to have an engine installed to pump out water from the ballast tanks, to make the ship more stable:

"Mr. Develin was asked whether he thought the suggestion made by Mr. Crone that a powerful pump should be installed was a good idea or a bad idea. He said that he did not think he gave it much thought after having decided that it was not a safety matter. He handed it over as a technical project to Mr. Ridley. In due course an estimate was obtained for the installation of a pump at a cost of £25,000. This cost was regarded by the Company as prohibitive".

The pump was needed because the ships are given such tight turnround times between ports. It is known that ferries go out to sea cutting into the water because of the excess ballast. With such a pump on board, they could have drained off the water from the ballast tanks quickly, but profits come before people's lives and again the company stands condemned for its inactivity.

Townsend Thoresen Car Ferries Ltd., at all levels from the board of directors down through managers and the marine department to junior superintendents, stands condemned in the Sheen report as criminally guilty. So I submit that the investigators of marine accidents appointed by the Secretary of State have found the owners of these vessels liable as specified in clauses 29, 30 and 31. If justice is to be done in the case of the 200 people who died on the Herald of Free Enterprise and for their families, who have just celebrated—if that is the word—the first anniversary of the deaths of their loved ones, we have a duty and responsibility to see it carried out.

As I have said, it is not unusual to introduce retrospective legislation. If the Government are sincere about righting the wrong that has been done in this case, they will support us by accepting the amendment and introducing retrospective legislation in respect of clauses 29, 30 and 31.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: I shall be brief. I have some sympathy for my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) on the issue that he raises. Like every hon. Member, I was clearly shocked not only by the manner of the sinking of the Herald and the human tragedy that that involved, but, by the comments that were made at the Sheen inquiry about which my hon. Friend has spoken. The company had almost no care whatever for the safety of those who were in its charge.

Prosecutions may be pending, but it is quite likely that those who were ultimately responsible — the senior managers of the company—are likely to escape penalty. That is particularly galling in the light of the letter written by P and O to those involved in the tragedy. The company advised them that they were not obliged to speak to the police who were inquiring into the whole affair and into whether criminal prosecutions were possible. Obviously, such prosecutions might have been against senior management in the company.

That letter was self-serving, and it is interesting to contrast it with the advice of the National Union of Seamen which has recently been pilloried for its actions. Its advice to its members was that they should co-operate with the police, and, if they wanted legal representation, the union would provide it. It is worth making the comparison between the two approaches.

It is on record how I have condemned the company for seeking to frustrate proper action by the police who were investigating the events leading up to the Herald disaster. For those reasons, it is difficult to resist the amendment. The traditional argument against it is that the House has an aversion to retrospective legislation, but during the lifetime of this Parliament the Government have passed such legislation, particularly against local government.

The Government have sought to act retrospectively and have brought in retrospective legislation. Where necessary, they have changed the rules in such a way as to make sure that what they intended is brought into line with reality. They did that by changing the law and the penalties in relation to local government in a way that has damaged the interests of my constituents both as ratepayers and as consumers of local government services. If they are prepared retrospectively to damage the interests of the people that I represent, who are generally quite poor, I can

[Mr. Tony Lloyd]

think of no reason why, on balance, retrospective legislation should not be used to deal with those whose contempt for people in their charge was such that ultimately it led to their deaths. For those reasons, the amendment has a great deal to commend it.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): Does my hon. Friend accept that the Government do not take a principled view against retrospective legislation? That is because they are, for example, introducing legislation of a retrospective nature to allow local authorities to charge administration fees against superannuation funds instead of against ratepayers. The instrument that will apply this will be retrospective to 1986, so the Government do not oppose retrospection in principle.

Mr. Lloyd: My hon. Friend makes a valid point which the Minister should take on board. It is almost certain that my hon. Friend has just destroyed the main thrust of the Minister's speech. The interesting point is that in this case my hon. Friend the Member for Broadgreen wants retrospection only to 1987. We are told that the Government are quite happy to refer matters back to 1986.

Mr. Wallace: I am following the hon. Gentleman's interesting argument. Does he recognise any distinction between retrospection in civil law and retrospection in criminal law?

Mr. Lloyd: I am sure that there is a very valuable point to be made about that. In some senses, retrospection in civil law has less to commend it than retrospection in criminal law. That may not be the answer that the hon. Gentleman wanted, but I am not sure whether this is a matter of absolute principle if the process of the court is at least to recognise a moral or an acceptable balance. As I am not a lawyer, I might be persuaded otherwise on another occasion. I do not think that I recognise any major difference. I hope that the Minister can satisfy the House in the context of my hon. Friend's remarks.

Mr. David Mitchell: I wish to make one brief point before I deal with the substance of the amendment. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) asserted that this type of ro-ro vessel is inherently unstable. It is not unstable, provided that it is watertight. It is important that the House should recognise that it is a different situation if one of those vessels, which, apart from this tragedy, have had a good safety record, goes to sea without the doors being closed and therefore is not watertight. It is a matter of the management of the vessel, but I shall not go into further detail now.

The amendment is not acceptable to the Government. It aims to tighten the criminal law retrospectively. That would be abhorrent in a democratic country, where it is a fundamental principle that people should be found guilty only under the criminal law as it applied when the offence was committed.

The hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) referred to restrospection, but none of the legislation to which he and the hon. Member for Broadgreen referred involves criminal acts. The amendment would seek to make that which was lawful at the time criminal, if applied retrospectively. The hon. Member for Bradford, South will realise that that makes a considerable difference to the case.

The hon. Member for Broadgreen read out large chunks from the Sheen report. All the matters in the report are now with the Director of Public Prosecutions, whose attention was drawn to the formal inquiry report by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last autumn.

There is a principle at stake here. I invite the House without any hesitation to reject the suggestion that we should apply the criminal law retrospectively.

Question put, That the amendment be made:—

The House divided: Ayes 11, Noes 126.

Division No. 247] **[1.27 am**

AYES

Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*	Salmond, Alex
Barnes, Harry *(Derbyshire NE)*	Skinner, Dennis
Cryer, Bob	Wise, Mrs Audrey
Cunliffe, Lawrence	
Davies, Ron *(Caerphilly)*	Tellers for the Ayes:
Loyden, Eddie	Mr. Bill Michie and
McKay, Allen *(Barnsley West)*	Mr. Terry Fields.
Prescott, John	

NOES

Alexander, Richard	Hargreaves, Ken *(Hyndburn)*
Amess, David	Haselhurst, Alan
Amos, Alan	Hayward, Robert
Arbuthnot, James	Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Arnold, Jacques *(Gravesham)*	Hunter, Andrew
Arnold, Tom *(Hazel Grove)*	King, Roger *(B'ham N'thfield)*
Ashby, David	Knapman, Roger
Atkinson, David	Lang, Ian
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*	Latham, Michael
Baldry, Tony	Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Batiste, Spencer	Lester, Jim *(Broxtowe)*
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony	Lightbown, David
Bennett, Nicholas *(Pembroke)*	Lilley, Peter
Biffen, Rt Hon John	Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Boscawen, Hon Robert	Lyell, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter	Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia	Maclean, David
Bowis, John	McLoughlin, Patrick
Brazier, Julian	Mans, Keith
Bright, Graham	Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon	Martin, David *(Portsmouth S)*
Brooke, Rt Hon Peter	Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Brown, Michael *(Brigg & Cl't's)*	Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Burns, Simon	Meyer, Sir Anthony
Campbell, Menzies *(Fife NE)*	Michie, Mrs Ray *(Arg'l & Bute)*
Carrington, Matthew	Miller, Hal
Cash, William	Mitchell, Andrew *(Gedling)*
Channon, Rt Hon Paul	Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Chope, Christopher	Morrison, Hon P *(Chester)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*	Moss, Malcolm
Coombs, Anthony *(Wyre F'rest)*	Nelson, Anthony
Cope, John	Neubert, Michael
Cran, James	Newton, Rt Hon Tony
Currie, Mrs Edwina	Nicholls, Patrick
Curry, David	Nicholson, David *(Taunton)*
Davies, Q. *(Stamf'd & Spald'g)*	Nicholson, Emma *(Devon West)*
Davis, David *(Boothferry)*	Oppenheim, Phillip
Day, Stephen	Page, Richard
Dorrell, Stephen	Porter, David *(Waveney)*
Dover, Den	Powell, William *(Corby)*
Dunn, Bob	Raffan, Keith
Durant, Tony	Rathbone, Tim
Fallon, Michael	Renton, Tim
Favell, Tony	Riddick, Graham
Field, Barry *(Isle of Wight)*	Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Forman, Nigel	Ryder, Richard
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*	Sackville, Hon Tom
Freeman, Roger	Sainsbury, Hon Tim
French, Douglas	Shaw, David *(Dover)*
Gale, Roger	Shaw, Sir Giles *(Pudsey)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan	Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Gill, Christopher	Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Glyn, Dr Alan	Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn	Spicer, Sir Jim *(Dorset W)*

Stanbrook, Ivor	Wallace, James
Stern, Michael	Waller, Gary
Stradling Thomas, Sir John	Watts, John
Summerson, Hugo	Wells, Bowen
Taylor, Ian *(Esher)*	Widdecombe, Ann
Taylor, John M *(Solihull)*	Wolfson, Mark
Thompson, D. *(Calder Valley)*	Wood, Timothy
Thompson, Patrick *(Norwich N)*	
Twinn, Dr Ian	Tellers for the Noes:
Waddington, Rt Hon David	Mr. Kenneth Carlisle and
Wakeham, Rt Hon John	Mr. Alan Howarth.

Question accordingly negatived.

Clause 30

OWNER LIABLE FOR UNSAFE OPERATION OF SHIP

Amendment made: No. 8, in page 23, line 1, leave out from beginning to second 'and' in line 7.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Clause 32

INVESTIGATION OF MARINE ACCIDENTS

Amendment made: No. 9, in page 26, leave out lines 16 to 18.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Clause 35

AMENDMENTS OF COAST PROTECTION ACT 1949 RELATING TO SAFETY OF NAVIGATION

Amendments made: No. 39, in page 30, line 6, leave out from 'condition' to 'his' in line 7 and insert 'subject to which the Secretary of State has given'.

No. 40, in page 30, line 13, after 'any', insert 'other'.

No. 41, in page 30, leave out lines 16 to 22 and insert—

'(c) may, if the condition relates—

(i) to the provision of any lights, signals or other aids to navigation, or

(ii) to the stationing of guard ships in the vicinity of the works in question or to the taking of any other measures for the purpose of, or in connection with, controlling the movements of ships in the vicinity of those works,

be varied by the Secretary of State in the interests of the safety of navigation (whether or not the operation has been completed) in such manner as he thinks fit for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of any such aids or measures as are mentioned in paragraph (i) or (ii) above; and'.

No. 42, in page 30, line 41, at end insert—

'(5A) After section 36 insert—

"*Imposition by Secretary of State of safety requirements in cases of emergency.*

36A.—(1) Where at any time after the Secretary of State has given his consent for an operation falling within section 34(1)(a) of this Act ("the relevant consent"), it appears to him—

(a) that any danger to navigation has arisen by reason of—

(i) any substantial damage to any works to which that consent relates, or

(ii) any other substantial and unforeseen change in the state or position of any such works, and

(b) that it is urgently necessary to do so in the interests of the safety of navigation,

he may, by notice served on the person to whom the consent was given, impose on that person such requirements as he thinks fit with respect to any of the matters referred to in subsection (2) below.

(2) Those matters are—

(a) the provision on, in the vicinity of, the works in question of any lights, signals or other aids to navigation, and

(b) the stationing of guard ships in the vicinity of those works.

(3) Where the person on whom a notice is served under subsection (1) above fails to comply with any requirements of the notice within the period of 24 hours beginning with the time when it is served on him or as soon after the end of that period as is reasonably practicable, the Secretary of State may make such arrangements as he thinks fit for the purpose of securing that those requirements are implemented.

(4) Where under subsection (3) above the Secretary of State makes any such arrangements, he shall be entitled to recover the cost, as certified by him, of making those arrangements from such one or more of the following, namely—

(a) the person to whom the relevant consent was given, and

(b) any other person or persons who is or are, in accordance with section 34(4A)(b) of this Act, bound by any condition subject to which that consent was given,

as he thinks fit.

(5) Once the requirements of a notice under subsection (1) above have been complied with by the person on whom it was served or implemented in accordance with arrangements made by the Secretary of State under subsection (3) above, those requirements shall, subject to subsection (6) below, be treated for the purposes of this Part of this Act as conditions subject to which the relevant consent was given.

(6) Section 34(4A)(a) and (d) of this Act shall not apply to any such requirements; but if it appears to the Secretary of State (whether on the application of any person or otherwise) that the circumstances giving rise to the urgent necessity for the imposition of the requirements no longer exist, he shall revoke them by notice served on the person to whom the relevant consent was given.

(7) Where the Secretary of State has served a notice under subsection (1) above in respect of any particular circumstances, subsection (5) above shall not preclude him from serving a further notice under subsection (1) in respect of those circumstances.

(8) A notice may be served by the Secretary of State under subsection (1) above whether or not—

(a) the operation in question has been completed, or

(b) any condition was imposed by him, on giving the relevant consent, with respect to any of the matters referred to in subsection (2) above.".'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

Schedule 5

MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS OF MERCHANT SHIPPING ACTS

MERCHANT SHIPPING LAW AMENDMENT ACT 1853 (c. 131)

Amendment made: No. 52, in page 69, line 45, at end insert—

'2A. At the end of section 546 (salvage of cargo or wreck) add—

"(2) In this section 'tidal water' means—

(a) any waters within the ebb and flow of the tide at ordinary spring tides; or

(b) the waters of any dock which is directly, or (by means of one or more other docks) indirectly, connected with any such waters.";

and the existing provisions of section 546 shall accordingly constitute subsection (1) of that section.'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Mr. Wallace: I beg to move amendment No. 59, in page 69, line 47, at end insert—

'3A. After section 634A insert—

Matters to be considered by general lighthouse authority before closure, etc., of facilities operated by them

[Mr. Wallace]

634B. — (1) Before bringing into effect any proposal which may result in a reduction in the number of persons to be employed or the hours of attendance to be worked at any lighthouse or lighthouse shore station a general lighthouse authority give written notice of any such proposal to the local authority within whose area the lighthouse shore station is situated and shall consider any representations received from that authority within a period of three months from the date of the notice.

(2) In formulating any proposal referred to in subsection (1) above the general lighthouse authority shall have regard to the desirability of enabling every employee to be made wholly or partly redundant by the proposal to continue to live and work in the same locality, and the notice to the local authority required by virtue of subsection (1) above shall specify what provision the general lighthouse authority propose to make by way of housing accommodation, financial assistance and retraining or, if the general lighthouse authority consider no such provision is necessary, their reasons for so deciding.

(3) "Local authority" for the purpose of the application of this section means in relation to—

(a) England and Wales, the council of a county;

(b) Scotland, the regional or islands council; and

(c) Northern Ireland, the district council."'.

The amendment would impose duties on the general lighthouse authorities before the closure of, or reduction in staff at, any of their lighthouses or light stations. It arises from the problem of automation of lighthouses and the closure of sound fog signals undertaken by the lighthouse authorities — principally by the one that concerns me, the Northern lighthouse board—in recent years.

Clearly there are many pressures on the lighthouse authorities to cut costs at present — from the Government and from shipowners who have to pay light dues. There was a considerable outcry when the light dues were increased a year go, and pressures to reduce costs have weighed heavily on the lighthouse authorities. The march of technology means that automation techniques, which have led to some staff being made redundant, have been implemented. My worry is about the consequences of the automation programme on the individuals concerned and the communities in which they live.

The problem is not unique to the United Kingdom. I understand that a programme in Canada has led to the automation of 85 of the 266 light stations there, and 230 men have been retired, retrained or reassigned. There are difficulties for the individuals involved. For many, it means giving up tied housing. Many may be in late middle age and find it difficult to retrain for new employment. It is also difficult to find employment. Many lighthouses are in remote parts of the country, where employment is not easy to find at the best of times, let alone at a time of high unemployment.

It is not easy for men to uproot themselves from communities in which they may have lived for a long time and brought up a family. There are also problems for the community. They are often remote and sparsely populated. It is proposed to automate the lighthouse on Bressay, which has a population of only 333. Taking one family from that community would have a significant impact. Fair Isle has a population of only 66. One lighthouse has already been automated, and the House will realise what an impact the removal of a family would have on that community. It would affect social life and mean that the local authority would have greater difficulty in providing services, which would become more expensive per head of population.

Losing a keeper and his family and making local assistants redundant can have a devastating effect on a remote rural area. The process has been quiet. We are talking about the loss of one job here and two jobs there. While closures do not attract the same public attention as a pit or major steelworks closure, they can have a similar impact proportionately.

The amendment would impose a duty on the lighthouse authorities to give local authorities notice when they are about to implement a closure or reduce staffing. There is no such duty at present, but a lighthouse may be a listed building, which means that the local authority is brought in if it wishes to do anything with that building. That is the mechanism by which the local authority in my constituency has been alerted to a possible closure and the consequences for the local community.

The amendment asks the authorities to consider the impact of their actions on the community. It would allow a local authority, in conjunction with the board, to see what can be done to find alternative employment for those affected. It would also allow the local authority to draw attention to cases when, on grounds of safety, it believes a light should be saved.

There has been considerable resistance to demanning of lighthouses in British Columbia. An independent review found that one quarter of stations should be kept staffed. It also suggested that the role of coast watchers should be enhanced because there was a clear need for help for boaters and tourists in some remote areas. Drawing a proposed closure to the attention of a local authority would enable some local input to be made if there was a safety reason for keeping a lighthouse open.

The amendment would also give boards a statutory duty to have regard to social factors when they make a decision. I have had considerable correspondence and meetings with the northern lighthouse board about automation and closures, and particularly about its proposed closures in my consituency. In my experience, the commissioners are sensitive and aware of the impact of their decisions on communities, yet they come back to me and say, "That is not within our statutory remit. We cannot do anything about it. We are helpless. We have a statutory duty to supply a lighthouse service and our scope for action is circumscribed. We cannot take into account social considerations." The amendment would allow them to do so. It would trigger off consultation with local authorities.

1.45 am

The Under-Secretary of State, Lord Brabazon, told me in a letter that in areas such as my constituency, the Highlands and Islands Development Board is always on hand to provide help. I certainly welcome the work of the Highlands and Islands Development Board, but even if the Minister cannot accept the amendment — I certainly hope that he will—it would be very encouraging if he were to give some indication that the lighthouse boards would seek to make contact with local authorities, and that even if it were not a statutory duty they would do that as a matter of practice and that they would also make contact with boards such as the Highlands and Islands Development Board so that it would have good notice of

where there was likely to be redundancies and it would have advance warning so that it could take immediate action.

Subsection (2) of the amendment contains some things that we should like the lighthouse boards to do if there were proposals to close down a particular lighthouse. It would require them to redeploy any redundant employees in the locality, to provide housing for those who would lose their tied housing, and to make financial provision for redundant employees or to provide retraining.

As I have said, job opportunities could arise out of the closure of lighthouses. For example, some of the older lighthouses can become tourist attractions and can be converted into museums. That is a possibility for the Sumburgh lighthouse in my constituency. At Cape Spear, in Newfoundland, several jobs have been created in the locality by the Canadian parks taking over the lighthouse and making it into a culture centre and a museum. Such initiatives could be taken, and the local authorities could get in on the act very quickly if they had advance warning.

In regard to redundancy provision, the northern lighthouse board is considering the position of mobile keepers. Negotiations are in train with regard to seeking a small improvement in the agreed contractual redundancy provisions to take account of keepers losing housing. I understand that that will need the approval of the Secretary of State and I very much hope that when the time comes he will give his approval. However, that applies only to a small number of keepers—the mobile keepers. I would wish further consideration to be given to those who are in non-mobile grades who may also find themselves without work.

There are a number of automated lighthouse people who have been in the service for many years and who have found that they will not reach promotion to the rank of principal keeper, when three or four years ago they fully expected to retire at the grade of principal keeper and enjoy all the pension rights of that grade. In my constituency it is very unlikely that a certain keeper who otherwise might have expected to be promoted before retirement will be promoted. At a very late stage in his working life, he cannot look forward to the pension that he thought he would receive. The Government should address themselves to this situation, since lighthouse keepers will obviously lose out.

I should like to ask the Minister one specific question about Irish lights. It has been represented to me by lighthouse keepers that there were enhanced redundancy provisions for some of the keepers who were in the employment of the commissioners of Irish lights. Will the Minister confirm whether that was the case and whether any increment was given for which the Secretary of State gave approval?

Finally, there is the question, who pays? In his letter Lord Brabazon says that if the costs were to fall as a charge on the general lighthouse fund, it would increase the pressure to raise the light dues. The Government must face up to that problem. During the 1984-85 coal dispute the then Secretary of State for Energy, now Secretary of State for Wales, came to the Dispatch Box week after week and proudly announced enhanced redundancy provisions for those who were to lose their jobs in the mining industry and said that help would be given by means of British Coal Enterprise Ltd.

The scale of this problem is entirely different, but the impact on the communities involved will be almost the same. We are dealing with communities. The loss of only a small number of jobs will have a great impact on communities where there is little alternative employment. The problem cannot be left just to the lighthouse boards, given their present financial structure. The Government must provide assistance for the many communities in the Highlands and Islands and in parts of Wales, England and Northern Ireland that are faced with a very real problem.

Mr. David Mitchell: I have listened very carefully to the arguments of the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) and I understand his motives, but the Government cannot support his amendment. I know that he has in mind the particular circumstances of lightkeepers in his constituency. The northern lighthouse board is the responsible authority, and I am sure that within the constraints of its statutory obligations to the mariner it has a proper concern for the interests of its employees.

The board hopes that a substantial element of necessary staff reductions can be achieved by natural wastage. During the last year, the board's redundancies within the hon. Gentleman's constituency have been limited to three persons, each in a separate location. It has no immediate plans for further compulsory redundancies, though a few more may be unavoidable in the longer term.

Given the very small numbers concerned, even allowing for the remoteness of some of the affected communities, I do not think that it would be practicable or desirable to impose the kind of duty on the general lighthouse authorities that the clause proposes. However, I shall follow up the hon. Gentleman's point and suggest to my noble friend in another place that he should ask the northern lighthouse board to advise local authorities, the Scottish Development Agency or the Highlands and Islands Development Board, as may be appropriate, and any other local enterprise agencies that may be operating in the area of any proposed redundancies. On the basis of that assurance, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will see fit to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. Wallace: I am grateful to the Minister for his assurance, and I look forward to its implementation. I asked in particular about provision being made for redundancy, but as the hour is late, I suggest that the Minister should deal with that in correspondence.

I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment made: No. 48, page 71, line 30, at end insert—

'MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT 1906 (c. 48)

Omit section 52 (provisions with respect to mortgages of ships sold to foreigners).'.

No. 53, in page 72, leave out lines 10 to 36 and insert—

'Inspection and admissibility in evidence of copies of certain documents.

75A.—(1) Where under any enactment a document is open to public inspection when in the custody of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen—

(a) there may be supplied for public inspection a copy or other reproduction of the document instead of the original; but

(b) the original shall nevertheless be made available for public inspection if the copy or other reproduction is illegible.

(2) Where the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen destroys any document which has been sent to him under or by virtue of any enactment, and keeps a copy or other reproduction of that document, then—

(a) any enactment providing for that document to be admissible in evidence or open to public inspection, and

[Mr. Wallace]

(b) in the case of a document falling within subsection (1), that subsection,

shall apply to the copy or other reproduction as if it were the original.

(3) For the purposes of this section, and of section 695(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 in its application to documents in the custody of the Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen, a copy is to be taken to be the copy of a document nothwithstanding that it is taken from a copy or other reproduction of the original.'.

No. 10, in page 72, line 37, at end insert—

'In section 92 (unregistered British ships)—

(a) omit "British"; and

(b) after "employed in them," insert "or shall so extend in such circumstances as may be so specified, in either case".'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Clause 49

NOTICES UNDER PART I OR II

Amendments made: No. 25, in page 42, line 32, after '49', insert—

'(1A) Any notice required or authorised to be served by the Secretary of State under Part I or II may be served by post.'.

No. 26, in page 42, line 36, leave out from 'which' to end of line 41 and insert

'a managing owner is for the time being registered under section 59(1) of the 1894 Act,'.

No. 27, in page 42, line 44, leave out from 'owners' to end of line 46.

No. 28, in page 42, line 46, at end insert—

'( ) For the purposes of section 7 of the Interpretation Act 1978 (service of documents by post) a letter containing—

(a) a notice to be served on any person in pursuance of subsection (1) above, or

(b) a notice required or authorised to be served under Part I on a representative person within the meaning of that Part,

shall be deemed to be properly addressed if it is addressed to that person at the address for the time being recorded in relation to him in the appropriate register; and a letter containing any other notice to which subsection (1A) above applies shall be deemed to be properly addressed if it is addressed to the last-known address of the person to be served (whether of his residence or of a place where he carries on business).'.

No. 29, in page 43, line 1, at end insert—

'"the appropriate register"—

(a) in relation to a notice in respect of a registered ship, means the register in which the ship is registered under Part I of the 1894 Act, and

(b) in relation to a notice in respect of a registered fishing vessel, means the register kept under Part II of this Act;'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Clause 51

EXTENSION OF ACT TO OVERSEAS TERRITORIES

No. 13, in page 43, line 21, leave out 'exceptions, adaptations and'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Clause 52

INTERPRETATION, MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS AND REPEALS

No. 14, in page 43, line 44, at end insert—

'"modifications" includes additions, omissions and alterations;'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Schedule 6

MINOR AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS SEA FISHERIES ACT 1868 (C. 45)

Amendments made: No. 37, in page 74, line 35, at end insert—

'and the reference in that subsection to proceeding to sea shall, in a case where the service for which the ship is intended consists of going on voyages or excursions that do not involve going to sea, be construed as a reference to going on such a voyage or excursion.";'.

No. 38, in page 74, line 42, at end insert—

'3. In section 692 (enforcing detention of ship), at end add—

"(5) Any reference in this section to proceeding to sea includes a reference to going on a voyage or excursion that does not involve going to sea, and references to sending or taking to sea shall be construed accordingly."'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Schedule 7

REPEALS

Amendments made: No. 54, in page 78, column 3, leave out lines 21 to 24.

No. 49, in page 80, column 3, leave out lines 13 to 17 and insert—

'Sections 51 and 52.'.

No. 55, in page 80, line 30, column 3, leave out 'Section 10.'.

No. 11, in page 80, line 43, column 3, at end insert—

'In section 92, the word "British".'.

No. 12, in page 81, column 3, leave out line 15 and insert—

'In section 37, subsection (4), and in subsection (6) the word "British".'. — *[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Schedule 8

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND SAVINGS

Amendment made: No. 7, in page 82, line 41, at end insert—

'3A. Section 4 (5A) of this Act shall not have effect at any time before the commencement of Part II of this Act, and shall not affect the operation of section 12(3) of this Act in relation to fishing vessels which are registered under Part I of the 1894 Act immediately before the commencement of Part II of this Act.'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

1.53 am

Mr. Robert Hughes: I repeat the welcome that my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) gave to the Government's two new clauses on cabotage. It was good to hear the Minister say that they were long overdue. We are grateful for their inclusion in the Bill, and we shall be happy to see them implemented when the Bill reaches the statute book.

We are disappointed that the Secretary of State was unable to accept our new clauses on industrial relations. However, we are glad that the Bill retains section 19 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1974. As time goes by, the Secretary of State may find that section 19 is used much

more frequently than it has been in the past. We are glad that that loophole has been left open and not closed in relation to section 42(2).

Some of my hon. Friends made a legitimate complaint about the hour at which we are discussing this extremely important legislation. Indeed, had we not been co-operative, we could have run the business through for a very long time, but we did not want to hold back progress on a Bill that we regard as necessary. I hope that the Government Whips and business managers will think very carefully in future about the timing of business on virtually the last day that we are here in Parliament—but I do complain about that. I will say, however, that when we have important business it is quite unnecessary for the Government to make statements that take up an hour of the House's time and delay the progress of a Bill unnecessarily. I hope that the necessary instructions will be relayed to the Home Secretary and the business managers.

Although we have rightly drawn attention to what we regard as deficiencies in the Bill—we would have liked its safety provisions to be stronger—we nevertheless accept that, in general terms, it was necessary, and we approve of the clauses dealing with registration and safety. I hope that the Minister will use the regulating powers that he has taken very strongly to protect the safety of those who sail in our ships, and of course the passengers who use them.

Despite our misgivings about some parts of the Bill, and our objections to the schedule, I do not intend to divide the House. We have made some progress. We shall watch the Government intently, and urge them to take action where it is necessary.

I hope that the Bill will prove an adequate measure to deal with merchant shipping. There is no doubt that, when we return to government, we shall make the necessary changes that we want to see. In the meantime, we accept what has been done, and hope that it will be carried out with expedition once it finally reaches the statute book.

1.56 am

Mr. David Mitchell: Hon. Members who served on the Committee, and those who have taken part in today's debate, can take some satisfaction in having participated in the passage of a Bill that moves ship registration into the 20th century, ensures high standards throughout British dependencies, incorporates many safety lessons learned so sadly at Zeebrugge, sets up the Merchant Navy Reserve, assists training and provides Her Majesty's Government with powers to move against unfair competition, both in cabotage and elsewhere.

At the same time, the measure will bring to an end unfair competition by Spanish fishing vessels in the United Kingdom quota from the EEC.

This is not the stuff of a great parliamentary occasion, but it is a worthwhile modernisation of our merchant shipping law, which will further the safety and prosperity of the industry. As such, I commend the Bill to the House.

Those who go down to the sea in ships, whether at work or as passengers, will in future be able to do so with more safety and security as a result of our activities here tonight.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 10(5) (Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.).

Financial Services

That the draft Financial Services Act 1986 (Stabilisation) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 24th February, be approved.

That the draft Financial Services Act 1986 (Investment Advertisements) (Exemptions) (No. 2) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 24th February, be approved.

That the draft Financial Services Act 1986 (Delegation) (No. 2) Order 1988, which was laid before this House on 24th February, be approved.

That the Financial Services Act 1986 (Extension of Scope of Act and Meaning of Collective Investment Scheme) Order 1988 (S.I., 1988, No. 496), dated 14th March 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 15th March, be approved.

Pneumoconiosis

That the draft Pneumoconiosis etc. (Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 29th February, be approved.

Legal Aid and Advice (Scotland)

That the draft Advice and Assistance (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations, 1988, which were laid before this House on 17th March, be approved.

That the draft Civil Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 17th March, be approved.

Legal Aid and Advice

That the Legal Advice and Assistance (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988, dated 8th March 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 9th March, be approved.

That the Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988, dated 8th March 1988, a copy of which was laid before this House on 9th March, be approved.

Town and Country Planning

That the Town and Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on Mineral Working) (Amendment) Regulations 1988, which were laid before this House on 7th March, be approved.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

Question agreed to.

PETITION

Diego Garcia (Ilois Population)

1.58 am

Mr. Allen McKay (Barnsley West and Penistone): I wish to present a petition, Madam Deputy Speaker, with your leave and that of the House. It concerns the 2,000 Ilois of Diego Garcia, who were forcibly removed from their homeland a while ago to Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The petitioners require the Government to arrange a meeting between the Ilois and the representatives of Mauritius, to arrange the immediate return of the Ilois to their homeland. They wish to be awarded compensation for the problems that have arisen since they left their homeland, and they wish the British Government to cease making the British Indian ocean territories available for military purposes.

I hope that the House will accept the petition.

To lie upon the Table.

Playground Injuries

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Lennox-Boyd.]*

1.59 am

Mr. Colin Shepherd (Hereford): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Mr. Dunn), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, for being in his place to discuss with me the continuing flow of playground injuries to children. I have been fortunate in that my three children have passed through the age of playgrounds without incurring anything more severe than the usual bumps and bruises. My attention has been caught by the surprising and distressing number of families who have not been so lucky.

There is no doubt that transport, drownings and fires account for by far the greatest number of accidental dealths of children. Playground injuries are not as great a problem as accidents in the home, but they are not inconsiderable. Most importantly, they are probably avoidable.

"That's Life" has put together the tales of woe that have been reported to it in letters. To the end of February, it has been told of no fewer than 381 incidents of more than usual gravity. That figure includes the ghastly sum of five deaths, one case of severe brain damage, 34 fractured skulls, 49 other head injuries, including concussion, six broken collar bones, six broken legs, 40 broken arms, 11 other breakages including noses and jaws, two dislocations, one severe internal injury, 77 other injuries needing urgent medical attention, and 14 teeth-type injuries. In addition, there were 135 other incidents requiring medical attention. It is obvious that these are not all the incidents that have occurred, and is interesting to note that there appears to be no way of recording all the statistics, collating them or analysing them.

My hon. Friend will be aware that in 1978 the Department of the Environment sent a long and comprehensive letter to all district councils and local education authorities — it was made available to the chief executives of county councils — that told all involved in the public sector of the ways in which safety could be improved. British standard 5696 has been published since 1979. However, there is no way of knowing the improvement that has been achieved as a result of the advice.

It is significant that there was a massive response to the "That's Life" programme on playground accidents. It came throughout the country from parents whose children had sustained substantial damage in playgrounds. Each one is a tragic and pitiful tale of woe. It is significant also that the Consumers Association should be similarly preoccupied and concerned as a result of feedback. It is significant as well that there should have been a steady run of articles over the past nine years in all manner of publications, all expressing concern at the unacceptably high level of accidental injury in playgrounds. It seems, however, that despite advice, admonition, British standards and other responses, a high level of accidents continues to be sustained. That must be unacceptable.

Ministerial responsibility amounts to an interesting but confused position. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State represents the Department of Education and Science. As 125 of the 246 injuries communicated to the "That's Life" team occurred in school playgrounds, it is

understandable that he should be sitting on the Government Front Bench waiting to reply to this debate. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment with responsibilities for sport also has a locus in the problem. It is a pity that both my hon. Friends cannot respond to the debate, but that would not be in accord with our procedure in this place.

A goodly percentage of our playgrounds are owned and run by district councils, and the interesting deduction of the playground action group is that from 1982 to 1987 no fewer than 10 per cent. of reported playground accidents involving injury occurred to children within the ages of two to five years. I was also fascinated to note that 80 per cent. of the accidents occurred in supervised playgrounds — so it is certainly not a straightforward picture of unsupervised playgrounds and older children showing off. It is, possibly, largely outside the education service, in supervised playgrounds and with younger children.

There is yet another sector where accidents can occur — the private sector, at theme parks, motorway service centres or, as is increasingly the case, roadside diners or even pubs. Who has the responsibility in that sector? It is certainly not the Education or Environment Departments. It appears that there might be a Department of Employment remit under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which places a duty on employers at such sites to protect those who are accidently or otherwise on them. Once again, that shows that there are three Departments involved. The basic question is: with whom does the buck actually stop? Until we have the answer, we cannot promote better safety.

In 1978, the Department of the Environment took the lead in a circularised letter. I wonder what, if any, advice has been given since. Can the Secretary of State for Education and Science lean on local education authorities to heed the advice contained in the British standard on play surfaces and the design of equipment? Can local education authorities be sued for compensation in civil proceedings? If, since the pre-1979 British standard — that is, the letter of October 1978 — no further advice has been given to local education authorities, is it possible that they could not be guilty of negligence and are therefore unassailable?

Section 4.2.1 of British standard 5696 specifically and strongly recommends that impact-absorbing surfaces be provided in at least the operating area around the equipment. Yet in countless thousands of playgrounds throughout the country, concrete and tarmac are still the norm. What is my hon. Friend's view on that? It is, perhaps, no wonder that the Surrey-based charity Play Safely writes:

"We are not satisfied that the existing legislation is adequate to compel managers of playgrounds to act with responsibility to protect children."

It referred to local representations that it had made about seven playgrounds that were left unattended and, consequently there was, "predictably, a tragic death."

What needs to be done is not difficult to establish, but the how is far more difficult. With regard to the "what" element, there is a need to encourage and cajole authorities and owners to keep their houses in order, to take the advice of the British standard and to bite the bullet on costs. I appreciate that expense is a problem, but authorities have a duty to sort out their priorities. I put it to them that they cannot put this responsibility lightly to one side. My authority has decided that it needs to deal with that, and I note with interest that the cost for the sites averages about £3,000 each. I should like to think that a phased programme, covering three to five years and meticulously adhered to would be fully within the means of all authorities, provided that the will is there — and we need to put the will there. There is also no shortage of advice on the wide range of materials that are now so widely available, and they must be carefully considered by authorities at the same time.

The "how" is how can we persuade local authorities and local education authorities that this issue is a reasonable and proper priority. I found it interesting that the Germans, whose DIN standards are more detailed than even the British standard 5696, have an equipment safety law that makes it mandatory for both equipment and installation to comply with the DIN standards. That is possibly a piece of Teutonic heavy-handedness, but it does have merit and it is probably worth considering.

I know that there are those who would take a more cynical view and regard that country's legislation as old-fashioned and heavy-handed protectionism, designed to stop imported equipment being sold in Germany. Nevertheless, it means that there is leverage for ensuring that equipment and installations comply. In that respect, the Germans have an authority that is not dissimilar from our trading standards officers, who would police and monitor this operation.

I appreciate that in the United Kingdom British standards have always been advisory and to make compliance compulsory by statute would be an enormous departure from practice and would have enormous ramifications. However, we should look carefully at that prospect before discarding the plan. Is there some way in which the German model can be adapted in the case of playgrounds, without having to go down the road of mandatory compliance with all British standards? That is a fundamental question.

Bearing in mind the present split paternity of the problem, a co-ordinated approach to finding solutions needs to be developed. A lead Minister needs to be established from the three Departments involved. I do not care whether he or she comes from the Department of the Environment or the Department of Education and Science, but somebody has to be in the driving seat and take charge.

We should add to that a review group to be drawn from the three Ministries. The other agencies that I have mentioned would be able to keep pressure on the problem. Tasks for that group would include looking at existing legislation, especially in the light of the consequences of the Housing Act 1980, which withdrew so much of the advice given in the past to local authorities as to how they should deal with matters such as play space for children, and with the way in which they organised it.

The review group would also promote the action that would need to be taken to get impact-absorbing surfaces installed. It could possibly keep pressure on the British standards to extend the draft that defines those surfaces and the way in which they should be used. I must make the observation that with head injury being the main type of serious injury that is sustained, especially among the younger children, softer landings are vital.

The same review group would be able to keep the standards under review, see how they are working, and strive towards improving our own legislation, both in the

[Mr. Colin Shepherd]

context of the United Kingdom and the European Community. That is important because, as time goes on, we must think in such terms more and more.

I am given to understand that there was recently an interesting conference in Brussels at which the United Kingdom was able to take an aggressive and leading part. If we were able to have such a review group, we would be able to continue to lead in that respect and to keep the pressure on the system to our own benefit.

I know that my hon. Friend regards this question with the gravity that it deserves, but I want to stress that in the solution that is to be developed, I do not want playgrounds to be created which are so safe that they are boring and unexciting. That would be unacceptable. There must be an element of excitement. However, I want parents to be able to have confidence — when they see their cherished children fizz off with glad abandon to the swings, slides and roundabouts — that they will not have to fear the consequences. There are things that we can do and we owe them to children and parents alike. We must not waste an hour or a day more.

2.14 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn): I am more than grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hereford (Mr. Shepherd) for raising this matter for discussion. I am glad to see that he is supported by my hon. Friends the Members for Isle of Wight (Mr. Field) and for Staffordshire, South-East (Mr. Lightbown). It is an important topic and one well worthy of debate. I congratulate my hon. Friend on making an extremely serious speech, and I am more than willing to consider many of the points in it.

As my hon. Friend is aware, the Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974 imposes duties on everyone concerned with the subject. In respect of injuries to children, the general duties under the Act have been supplemented by specific requirements laid down in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985. Those regulations require that the appropriate enforcing local authority is notified immediately. Further to those statute law provisions, it is the responsibility of local education authorities to take reasonable care of pupils and students at schools and colleges in their charge within the "in loco parentis" doctrine enshrined in common law.

I am aware that there is concern for safety in the school playground, not least because of the points made by my hon. Friend and the media in general, and also because of the representations made to me and to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. The correspondence that we have received has advocated improvements to playground surfaces and safer playground equipment.

As my hon. Friend said, in 1978, the holder of the office of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment issued to all local authorities a circular letter entitled: "Need for Improved Safety in Children's Playgrounds". An attached technical appendix listed several possible stages for eliminating some of the most common causes of playground accidents and included details of some impact-absorbing surfaces for use underneath playground equipment. My Department sent copies of that document to all chief education officers, inviting them to review their provision in school playgrounds.

I am aware that there has been a good deal of media coverage during the past year of several serious injuries to children who have fallen from playground apparatus on to a hard surface. However regrettable such accidents are, they will have brought to the attention of local authorities the possibility of installing alternative surfaces to the traditional tarmac and concrete. Some authorities are known to have installed impact-absorbing surfaces under climbing frames and other apparatus in park playgrounds, and also on a trial basis in some school playgrounds. But, as my hon. Friend said, it is recognised that an impact-absorbing surface cannot provide an absolute guarantee of safety.

Teachers and other helpers will normally be able to control the number of children using equipment at any one time and to give instructions in the sort of activity carried out for a child's proper physical development. Of course, it is for the school authorities to decide whether an item of equipment is used and whether to make local rules with regard to its use, for example, during and outside school hours respectively, and on the ages of the children who may be permitted to climb on the apparatus depending on its height above ground.

The Government hope that all new external play equipment installed will conform to the requirements of the "Specification for fixed playground equipment for schools"—BS 3191—and "Play equipment intended for permanent installations outdoors"—BS 5696—to which my hon. Friend referred. The latter generally refers to non-school playgrounds.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has no plans at present to introduce new legislation governing the installation of children's play apparatus or associated equipment. However, in addition to the current British standards to which I have just referred, the British Standards Institution is in the process of preparing a new standard for play equipment which is expected to be completed later this year. As my hon. Friend will know, British standards do not have statutory force but they do provide valuable and influential guidance on the subject areas to which they apply.

The House will accept that there is no one specific rule for the provision of playing fields and recreation areas at schools and colleges. Much depends on the number of pupils attending who are aged eight and over when determining such provision.

My hon. Friend made a number of important points about the nature of the relationship between Government Departments. They continue to monitor all health and safety aspects within the community. In recent months my Department has issued to local education authorities a guidance document on first aid arrangements in schools and colleges. This includes a reiteration of my Department's long-standing advice that all teachers should have a basic working knowledge of first aid that would enable them to deal with situations where medical or first aid treatment is necessary.

Mr. Shepherd: When the new standard is published will the Department positively circulate it to all schools? Will district councils be positvely circulated by the Department

of the Environment? Will the mechanism employed in 1978 be used again to bring the councils up to date and make certain that they are aware of the new standard?

Mr. Dunn: I certainly undertake to consider that. If the practice remains as it was some years ago we shall continue with it, but if there is any new departure in what my hon. Friend has suggested I shall commend it to my Department and to my colleagues at the Department of the Environment for consideration.

My hon. Friend has raised a number of important issues regarding the interface that a group of Departments will have upon the same subject. I will undertake to raise those issues with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education.

We all share my hon. Friend's opinion that the safety of our children is paramount. This has been a useful debate and I have learned a great deal. His constituents should be extremely pleased that he is able to represent their interests as well as those of the wider public.

I am determined to bring the nature of the debate to my right hon. Friend's attention so that we can consider what further progress can be made.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at twenty three minutes past Two o'clock.

House of Commons

Thursday 31 March 1988

The House met at half-past Nine o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fish Farms (Pollution)

1. **Ms. Quin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if his Department has commissioned any studies to examine the extent of pollution caused by fish farms; and if he will make a statement.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John Selwyn Gummer): The effect of fish farm effluent is kept under review by the Fisheries Departments and recent studies have pointed to a significant decline in the quantity of waste discharged per tonne of fish produced.

Ms. Quin: Is the Minister aware that several recent reports have claimed that highly polluted water from fish farms is threatening the survival of some of the native species of fish in our rivers, such as the brown trout? Is he satisfied that the procedures for monitoring the discharges from fish farms are working efficiently? If not, will he set up an inquiry into that matter?

Mr. Gummer: I am satisfied that the procedures are working satisfactorily. As I have said, recent studies suggest that there has been a significant decline in the quantities of waste discharged per tonne of fish produced. We are looking carefully at the matter and are examining one or two specific cases. For example, the Wessex water authority and the Department of the Environment have been trying to deal with the problems that appear to have affected wild fish stocks on the Avon. However, we are sure that things are working reasonably well elsewhere.

Mr. Nicholas Baker: Will my right hon. Friend take particular care to ensure that the procedures are not administered in a too discriminating and over-robust manner? Is he aware that fish farming — including crayfish and other crustaceous fish production — is a very important and growing industry which should not be damaged by excessive zeal by anyone imposing the procedures to which he referred?

Mr. Gummer: I agree that fish farming is a very important industry. However, we must ensure that the industry does not badly affect the quality of the water in our rivers. We must keep an eye on the industry, but I agree that we must not do that in a way that makes people feel that they are being harried.

Mrs. Ray Michie: Is the Minister confident that the ban on the anti-foulant tributyl tin, which is used in fish farms, is effective and that no outlet for the chemical exists through wholesalers? How should fish farms dispose of any stocks of that chemical? What advice is being offered to those fish farms on disposal methods?

Mr. Gummer: As the hon. Lady will be aware, the Ministry took the lead in trying to do something about tributyl tin and the problems that we discovered in our research into sex changes among some molluscs and other small animals, which may have been of particular interest to other molluscs and small animals. The hon. Lady will understand that the particular cases to which she is referring are largely within the purview of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. I will ensure that he gives an answer to the hon. Lady on the specific cases to which she has referred.

Dr. Godman: The Opposition welcome the growth and development of fish farming. A commitment was given by the Government at the recent ministerial conference on the North sea to the precautionary principle applied to pollution of the marine environment. What provisions are made to monitor routinely the use of chemicals used by fish farmers? Is there any provision within the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 to restrict or ban the use of Nuvan 500 EC by fish farmers? Is Nuvan not as dangerous to the marine environment as TBT anti-fouling paint?

Mr. Gummer: The hon. Gentleman will accept that I might have looked at his specific example if he had asked me to do so. However, we take great care about fish farms, not only with regard to the chemicals that are used. As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we also consider the problems of water abstraction licensing, and that is another area that we have to watch very carefully. We have already undertaken to amend the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in that direction. I will certainly look at the specific cases that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

Foodstuffs (Radioactivity)

2. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to change the levels of radioactivity permitted in foodstuffs exported from, and imported into, Britain and the EEC.

11. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the permitted radioactivity levels following the Chernobyl accident for the import and export of foodstuffs in Britain and other EEC countries; and if he will make a statement.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. Donald Thompson): Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I have no plans to change present national arrangements regarding radioactivity levels in foodstuffs imported into or exported from this country.

Following Chernobyl, maximum permitted radiocaesium levels for Community imports of foodstuffs from all third countries were set at 370 bq/kg for milk and babyfood and 600 bq/kg for other foods. Those levels remain unchanged. No comparable legislative measures were adopted governing either intra-Community trade or exports. Changes in EC arrangements are, of course, a matter for the European Community.

Mr. Cook: Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

I am grateful to the Minister for that full reply, and I am sure that the information that he gave will be useful to

many people. But is he aware that there are reports from many Third world countries that they have received consignments, especially of dried milk powder, which exceed those levels; that, despite that, pressure has been exerted on those countries to accept the consignments; and that some consignments have been returned to Britain? Will the Minister look into the matter to see whether the reports are true? If they are, where are those consignments stored and what will be their future use?

Mr. Thompson: I would understand the hon. Gentleman's concern if what he said had any basis in fact. No Third world country has registered any protest—*[Interruption.]* I shall answer the hon. Gentleman's question as gently as I can, and we shall see what he makes of it after I have finished.

No Third world country has registered any imports from the United Kingdom that are above the EC recommended levels. There were two prongs to the hon. Gentleman's question: first, materials going to the Third world in aid; and, secondly, materials going to the Third world in normal trading patterns. There is no doubt that, at first, in the normal trading patterns some of our customers were reluctant to accept goods from Europe and the United Kingdom. That reluctance has been overcome. As the hon. Gentleman said, there has been much publicity about goods going in aid to the Third world. I shall consider any documents or evidence that the hon. Gentleman may have, but at present it seems that that charge cannot be laid at our door.

Ms. Ruddock: The Minister probably knows that a consignment of EEC food aid to Mexico was traced to the Irish Republic and accepted back by the Irish Republic after complaints from Mexico. Although, as the Minister said, Britain has not been a source of over-contaminated food, does he agree that it reflects badly on the EEC as a whole? Did the Minister see early-day motion 733, which brought these matters to the attention of the House, and did he discuss them with those responsible during his visit to Brussels earlier this week?

Mr. Thompson: I agree with the hon. Lady that the United Kingdom's record in these matters is remarkably good and should be a model—*[Interruption.]* I would have agreed with the hon. Lady had she said that. Since Chernobyl, the United Kingdom's record has been remarkably good. I am as worried as the hon. Lady is that the good name of the European Community will be spoilt by such incidents. It reflects badly not only on aid but on trade, and that is bad for all of us.

Mr. William Ross: Is the Minister aware that my constituency is still suffering from the effects of the Chernobyl accident and that it is affecting sheep production in the mountainous areas? Given recent reports of the slow breakdown of radioactive materials, especially in peat vegetation, can the Minister give the House and the country an assurance that we know how long it will be before the caesium levels in those peat and upland areas fall to a reasonable level so that we can get rid of this dreadful problem, which must have an effect on food production and exports?

Mr. Thompson: Despite the occasional levity, I take the problem seriously, especially in Wales, Cumbria, and Northern Ireland, where the effects of the accident at Chernobyl still linger. Unfortunately, I cannot give the hon. Gentleman any idea of how long it will be before the effects of the accident have gone from our land. We are monitoring on a continual basis, not only in the affected areas, but throughout the country and we are also monitoring imports of goods. The hon. Gentleman has heard the answer about exports.

Dr. David Clark: Does the Minister agree that one cannot differentiate between aid and trade when talking about becquerel levels? Those levels are laid down by the EEC and should be adhered to in aid and trade by all countries. Will the Minister once again give us an assurance that he will examine the newspaper reports? I accept that most of them suggest that contaminated food has not been exported from this country, although there is the possibility of one shipment to the Philippines from this country. Will he give us an assurance that he will not only look into that but will take the matter to Brussels and ensure that food that is above the safety becquerel limit is not being exported, in either aid or trade, from any of the European countries? That is important.

Mr. Thompson: Aid and trade are equally important. In many ways, perhaps aid is more important because the recipient countries have less sophisticated facilities than the trading countries that accept our goods. I fully accept the hon. Gentleman's point on that. I reiterate what I said to his hon. Friend the Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook). I will look again carefully at any documentation that he or his hon. Friends present to me. Having looked at that, I shall talk to my right hon. Friend the Minister and see whether it is necessary to take the matter to Brussels to encourage or fortify our friends there.

Sheepmeat

3. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations he will be holding with British sheep producers in advance of the next round of negotiations on the community sheepmeat regime.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Mr. John MacGregor): My agricultural colleagues and I continue to stay in close touch with representatives of British sheep producers and will continue to consult them on aspects of the review of the sheepmeat regime.

Mr. Macdonald: The Minister may know what I am about to ask him, because I have written to him on the matter. Does he appreciate that the Crofters Union in the highlands and islands represents some 4,000 hill farmers, the vast majority of whom are involved in sheep farming? Does he appreciate also that crofting is a particularly successful form of agricultural activity and helps to retain a large population in the rural areas—one could say a high population per hectare? Given that, will the Minister undertake to seek a meeting with the Crofters Union on negotiations about the sheepmeat regime, and in those negotiations will he undertake to look for reforms and methods of administration that will benefit the smallest farmers, such as crofters, in the poorest areas?

Mr. MacGregor: The negotiations have not yet got under way. However, my noble Friend the Minister of State, Scottish Office, met representatives of the Scottish Crofters Union on 5 February and assured the union that the interests of the traditional producers would be kept in mind in the negotiations. Obviously, I shall stay in close

touch with my noble Friend the Minister of State and I shall bear in mind the points made today by the hon. Gentleman.

Mr. Curry: Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that it would be unwise to be boxed in to a line-by-line defence of every dot and comma of the status quo in the sheepmeat regime and that what matters is to preserve equivalent benefits that exist now for British producers, make sure that we retain access to the continental markets that have grown in importance and retain the advantage that comes from our extensive system of rearing?

Mr. MacGregor: It is right not to be committed line by line, because negotiations would never be successful if one started from that point of view. The negotiations have not yet started. I agree broadly with my hon. Friend that those are our objectives and I make it clear that I shall continue to seek measures for the future of the sheepmeat regime that will enable United Kingdom sheep producers to make the most of our natural advantages.

Mr. Kirkwood: In his consultations with sheep producers in the United Kingdom, will the Minister bear in mind the importance of the sheepmeat regime, particularly the EEC Commission's proposals to change it, to areas such as Scotland and Wales? I plead that, when the negotiations in Brussels come to a head, the Minister will seek to take with him his colleagues the Secretaries of State for Wales and for Scotland, to emphasise the vital importance to those countries of the proposals that are being considered in Brussels.

Mr. MacGregor: I work closely with my right hon. Friends. As a Scot, I am clearly well aware of the implications for Scotland. We shall have to judge at the time who goes to the negotiations. We have not yet started the negotiations. I suspect that they will be pretty long. We still lack detail on most aspects of the Commission's proposals, but I shall obviously be in close touch with my right hon. Friends. Of course, I discuss the matter with the industry in Scotland when I visit Scotland. We are well aware of the industry's views and the impacts on the two countries to which the hon. Gentleman referred.

Dr. David Clark: Does the Minister recall telling the House immediately after the Copenhagen meeting that the sheepmeat regime proposals for stabilisers discriminated against this country? Does he recall also that such stabiliser proposals were accepted by the Prime Minister in Brussels? How will he ensure that sheep remain on the hills? How will he ensure an adequate income for sheep farmers in upland areas? Some of them have advised me that when the stabilisers come into force next year they will be down £3,000 on their already meagre incomes.

Mr. MacGregor: As I have said, obviously there must be a stabiliser for the sheepmeat regime. Currently, costs are expected to be over 1 billion ecu for the sheepmeat regime as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary that there are stabilisers for the sheepmeat regime. We had to look at the overall balance of the outcome of the summit. One element in the sheepmeat stabiliser singled out the United Kingdom. That is because we have the variable premium, and no other state does. There was a feeling in the Community that a different regime had to apply to the different system that we have. There was one other discriminatory element in the proposals which is particularly important to the upland areas to which the hon. Gentleman referred. This is the proposal to limit headage payments. We got that out. Obviously, the impact of the stabiliser next year will depend on sheep production. If sheep production exceeds targets here and in the rest of the Community, the sheepmeat stabiliser must apply.

Nitrates

4. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will give figures for the amount of nitrates applied to land in Britain in each of the years *(a)* 1960, *(b)* 1970, *(c)* 1980 and *(d)* 1987.

Mr. MacGregor: Such information is not available, as details are not maintained of the proportion of nitrates contained in fertilisers applied to land. Nitrates are, of course, only one form of nitrogen found in such fertilisers.

Mr. Williams: The amount of nitrogenous fertiliser applied in the past 30 years has more than trebled. In view of the serious problem of pollution of water supplies by nitrates in eastern Britain and the major role that deintensification and low-input agriculture could play in reducing Common Market surpluses, will the Minister consider introducing curbs on the use of nitrogenous fertilisers? I have in mind either a tax on nitrogenous fertiliser or, in areas that are severely affected by nitrate pollution, a complete prohibition on the use of nitrogenous fertilisers.

Mr. MacGregor: The Government are still considering the options that were identified in the nitrate co-ordination group report. They are complex matters. It is important that we get any policy changes or other proposals resulting from the report absolutely right. Although we are considering what should be done in the light of the report, I do not think that a tax is an effective or efficient means of reducing cereals and other crops in surplus; nor do I think that it would necessarily have the impact that the hon. Gentleman requires. It would have to be a very high tax indeed. Of course, it would operate indiscriminately. Therefore, I am not sure that it is the right approach to take. We are still considering the report in general and will make our views known as soon as we possibly can.

National Farmers Union

5. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the National Farmers Union; and what matters were discussed.

7. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the National Union of Farmers; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet the president of the National Farmers Union and other representatives frequently to discuss matters of agricultural policy. The last occasion that I met the president was Tuesday of this week.

Mr. Jack: I thank my right hon. Friend for that news. Will he send a message of Easter hope to members of the National Farmers Union in my constituency, who are pig producers, that his success on stabilisers will open the door to the start of successful negotiations on 18 April, to a change in the green pound regime and to a reduction in the MCAs on pigs, which have so damaged the industry? Will he support the Food from Britain initiative, which is trying

to open up new markets for British pork meat in the United States, and will he recommend to housewives this Easter that they should buy British pork?

Mr. MacGregor: I am sure that housewives will have heard my hon. Friend's last point, even this early in the morning. I support the efforts that Food from Britain is making to try to increase exports of pigmeat products.

As to my hon. Friend's first point, I raised the matter at the Agriculture Council this week, at which we had a preliminary discussion about the price review—the price proposals for this year—and I also discussed the matter with the president of the NFU. I have made it clear in the Council that, because of the increased use of cereal substitutes in the pig rations of some other member states, pigmeat MCAs are now producing, rather than preventing, distortions. I therefore called for an immediate and complete devaluation of our green rate in that sector. This will be a difficult and protracted negotiation because other member states hold a directly contrary view and the Commission has not made a proposal, but I have made my position clear.

Mr. Leigh: When my right hon. Friend met the president of the National Farmers Union, did he make it absolutely clear that when he is in Brussels he is battling not only for Britain but for our farmers, particularly with regard to the green pound and stabilisers? To illustrate the difficulties that my right hon. Friend faced, will he say what line was taken by other member states on price fixing?

Mr. MacGregor: Yes, indeed, I did. As to the general line on price fixing, I imagine that my hon. Friend has in mind green rates, which will be an issue in price fixing. There were some calls from member states in that regard, but the Commission made it clear that it was opposed to changes in green rates, apart from the Greek drachma—Greek MCAs are three to four times greater than those in the United Kingdom. I made my position on the green pound clear in the preliminary discussions that we had at the Council this week.

Mr. Geraint Howells: Will the Minister assure our pig producers that their prospects for the next two years will be better than they are at present? Will he tell pig producers and the industry by what percentage he is likely to devalue the green pound in the next six months?

Mr. MacGregor: I cannot give the hon. Gentleman an assurance, because we have a lightweight regime in pigs and it depends very much on the market. At present pig production is in surplus, and that market position is obviously affecting the price. In so far as measures are available to me, we argued for, and succeeded in obtaining, private storage aids, which are making some difference to market stability. I have made my position clear on MCAs in the pigmeat sector. The hon. Gentleman will recognise that pigmeat MCAs have fallen nearly 20 points since February last year to the current level of minus 7·5, which has made a big difference to the position. Pigmeat prices have stabilised and some feed costs are still coming down.

Mr. Ralph Howell: I accept that my right hon. Friend is doing all that he can to bring about an immediate 9 per cent. green pound devaluation, but will he give an assurance that the Government are exerting maximum pressure in this direction, and will he say what is the chief stumbling block to the devaluation of the green pound?

Mr. MacGregor: This is fundamentally a matter for the price proposals. I made it clear this week that it is necessary to take further steps towards achieving the objective of the complete removal of MCAs by 1992 when the single market comes into operation. We shall be discussing this matter at later Council meetings when we discuss the price proposals. With regard to the main stumbling blocks, there are divided views within the Community, and the Commission has made it clear that it is not making any proposals on this matter.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: When the Minister next meets the president of the NFU, will he alert him to the increased incidence of licensed security dealers in the City of London who are investing in agriculture-related stocks, and, in particular, to the operation of Afcor Investments Ltd., which specialises in this sector and whose investments are questionable? Will he also raise the matter with his colleague at the Department of Trade and Industry?

Mr. MacGregor: I know nothing of the question, so I shall look into it, but it is not the kind of matter that I normally discuss with the president of the NFU.

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: Will my right hon. Friend ensure that he does not agree to any devaluation of the green punt without a larger prior devaluation of the green pound, so that British beef producers do not suffer still further from the disparity between the two and a devaluation of the green punt that is not matched by at least an appropriate one of the green pound?

Mr. MacGregor: We have not got into detailed discussions on the price proposals yet, so the precise positions of the different member states is not yet clear. My hon. Friend will note that last year we had a devaluation of the green pound in relation to beef that was ahead of the Irish position, and the competitive difference has come down substantially in the past year or two.

Mr. Wallace: Will the Minister accept that, in Scotland at least, farm incomes in real terms are worth only one third of what they were worth 10 years ago? Does he recall that 10 years ago Conservative Members joined Liberal Members to beat the Government and force a revaluation of the green pound? Does the Conservative party accept that the case for devaluation must be prosecuted with as much vigour now as it was 10 years ago?

Mr. MacGregor: Farm incomes are under pressure throughout the world because of surpluses. It is because of that problem that we have been devoting so much effort to deal with the surpluses. The position of the green pound is a matter for agreement within the Council. Therefore, we have to get the proposal on the table if we are to get anywhere, and we have to get general discussion among the Twelve. That is where the issue has to be dealt with.

Forestry

6. **Mr. Marland:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a further statement on measures to stimulate tree planting.

Mr. Gummer: On 23 March we announced details of a new forestry grant scheme, to be known as the woodland

grant scheme, which is to be introduced on 5 April. Copies of a Forestry Commission leaflet on the scheme have been placed in the Library of the House. We also intend to introduce the farm woodland scheme later this year.

Mr. Marland: How will the new planting grants impact on the existing farm woodland scheme, about which the Conservative party is so enthusiastic?

Mr. Gummer: The farm woodland scheme, as my hon. Friend knows, is a mixture of two parts. There are the planting grants, which come from the Forestry Commission, and there are annual income grants to farmers to make up for the income that they have forgone by using that land for planting. Therefore, the farmers will benefit from the new planting grants that the Forestry Commission has announced, although we have interpreted them in such a way as to be of particular advantage for the planting of broadleaves and of rather less advantage for the planting of conifers.

Mr. David Nicholson: Can my right hon. Friend give the House an estimate of what effect the farm woodland scheme and set-aside are likely to have on land use and the countryside over the next decade?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend expects me to have a crystal ball of a kind that I would not claim to have. We believe that there is a considerable opportunity for farmers to use land in both these ways. We are trying to combine a regime of stricter price control with alternative uses. The advantage of the farm woodland scheme, which has been strongly welcomed by the Opposition—*[Interruption.]*—except, it seems by the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) will be seen quickly and clearly by farmers.

Research and Development

8. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the financial resources currently available for agricultural research.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The total of Government expenditure on research and development in agriculture and food planned for 1987-88 is approximately £195 million. In addition, much relevant research is done by the industry, particularly the food industry and industries which provide agricultural inputs such as agrochemicals and veterinary pharmaceuticals.

Mr. Hunter: When does my hon. Friend expect to come to conclusions about the future level of public funding for agricultural research and development, especially in the light of an internal review recently conducted?

Mr. Thompson: The internal review is still being conducted, and we have held informal discussions with various bodies, such as the Agricultural and Food Research Council, development councils, producer organisations, research associations and the IPCS.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: Is the Minister aware of the deep concern in Scotland at the continuing reduction in research facilities? Is he aware of the threat currently hanging over Torry research station in Grampian, and will he take action to ensure that we do not see the loss of this organisation?

Mr. Thompson: I am aware that there is concern in many areas about the new shifts of research, and about areas in which research is going down. That is partly because we are looking at research into diversification and extensification, rather than, as formerly, purely producing more and more food. I shall look into the hon. Lady's question and write to her.

Bees

9. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any proposals to hive off the responsibilities of his Department's bee officers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: No, Sir. From the next bee season we shall be concentrating our inspection for foulbrood on colonies where the disease is suspected or which have a recent history of the disease, but these inspections will continue to be carried out by the Ministry's bees officers.

Mr. Tony Banks: A stinging reply.

Mr. Allen: Earlier this week I put on the Order Paper a request for morning sittings. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the usual channels for responding so quickly.

Has the Minister received representations from the Nottinghamshire Beekeepers' Association? Is he aware that, by reducing the number of random checks of bee officers from his Ministry on the hives of this country he will encourage the spread of American foulbrood, European foulbrood and, indeed, the bee equivalent of myxomatosis, varroasis? Will the Minister now restore any of the cuts in bee inspections and stand up for the health of the British bee?

Mr. Thompson: Random sampling over the past 10 years of almost every hive has found disease in less than 1 per cent. of the flock, so the present level of inspection cannot be justified. Nevertheless, we shall inspect those premises that have foulbrood.

The inspections have prevented a further spread of the disease, and we now have a very healthy flock *[Interruption.]* We shall therefore inspect only premises where we suspect that the disease is present, or whose beekeeper asks us to inspect them.

Green Pound

10. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received about the level of the green pound; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I have received a number of representations on this subject. The majority have sought a devaluation for pigmeat. Some have concerned all or a number of sectors. Representations from food manufacturing interests have opposed devaluation.

Dr. Clark: I recognise that my right hon. Friend has already said that he is seeking a devaluation of the green pound. Is he aware, however, of the considerable importance attached by the British farming community to his success? Bearing in mind that the first 4 per cent. of any devaluation will be used to offset the drop in farm incomes brought about by the recent package of measures on stabilisers, is he seeking a devaluation greater than 4 per cent., so that there will be real benefit to the British farmer?

Mr. MacGregor: Of course I am aware of the feelings of farmers in this country, but I think it is important to keep the two matters separate. The stabiliser regime is necessary on its own, with—if production goes beyond the maximum guarantee quantity thresholds—the effects of price reductions. That is necessary to deal with the soaring cost of the common agricultural policy and the surpluses.

Devaluing the green pound is a question of fairer terms of competition between the member states, and is also strongly linked with the move towards the single market by 1992, when it must be right to get rid of the MCA system altogether. It is important to approach the two matters differently, and that is what I am doing.

Sir Charles Morrison: In my right hon. Friend's negotiations with other member states, will he remind them that they are meant to believe in the principle of fair competition? Are not British farmers suffering considerably because of the level of the green pound? Will he impress upon those member states that, as they have to get used to the principle of fair competition for 1992, it would be far better if they began to get used to it now?

Mr. MacGregor: I am sure my hon. Friend recognises that our competitiveness has vastly improved during the past year. United Kingdom MCAs are now 18 to 20 points lower than in February 1987, which is well over half in all sectors and more than three quarters for beef. That has significantly improved our competitive position. I agree about the importance of achieving competition on, overall, reasonably fair terms. I also agree about the importance of moving to that position ready for 1992, and that is what I stressed this week.

Coastal Protection

12. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received from coastal authorities on his proposed changes in the capital allocation for coastal protection works.

Mr. Gummer: Representations have been received from a number of coastal local authorities, from Members of this House, and from others with an interest in this matter.

Mr. Atkinson: Is my right hon. Friend aware of the important coastal protection work now under way in my constituency to save Hengistbury Head? Will he confirm that the proposed changes in capital allocation for 1988-89 will not affect schemes already under way or being considered by his Department?

Mr. Gummer: My hon. Friend has mistaken the concept. All that we have said is that although there will be 100 per cent. capital allocation, there will be some occasions on which we will not have sufficient funds to give that percentage. We shall, therefore, offer a lower rate to local authorities that can manage with a lower capital allocation. The change is not fundamental; it is merely a means of ensuring that we use all our capital allocation each year, rather than leave some unused because local authorities cannot have 100 per cent. of what they need.

Forestry

14. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations were held concerning the proposed new grant arrangements for forestry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The forestry grant scheme and broadleaved woodland grant scheme were closed to new applications from 15 March. In order to maintain the confidence of the forestry industry, it was essential to announce details of the replacement grant scheme as quickly as possible. The Forestry Commission therefore had to consider and finalise the details of the new scheme very quickly, which precluded prior consultations on them as such with outside bodies.

Mr. Davies: In retrospect, does the Minister think that it would have been better if he had consulted the forestry industry, farmers and environmental interests? Does he accept that the result of no consultation is two forestry policies—one for England and one for Scotland and Wales? Does he recognise that the environmental safeguards that apply to Scotland and Wales are lower than those for England? As MAFF is the lead Department with responsibility for the Forestry Commission, does he propose to take any initiative to even out the application of his policy to Scotland, Wales and England?

Mr. MacGregor: The policy, in most of its broad details, is applied uniformly throughout the United Kingdom. The difference to which the hon. Gentleman refers arises because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and I said that we would be unlikely to accept proposals for conifer planting in the English uplands. That is an English environmental matter. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, on environmental grounds and for forestry reasons that affect those two countries, took a different view on that aspect of the policy alone.

Overall, the policy is the same for all countries. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will approve of the emphasis in the farm woodland scheme on broadleaves rather than on conifers. There is only a marginal difference in the conditions for English upland areas, and that is for environmental reasons.

British Produce (Marketing)

15. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any further plans to promote the marketing of British produce; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The Government attach particular importance to the improvement of marketing. For that reason we set up Food from Britain in 1983. FFB has spent about £15 million so far at home and abroad, most of it provided by the Government. In each of the three years from 1988-89 our contribution will depend on industry providing at least £3 million.

Mr. Butler: Does my right hon. Friend agree that we have excellent products in this country, but that traditionally we have fallen down on the marketing of them? Does he not believe that we could do still better?

Mr. Gummer: I am sure that we could do better. Marketing is of great importance in the industry. It is in the market place that the farmer finds himself most at home. That is why I was pleased to see the excellent presentation of British food at the "Alimentaria" food fair in Spain, which is an increasingly important market.

Forestry

18. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received about his Department's policy towards the encouragement of the planting of deciduous trees in England and Wales in the light of the Budget taxation proposals.

Mr. MacGregor: I have received no such representations, but substantial encouragement for the planting of broadleaves will be provided by the new woodland grant scheme and by the proposed farm woodland scheme.

Mr. Chapman: While very much welcoming the Government's woodland grant scheme, may I ask my right hon. Friend to confirm that, with the present state of the agriculture industry, we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to start re-creating some of our lost woodlands? Does he understand the importance of that envronmentally as well as economically, in the light of the fact that we have probably lost about half our ancient woodlands in the past half century?

Mr. MacGregor: I agree with my hon. Friend that there is a good opportunity for three reasons—the surpluses, the environmental aspect and the other opportunities in farming. We have introduced the farm woodland scheme and it looks as if we shall get a good response to it.

PRIME MINISTER

Engagements

Q1. **Mrs. Maureen Hicks:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher): In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the President of Cyprus.

Mrs. Hicks: Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the chief superintendent of the police in Wolverhampton and the 250 police officers in the west midlands on their brave and successful initiative with Wolves earlier this week? Does she accept that we must continue to detect and punish the violent football offenders who are determined to wreck football matches and ruin the game for genuine football fans?

The Prime Minister: I think that the police in all parts of the country are to be congratulated on their determined efforts to tackle football hooliganism and to track down those responsible for this terrible offence that is doing so much damage to football. With good co-operation between the police, the Football Association and the clubs a good deal has already been achieved, but I agree with my hon. Friend that there is still a long way to go.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister aware that from tomorrow, when her changes in housing benefit and rate relief come into effect, an old lady on a basic pension will, because of the 20 per cent. rule, have to pay £2 a week instead of getting £500 rate relief per annum? An 87-year-old war widow with a small occupational pension will have her housing benefit reduced by £17·87 a week. A couple in work with a joint income of £82 a week will lose £16·50 in help with their rent and rates. This is an historic day. It is the first Maundy Thursday in history when, instead of giving money to the poor, rulers are taking money from the poor.

The Prime Minister: First, more is being given to the poor, as the right hon. Gentleman knows—a great deal more. Indeed, expenditure on social security has gone up from £16 billion to £46 billion—an enormous increase. It will go up a further £2 billion next year. That means —[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."]— I am answering the question and I insist on doing so in my own way. The average family will be paying £64 a week to finance social security. Yes, we have had structural changes. Yes, they were meant to re-target the money spent so that disabled people, families with children and those in low-paid work are better off. In cash terms transitional protection of income support means that 97 per cent. of sick and disabled people, 92 per cent. of couples with children, 89 per cent. of single parents and 87 per cent. of pensioners get more or the same.

Mr. Kinnock: The Prime Minister is making the same stupid mistake as she made with the National Health Service figures. First, does she not realise that there is no transitional arrangement for housing benefit and for the loss of rates relief, so that is utterly irrelevant? Secondly, the Prime Minister can play the numbers game as much as she likes. There are 9 million people in poverty in Britain now. In 1979 there were 6 million people who were reckoned to be in poverty. The right hon. Lady can talk about targeting as much as she likes, but does she not realise that if the targets missed include war widows, if the targets missed include people who are desperately sick, if the targets missed include hundreds of thousands of poor people, her targets are rubbish?

The Prime Minister: What the right hon. Gentleman is saying is that we can never have a restructuring of social security if anyone loses. It is an absolutely ridiculous thing to say. He totally ignores the enormous increases— *[Interruption.]* We deliberately re-targeted. I dealt with housing benefit last week. Yes, we deliberately did have changes. There is no blunder in the figures. The fact is that 97 per cent. of the sick and disabled, 92 per cent. of couples with children, 89 per cent. of single parents and 87 per cent. of pensioners are getting more or the same. As for war widows, they have more to thank this Government for than any previous Government. It was this Government who totally and utterly relieved war widows' pensions of tax, and I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for allowing me to say that once again.

Mr. Kinnock: Is the Prime Minister not aware that in order to get those figures she has had to lump together gainers and those who are reckoned to be neither gainers nor losers? The Minister who compiled those figures had to go to the Select Committee yesterday and admit that those who are reckoned to be neither gainers nor losers are already losers because, as he put it, their benefits were frozen in 1987. Does the Prime Minister not recognise that £650 million is being taken away from housing benefit and that 700,000 people will lose everything? They are people who have put a few bob away to tide them through their old age. The right hon. Lady is cutting them off without a penny.

The Prime Minister: Does the right hon. Gentleman not realise that expenditure that has increased from £16 billion to £46 billion, and that is going up by a further £2 billion, is, even on his arithmetic, an enormous increase?

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: Will my right hon. Friend join me in congratulating the miners at the Gedling colliery in my constituency on the figures that were announced earlier this week, which show that productivity over the last year has increased by nearly 25 per cent.? Does she agree that increased productivity and greater competitiveness offer the best guarantee for the long-term interests of the industry, not only in Gedling and Nottinghamshire, but throughout the British mining industry?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I join my hon. Friend in congratulating the miners on the excellent increase in productivity. I join him also in making it clear that there is a very good future for those who work in the mining industry when they produce coal at competitive prices and give a very good return on the massive amount of investment that this Government have ploughed into the mining industry. Many congratulations.

Dr. Owen: Will the Government rethink their appallingly short-sighted response to the report on AIDS and drug misuse in view of the fact that in Edinburgh 50 per cent. of those on injectable drugs now have the HIV AIDS virus, that this is by far the most likely route into the heterosexual community, and that unless money is spent in Edinburgh and in the country as a whole to control drug misuse we shall run a very serious risk of AIDS spreading into the community as a whole?

The Prime Minister: I do not agree with the right hon. Gentleman. He is very well aware of the large amount of money that has been spent on warning people about the dangers of the behaviour that they assume. We have tried to get over to them an excellent educational policy, and we have tried to make available very good extra facilities. A large amount of money has been put into extra research. I think that we have got the balance about right.

Mr. Cormack: When my right hon. Friend goes to church over Easter, will she see whether the collection is to go to the fabric fund? If it is, will she reflect, as she puts her contribution in the plate, that 15 per cent. is going to her next-door neighbour? Will she therefore have discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to see whether VAT can be removed from repairs to listed buildings, especially churches?

The Prime Minister: The Easter collection normally goes, as my hon. Friend, I think, knows well, to the clergy in the diocese, and I hope that it will continue to do so. I realise that my hon. Friend knew all that and only twisted the question the other way to make his point. The matter has been considered many times, and I do not think that there will be any change in the decision already made.

Q2. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Jones: As the Prime Minister is so dismissive of the views of the Citizens Advice Bureau, does she share the views of the member of her own party who said yesterday that pensioners with modest savings could lose up to £10 per week in housing benefit as a result of the changes coming into effect shortly? Will she give the House a straight answer?

The Prime Minister: It was a matter of policy that housing benefit should be cut off where people have £6,000 in capital in addition to the ownership of their house, which many of them also have. It was a matter of policy that those people should not be entitled to housing benefit. Every two households in this country support not only themselves but a third household and there really is a limit to the amount that we can have in housing benefit. Again, we think that we have got it right and that people without capital should not be forced to pay housing benefit to those with sums over £6,000.

Mr. Gow: When my right hon. Friend comes to reply to the letter sent to her by Amnesty International, apparently on behalf of three terrorists—mercifully now dead—will she point out that it is the organisation to which those terrorists belonged that has been in massive breach of all decent standards relating to human rights? Will she further point out that an inquest is to be carried out before a jury in Gibraltar and that the inquiry for which Amnesty International has asked is a stunt without status?

The Prime Minister: I agree with almost every word that my hon. Friend used in putting his question so ably. I hope that Amnesty has some concern for more than 2,000 people murdered by the IRA since 1969. There will be an inquest in Gibraltar and that is the proper occasion for the matters in question to be examined.

Q3. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Barnes: At a moment of weakness on the Cross, Jesus said:

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Why, by the time we come back after Easter, will the Government have forsaken the poor of this country?

The Prime Minister: As I said, the Government do not find resources; the people do. The people are already paying £46 billion to state social security, and it is going up by a further £2 billion. The average family will then be paying £64 a week to social security. That is a very considerable amount. It is not the Government, but the people who find resources.

Q4. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Bennett: Does my right hon. Friend agree that recent tragic events in Northern Ireland reinforce, if any reinforcement were necessary, the vital importance of the Army supporting the civil power there? Does she further agree that if the "Troops Out" movement, which is supported by many Opposition Members, were to be successful, it would place many innocent lives in Northern Ireland in jeopardy?

The Prime Minister: I agree with my hon. Friend. Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom and there

can be no question of withdrawing our troops while the security situation remains as it is and the IRA continues to murder and maim indiscriminately. I think my hon. Friend will agree that we have every reason to be grateful to the Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary for the considerable restraint and courage with which they carry out their duty.

Mr. Millan: Would the Prime Minister care to explain why she has chosen to meddle again in Scottish education and impose a major unwarranted and unwanted change —the opting out of schools? Would she care to explain why she intended to choose the dishonest and disreputable method of announcing the change through a planted amendment to the School Boards (Scotland) Bill?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that the system of governing schools in Scotland is quite different from that which obtains in England. He is aware that there is a Bill before the House which has received a First Reading and will soon receive a Second Reading. It will establish school boards in Scotland. That is the initial step which must be taken. There will be no addition—and nor could there be, under the Long Title, to make opting out a possibility during passage of the Bill. *[Interruption.]* We obviously take a totally different view. Our purpose is to increase choice in education, whereas the attitude on the other side of the House is that that is the education that Socialists want and the people must take it or leave it.

Q5. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

Mr. Burt: Will my right hon. Friend recall, especially this Easter time, Mr. Terry Waite and Mr. John McCarthy, who are captive in Beirut? Will she note the deep concern that is felt on both sides of the House for those two good men and all other innocent political hostages? Can she reassure the House and the families of those men that everything possible is being done to secure their release which does not put further innocent lives at risk?

The Prime Minister: Yes, we are very much aware of those two people and of all those who have been taken hostage. My hon. Friend is aware of the policy that we pursue. We will make representations on their behalf and follow up every lead to try to see that they are in reasonable health and are kept in reasonable circumstances. We will not pay ransom, because to do so would only mean that more hostages are taken. We do not forget these people and are well aware, particularly during public holidays, of the great strain that their families are under.

Business of the House

10.31 am

Mr. Frank Dobson (Holborn and St. Pancras): Will the Leader of the House state the business for the week in which we return after the recess?

The Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Wakeham): The business for the first week after the Easter Adjournment will be as follows:

TUESDAY 12 APRIL—Second Reading of the School Boards (Scotland) Bill.

Motion on the Church Commissioners (Assistance for Priority Areas) Measure.

WEDNESDAY 13 APRIL—Progress on remaining stages of the Health and Medicines Bill.

Afterwards motion relating to the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations.

THURSDAY 14 APRIL—Completion of remaining stages of the Health and Medicines Bill.

FRIDAY 15 APRIL—Private Members' Bills.

Mr. Dobson: I am grateful to the Leader of the House for his statement.

When can we expect a debate in Government time on the proposed sale of Rover to British Aerospace? In view of what we have just heard from the Prime Minister, may we expect a ministerial statement to establish exactly what is the Government's policy on allowing opting out of schools in Scotland? Is it as demanded by the Prime Minister in the leaked letter to the office of the Secretary of State and confirmed by her today, or is it as stated, and frequently repeated, by the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland? Parents in Scotland are entitled to some clarification.

When does the Leader of the House expect to tell us that there is to be a general inquiry into leaks from the Prime Minister's office, or is it that civil servants are gaoled when they leak what embarrasses the Prime Minister and promoted when they leak what pleases her?

Will the Leader of the House provide a fifth day on the Floor of the House for debate on the remaining stages of the poll tax Bill? He will be aware that the Secretary of State for the Environment tabled amendments to the Bill after the guillotine was introduced. We think that the Opposition and those Conservative Members who claim to oppose the poll tax should have an opportunity to debate in full those amendments and all other aspects of the Bill.

Although we recognise that the security services were rightly concerned to prevent a terrorist explosion in Gibraltar, when can we expect a ministerial statement to be made which explains what happened and how the press came to be misled into carrying false information about the subsequent shooting? My right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) has still not had answers to the 10 questions that he put to the Foreign Secretary and until answers are given to those questions many people in this country will be perturbed about what is believed to have happened and this country's reputation will suffer.

Does the Leader of the House recall that on Tuesday the Prime Minister invited the Opposition to put down a motion to cancel the social security changes due at the beginning of April? Will he guarantee that, if we put down such a motion, the Government will find time for it to be debated and that the Prime Minister will take part in the debate and display to the whole country her expertise in robbing the poor to pay off the rich?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman asked me a number of questions about business for the week after the Easter recess and other matters.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether there should be a debate on the Rover Group and the recent arrangements with British Aerospace. We can best discuss that through the usual channels, but the Government will be happy to have a debate on that, if the time can be found for it.

With regard to Scotland, the points at issue could, with a little skill, be brought into the debate on Tuesday 12 April on the Second Reading of the School Boards (Scotland) Bill.

With regard to leaks, I do not believe that it would be right to have a general inquiry. I should have thought that the Opposition would have believed that proper government required confidential arrangements for dealing with matters and would have deprecated leaks rather than seeking to make political capital out of them whenever they occur.

I recognise that there is concern in some quarters of the House about whether there is adequate time for the Local Government Finance Bill. The House has passed a timetable motion in respect of the Bill, but I should be happy to have discussions through the usual channels to see whether satisfactory arrangements can be made.

As for the events in Gibraltar, I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would have agreed with the Prime Minister that it was right for the inquest in Gibraltar to have been conducted in accordance with the law and that any questions that might not be answered at that time could then be dealt with more appropriately through discussions with the Foreign Secretary and his right hon. Friend. I believe that it is the right course for the inquest to take place, although, of course, that is not a matter for me.

With regard to the Opposition motion on social security matters, there is an established procedure to discuss on Opposition days matters that the Opposition choose. No doubt—

Mr. Dobson: The Prime Minister asked for a debate.

Mr. Wakeham: The Prime Miniter made a suggestion as to what the Opposition might like to discuss. That is a matter for the Opposition and, when a Supply day is organised, no doubt they will have to choose the subject that they want to discuss. I have no doubt that whichever Minister replies to the debate will see off the Opposition once again.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. The House knows that this is a day for private Members' Adjournment debates. I shall allow business questions to run until 11 o'clock. I hope, therefore, that hon. Members will ask brief questions.

Mr. Roger Sims (Chislehurst): Does my right hon. Friend recall the emotional impact of the Vietnamese boat people who arrived in Hong Kong some years ago? Is he aware that several thousand refugees are still in camps in Hong Kong, some of them the original arrivals, and that when the governor of Hong Kong was in London recently he was apparently unable to persuade Her Majesty's

Government to allow some of those refugees to settle in Britain and thus encourage other countries to help in solving this problem? Will my right hon. Friend consider allowing the House to debate our moral obligation to those refugees and, indeed, the people and Government of Hong Kong, who have shouldered the burden for so long?

Mr. Wakeham: That is an important matter in Hong Kong and it is of wider concern, but I cannot promise my hon. Friend an early debate on it. However, I shall refer the point that he has raised to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Mr. Norman Hogg (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth): Will the Leader of the House accept that, since the Secretary of State for Scotland is here today, and likewise the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland with responsibility for education, it would be appropriate to have a statement at 11 o'clock on the situation which obtains as a result of the now celebrated leaks which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald*? I am referring to the School Boards (Scotland) Bill and the Government's intention to bring forward proposals for opting out.

Will the right hon. Gentleman further accept that all those circumstances, which have been created largely by the Prime Minister, have caused the Secretary of State for Scotland to become something of a figure of ridicule in Scotland, which is not in anyone's interests? Such a situation cannot continue, and it would be in the Government's interest if a statement were to be made at 11 o'clock.

Mr. Wakeham: I am tempted to discuss other matters of ridicule, but I will not. The Prime Minister tried, and I tried yesterday, to set out the position with regard to education in Scotland. The right thing to do is to discuss this matter in the debate on the day that we return after the Easter Adjournment.

Mr. Teddy Taylor (Southend, East): In view of the most worrying statement this morning by the chairman of the excellent British Aerospace that his results have been devastated by losses on the Airbus contract, will the Government make an early statement about whether they have any powers to bring some economic management into that project and to stop the creation of a mountatin of state-aided and unsaleable planes?

Mr. Wakeham: I cannot accept what my hon. Friend says about the management of that project, but I shall certainly refer the matter to my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Mr. James Wallace (Orkney and Shetland): The Leader of the House is undoubtedly aware of the great concern in Scotland about the leaked proposals. Will he say whether, in the absence of a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, the Government would be prepared to send the School Boards (Scotland) Bill to a Select Committee before it is referred to a Standing Committee, or does he have news to report on the progress of setting up a Select Committee on Scottish Affairs?

Can the Leader of the House help us? Does he know why the Leader of the Opposition appears to have discontinued the convention that he asks the Leader of the House the question on business? Is he too busy fighting on other fronts?

Mr. Wakeham: I am always sorry when the Leader of the Opposition is not here, and that is no criticism of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), who stands in admirably for him. However, the Leader of the Opposition does seem to have one or two matters on his plate at the moment, and we shall await developments.

My task here today — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman asked me about the School Boards (Scotland) Bill and I am trying to answer him. My job is to announce the business, not the contents of ministerial speeches, and he will have to wait until Tuesday 12 April for that.

Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire): May I share with my right hon. Friend the concern just expressed that the Leader of the Opposition seems to have abandoned the long-standing convention of his being here for business questions? Perhaps my right hon. Friend will take an early opportunity to explain that to the House.

May I urge on my right hon. Friend an early debate, ranging across the whole spectrum of political policy, so that the various Labour party leadership candidates may give to their colleagues and the House the fullest explanation of their policies? Perhaps they will be prepared to give a statement on whether any one of them elected to the leadership of the Opposition would be prepared to liaise with any of the others elected as deputy leader. Opposition Members are entitled to know the answer to that vital question.

Mr. Wakeham: As usual, my hon. Friend is being extremely charitable to the Opposition. However, having heard some of the right hon. and hon. Members who are candidates, my experience is that at the end of their speeches one is not much clearer what their policies are.

I am not sure that my hon. Friend's way is the right way to proceed.

Mr. Nigel Spearing (Newham, South): When will there be a statement on the Agriculture Ministers' meeting which took place earlier this week? Would it not have been better for the statement to have been made today? Will it be made when we return from the recess? Is the Leader of the House aware that 21 documents arising from the Copenhagen and Brussels meetings need to be debated in the House? Will he guarantee that they will be debated before decisions are taken?

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the April business statement for EEC matters is not in the Vote Office? Does he agree that these matters are not up to scratch in a procedural sense, and should not the Leader of the House ensure that matters are improved as soon as possible?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. Gentleman keeps a close watch on these matters. He is aware that I have had discussions and I recognise that there were some shortcomings in what happened in the past. We are doing our best to improve the position. There were certain discussions through the usual channels about the most convenient way of handling statements in the House. I will take on board the points raised by the hon. Gentleman and try to improve in the other areas.

Mr. Ivor Stanbrook (Orpington): Is my right hon. Friend aware of any early-day motion which has attracted the support of more than 350 hon. Members? Does not such support reflect the strong feeling in the House about the anomaly whereby all public service pensioners' war

[Mr. Ivor Stanbrook]

service is included for pensions purposes unless their service was abroad? In view of the strong feeling expressed by the vast majority of hon. Members on both sides of the House, is there any need for a debate? Should not the proposal just be introduced?

Mr. Wakeham: I recognise how strongly my hon. Friend and other hon. Members feel about this. As he is aware, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs has said that he would be glad to discuss the issue again with my hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) and a number of his colleagues. That is perhaps the best way to proceed.

Mrs. Ann Clwyd (Cynon Valley): As a result of the considerable concern over the Government's poll tax proposals, their complexity and the fact that amendments were introduced by the Secretary of State for the Environment after the guillotine fell, will the Leader of the House ensure that an extra day is made available so that those proposals can be explored in considerable detail in the House before we vote on them?

Mr. Wakeham: I do not believe that the fact that there are Government amendments automatically means that the guillotine motion passed by the House is invalid and should be reconsidered. That is not a precedent that I can accept. The question is rather the number of amendments, their complexity and whether there is adequate time. I told the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), the Opposition Front Bench spokesman, that I would have discussions through the usual channels. We will look at this again, although the House has settled the matter.

Mr. Nicholas Baker (Dorset, North): Will my right hon. Friend find time to discuss the report published today by the Haringey education authority which recommends that children should be required to learn about
"gay scientists, lesbian stand-up comics and Nazi persecution of homosexuals"?
Will join me in condemning pernicious rubbish of this kind and support a policy for the sake of the nation's children and to prevent discrimination by way of reaction against the homosexual community that local authorities should not try to pretend that homosexuality is a pretended family relationship?

Mr. Wakeham: I agree entirely with my hon. Friend, but I cannot find time in the week after the Easter recess for a debate on that subject.

Mr. Tony Banks (Newham, North-West): May I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 919, which marks the fact that today is the second anniversary of the abolition of the Greater London council?

[That this House notes that 31st March marks the second anniversary of the abolition of the Greater London Council; calls attention to the loss to London of bold, imaginative and socially responsible policies in the areas of transport, planning, housing, recreation and the arts; further notes the cuts being imposed by the Government upon the London Fire Brigade together with the general deterioration during the past two years of London's services and infrastructure; and calls for the restitution of London-wide local government, together with a single voice for the capital city and the return of a sense of London identity and zest for living which two years ago emanated from County Hall.]

Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in many respects services and infrastructure in London, particularly with regard to transport, planning and housing, have descended into unplanned chaos? The right hon. Gentleman has promised an early debate on London. When will it take place?

Mr. Wakeham: I congratulate those who tabled the early-day motion, because without it we would have quite forgotten the anniversary. Perhaps we should have a minute's silence from the hon. Gentlem[illegible] year. That would contribute more to good government than anything else that he has done. I listened carefully to what he said, but I cannot promise an early debate on the subject.

Mr. Harry Greenway (Ealing, North): Will my right hon. Friend take note of the reduction in rates payable by Londoners since the abolition of the GLC, for which we are all grateful, which we do not want back in any form?

Will my right hon. Friend consider early-day motion 752, signed by hon. Members on both sides of the House?

[That this House calls upon Her Majesty's Government to press the European Economic Community to renew the import ban on baby seal products as a means of maintaining pressure for a ban on the inhumane culling of baby seals, wherever they occur.]

May we have an early debate on this important matter?

Mr. Wakeham: That is an important matter. The Government strongly support the current EEC directive banning the import of harp and hooded seal pup skins and products on conservation grounds. A review of the conservation status of those two species will be undertaken before the expiry of the directive at the end of September 1989. No expiry date has been attached to our national measures to implement the directive under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act 1976.

Mr. Bob Cryer (Bradford, South): May we have a debate on the Register of Members' Interests, especially in view of the abuses that have come to light, including the planting of 58 parliamentary questions on behalf of Price Waterhouse and the recent article in the *Daily Mirror* demonstrating that Morgan Grenfell appears to regard Members of Parliament as being available for hire?

I draw the attention of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 927, which calls for an inquiry into the sale of the Rover Group and especially the role of the right hon. Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit).

[That this House notes the £2·9 billion paid to rescue British Leyland, now called the Rover Group, by the taxpayer; is astonished that British Aerospace is effectively being paid £650 million to take over the sole remaining British volume car-maker with assets valued at over £700 million and an improving financial position; demands that any benefits go to the nation; and calls for a full inquiry into this bizarre deal and the position of the Right honourable Member for Chingford as adviser to the Chair of British Aerospace in the conduct of negotiations.]

Would it not be better to discuss all those matters and the effectiveness of the register in an early debate?

Mr. Wakeham: I know that the hon. Gentleman wishes to be helpful in these matters. I have noted the Select

Committee's proposal about the changes to be made in the registration of directorships and its further consideration of lobbying, but I do not see the need for a debate. Although there is a stronger case for a debate on the Rover Group, I can add nothing to what I have already said to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson).

Mr. Nicholas Bennett (Pembroke): In the light of the successful completion last night of the Committee stage of the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, after three and a half days of exhaustive, if not exhausting, debate, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that if the Bill was obstructed on the Floor of the House on Report and Third reading, and was not completed, many people who have a great interest in the subject would look to the Government to provide time so that the House could make a final decision on the matter?

Mr. Wakeham: The Government have made their position clear. At the beginning of the Session, we provided additional time for private Members' Bills generally, and, except in wholly exceptional cases, we do not believe that we should provide additional time for any Bill, however important it is or how much support it attracts. But I agree with my hon. Friend that the whole House would deprecate the use of procedural tactics to try to stop it reaching a decision on the matter.

Mr. Rhodri Morgan (Cardiff, West): Has the Leader of the House read early-day motion 922, which has been signed by more than 120 Labour Members of Parliament?

[That this House notes the Prime Minister's apparent wish for a debate on her social security changes; believes that the challenge she issued to the Leader of the Opposition on this subject on Tuesday 29th March was solely intended to cover up her own confusion; and invites the Prime Minister therefore to propose a debate in Government time and on a Government motion to enable the Leader of her Majesty's Official Opposition to respond to her challenge.]

It seems to commemorate another second anniversary — the last time that the Prime Minister spoke in a debate in the House. Does the Leader of the House agree that the 62 new Labour Members are suffering from a form of sensory deprivation, which is a great disappointment to them, not having heard the Prime Minister's spout-to-kill policy in operation? Does he agree that the social security changes that will be introduced on 11 April would provide a suitable opportunity for a debate involving the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Wakeham: I had noticed that early-day motion, but it completely misses the point made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on Tuesday. If the Opposition are so set against the social security increases that will go to the overwhelming majority of claimants after 11 April, they should give themselves the opportunity to stop those increases.

Mr. Allen Adams (Paisley, North): Given that once again this week the Prime Minister has behaved towards Scotland with all the sensitivity of a sex-starved boa constrictor, will the Leader of the House——

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not know whether there is anything in "Erskine May" about that sort of comment, but I do not think that it adds to the dignity of the House. As it is Easter, I hope that the hon. Gentleman will rephrase his question.

Mr. Adams: Of course I withdraw it, Mr. Speaker. I would not call the Prime Minister a sex-starved boa constrictor, but outside this place I have heard a number of people refer to the Prime Minister in those terms.

Will the Leader of the House try to get the Secretary of State for Scotland off his knees for five minutes and bring him into the Chamber to make a statement on Scottish education so that we may know exactly what the Government's policy is?

Mr. Wakeham: If the hon. Gentleman is trying to influence me or change my mind, he will have to do much better than that.

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): Is the Leader of the House aware that many pensioners are extremely angry about losing the pension increase because of the delay in payment until 11 April? Will he arrange to dip into the money that the Government are saving by robbing pensioners of their pension increases to pay for free television licences for all pensioner households? Those licences will be increased on 1 April.

Will the right hon. Gentleman also arrange for the Secretary of State for Social Services, on the first day back, to make a statement on the changes in the social security system, which the Government have called historic, to enable the House to put questions to him about the problems that will inevitably arise from those changes?

Will the Leader of the House ensure that citizens advice bureaux are not victimisied by the Prime Minister but are given additional funds to deal with the avalanche of queries arising from the social security changes?

Mr. Wakeham: The answer to all the questions except the last one is no, Sir. The hon. Gentleman's question on funding for citizens advice bureaux is not a matter for me.

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn (Islington, North): Will the Leader of the House ensure that during the week after the recess there is a debate on foriegn affairs, and especially the Prime Minister's forthcoming trip to Turkey? Will he convey to her the wish of many hon. Members and many British people that, instead of approving the veneer of democracy that the Turkish Government try to put on their country, she should instead visit the prisons in Turkey, which are the most overcrowded and which have the largest prison population in Europe?

She should also visit Diyarbakir in eastern Turkey where many Kurdish people are being killed by the Turkish army, and she should call for the release of Mr. Kutlu and Dr. Sargin, the general secretaries of the Communist party and the Workers party respectively, who have been held in prison and tortured but have not yet been brought to trial. Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the Prime Minister denounces this travesty of democracy in the name of this country?

Mr. Wakeham: I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will have a successful and informative visit to Turkey. I have already said that the time is approaching when we should have another debate on foreign affairs. I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House wish to discuss many issues, but I cannot promise such a debate in the near future.

Mr. Greville Janner (Leicester, West): May we have a debate very soon on the extraordinary saga of the disappearing documents, which were in the Public Record Office, relating to war crimes in general and to the allegations against President Waldheim in particular? Will the Leader of the House draw the attention of the Foreign Secretary to the leading article in *The Times* today about an alleged deal with Allied intelligence, and will he assure the House that the Easter holiday will not be used by our military intelligence to remove yet more documents from those files?

Mr. Wakeham: The hon. and learned Gentleman wishes me to refer that report in the newspapers to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. I shall certainly do that. I know how strongly the hon. and learned Gentleman feels about some of these issues, but I cannot promise him an early debate on the matter.

Mr. Barry Porter (Wirral, South): Will my right hon. Friend find time for a debate on the troubles of Prescot, or indeed the troubles caused by Prescott? Prescot requires, indeed demands, new employment and it is right that the problems of this small town in south Lancashire should be debated in the House.

Mr. Wakeham: I regret that I cannot find time next week for that very important subject.

Mr. David Winnick (Walsall, North): I welcome any move by the Home Secretary to ensure that there is adequate protection for African National Congress representatives in London following the assassination that took place in France. Would it be possible for the Foreign Secretary to call in the South African ambassador and make it perfectly clear that Britain will not tolerate the South African authorities' murder squads operating in this country? Would the Leader of the House also remind the Foreign Secretary that the ANC offices have, on numerous occasions, been burgled and that on one occasion they were fire-bombed? We must tell South Africa that its murder squads and other hit agents cannot operate in the United Kingdom under any circumstances.

Mr. Wakeham: I have no idea whether the hon. Gentleman's allegations are correct. However, I shall refer the points he made to my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Mr. Tony Worthington (Clydebank and Milngavie): The Leader of the House must act to end the tragi-comedy of Scottish education policy where the Secretary of State for Scotland is being turned into the Kurt Waldheim of the Government Benches; he only obeys orders. Will the Leader of the House arrange for the Prime Minister to come and tell us about Scottish education policy because the Secretary of State does not know about it?

Mr. Wakeham: What is tragic is the way in which the Opposition get excited about some of these things and make a great deal of fuss and then realise that they are barking up the wrong tree. What I have done to try to assist them is to arrange the Second Reading of the School Boards (Scotland) Bill on Tuesday 12 April, and if they get their act together, they can make their points in that debate.

Several Hon. Members *rose*——

Mr. Speaker: Order. In view of the fact that the Adjournment debates are starting half an hour later than is shown on the Order Paper, the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) should divide the time between them. The debate of the hon. Member for Newbury will continue until 11.30 and the debate of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East will be from 11.30 until 12 o'clock.

Mr. Tam Dalyell (Linlithgow): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot take points of order now. This is private Members' time.

Mr. Dalyell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I asked you for a ruling yesterday, as reported in column 1107 of *Hansard*, on the issue of leaks by civil servants and politicians. My question is simple: are you going to consider that, possibly over the Easter recess, in the light of what was reported in column 1107?

Mr. Speaker: I shall be considering throughout the Easter recess what went on yesterday.

Light Aircraft (Safety)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

11.2 am

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Newbury): I am grateful for this opportunity to speak about the safety of light aircraft. I do so as deputy chairman of the Air Safety Group, an organisation on which are representatives of all the main political parties. If 1988 is anything like previous years for light aircraft accidents—by "light aircraft" I mean aircraft below 5,700 kg in weight—there will probably be at least 200 accidents, some of which will be fatal.

In 1987, 56 people were killed in crashes of that sort. On the face of it, that sounds like a large number of accidents until one realises that there are about 4,000 aircraft in that category. Nevertheless, the chances of being killed in a light aircraft are 46 times greater than in a commercial jet. A total of 200 accidents, even if they represent only 5 per cent. of light aircraft in operation, is a high number and in recent months I have tried to discover whether there are any similar features in light aircraft accidents that call for remedial action. To some extent, I think that my research has paralleled that of the Civil Aviation Authority, the inquiries of which proceed.

In a press release in October 1987, Mr. Christopher Tugendhat, chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority, said about last year's figures:

"Whereas fatal accidents involving UK public transport aircraft are very rare, the fatal accident record for light aircraft operated by private individuals and flying clubs has shown a disturbing increase."

He went on to say:

"I am asking a CAA task force to analyse these accidents to see whether there are any common threads and if anything can be done."

This morning I want to suggest some steps that should be taken. I do so after talking to private flyers, those who run flying clubs and the accidents investigation branch of the Department of Transport at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough.

The first and most surprising discovery I made during my investigations was that there is no legal requirement for light aircraft owners to have third party insurance. Obviously, some pilots have that as well as personal accident insurance. However, despite the number of accidents to which I have referred, insurance remains an optional extra. I find that disturbing. After all, light aircraft crashes often cause fatalities not just to the pilot and his passengers but to members of the public.

To give one example, in September 1985, at Fordingbridge, a microlight aircraft that had been flown to a school fete crashed when taking off from the fete. It killed a woman and injured her child as well as five other people in the crowd and the pilot. The pilot was not insured. As it happens, it was the first microlight crash in which a member of the public has been killed in this country. I refer to it solely because it illustrates the hazards inherent in private flying and the reason why third party insurance should be a legal requirement. In fact, had that pilot taken out third party insurance, it would have cost him £120 per annum, and, if he had personal accident insurance, that would have cost a further £500 per annum.

Of course, insurance will not prevent crashes or save lives, but it means that victims of such accidents can receive compensation. I commend to my hon. Friend the Minister the suggestion for compulsory third party insurance for private pilots.

When I visited the accidents investigation branch at RAE Farnborough, it told me that on average there are about 150 reportable accidents a year involving private light aircraft, including club aeroplanes. A reportable accident is one in which there has been a death or serious injury or in which the aircraft was missing or has been badly damaged. If someone has been killed, the accidents investigation branch sends out a team to the site of the crash for a field examination a report is submitted to the CAA. Roughly four months later the accidents investigation branch will publish an account of the crash in its bulletin. That bulletin is widely circulated among aircraft operators, flying clubs and manfucturers. However, private pilots will probably not see it unless they are a member of a club.

To obtain a private pilot's licence, the would-be pilot has to undergo a medical examination before he or she obtains a student pilot's licence. He will probably go solo after 10 to 15 hours training and will receive his licence after 40 hours in the air. Once he or she has received their PPL, they will be required to fly for at least five hours a year, in fact during a 13-month period. Depending on when they fly the five hours, it would be possible for them to fly those hours within a two-year time frame. However, those five hours are meant to be a refresher course, proving that the pilot is keeping up to date with the requirements of his aircraft, modern air space and aircraft regulations.

It must be anybody's guess as to whether five hours in 13 months or over a period of two years is enough to ensure that a pilot maintains his skills and remains fully conversant with the flying scene. Most flying clubs will not allow their members to use their aircraft if they have not flown during the previous three months. However, as long as a private pilot notches up his five hours in those months, he will continue to possess his licence and be entitled to fly.

That position does not exist in America, although there is much more private flying there. In America, private pilots must have a check-up with a qualified instructor every two years before they can continue to fly. That seems to be a sensible procedure that I suggest we should follow.

I have already referred to the medical examination that every would-be pilot must have before being given a student pilot's licence. When he obtains his PPL, assuming he is under 40 years of age, he will not be required to have another medical examination for five years. When he is between 40 and 50 years of age, he will have to have an examination every two years, and only when he is between 50 and 70 will he be required to have an annual health check-up.

Perhaps such wide intervals up to the age of 50 are acceptable and based on medical advice, but an annual medical when a licence is renewed would not seem to be unreasonable, particularly as 60 per cent. of light aircraft accidents are put down to pilot error, while only 30 per cent. are put down to mechanical failure, and the remaining 10 per cent. are put down to other reasons, of which attempted aerobatics make up a sizeable chunk.

Pilot error brings me back to the airmanship of the pilot, his knowledge of his machine and of the elements through which he will fly. Over and again, I was told that weather plays a crucial part in accidents and that, although pilots will have been through a meteorology and navigation test, too often they ignore weather conditions

[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]

unless they are flying club aircraft. In that case, they can fly only if the chief flying instructor agrees; otherwise the decision to fly is the pilot's. He may or may not have an instrument rating. He may or may not possess effective information about the weather conditions into which he will fly, but if he decides to go, he may do so.

I have not seen a breakdown of accidents showing the extent to which weather is a contributory factor, but I know that icing on wings has caused several crashes. That leads me to ask whether the present meteorology exams are still enough and whether something more should be put in their place.

My hon. Friend the Minister knows that private aircraft are not required to be equipped with radio transmitters, although most modern aircraft, other than microlights, have them. It is a safety measure. Those to whom I have spoken seem to want to leave the situation as it is.

Club aeroplanes are maintained on a transport category certificate of airworthiness, which is to a higher standard than that required of a private pilot, who is allowed to do a certain amount of maintenance for himself. There are 50-hour checks and 100-hour checks. I said that club maintenance is to a higher standard than that which is required of a private pilot, but it depends on enforcement of the regulations.

Last summer, I flew to France in a club aeroplane. I was surprised to find that several instruments were malfunctioning. Our pilot, who happened to be my nephew, got us to Abbeville and back safely. When we arrived home at the club, another pilot and his family were waiting to fly the aircraft somewhere else. Nobody checked the instruments. Presumably that pilot, too, handled an aircraft with malfunctioning instruments. It illustrated the point that perhaps the CAA does not police private flying as scrupulously as is required.

It is inevitable that, in a short debate such as this, I shall have overlooked certain points that also contribute to aircraft safety. I have not referred to drunken flying, yet there is no doubt that it is a contributory factor to accidents. It is reasonable to ask whether we use our air space to ensure maximum safety for commercial aircraft and privately owned small aircraft, and whether club airfields are properly equipped with radar. Perhaps, as our air space becomes more widely used, the time has come to consider a measure of re-regulation, and to take a searching look at the general safety of light aircraft and those who fly in them.

11.13 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley): The House will be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) for introducing this subject. I pay tribute to his work as deputy chairman of the air safety group. He rightly said that commercial aircraft safety is at a welcome, high level. The general problems of those using light aircraft, often referred to as general aviation, deserve as much attention as those of us who fly as commercial passengers. Obviously, the regulatory regimes are different. I am glad that my hon. Friend acknowledged the role of the Civil Aviation Authority. Again, its competence and responsibility deserve praise. It does a good job on behalf of the people of this country.

My hon. Friend drew attention to the increase in the number of fatal accidents. In 1987, the number rose to 25. From 1981 to 1986, the number fluctuated between 13 and 20. The significance of the increase has been considered by the civil aviation study group.

I shall tell the House about the CAA's present views on light aircraft safety. Parliament has entrusted to the CAA all aspects of aviation safety regulation. It is for the authority to determine what steps are required to ensure safety in this important sector of aviation. The Government wholeheartedly support the CAA. Regulatory experience and expertise rests with the authority. I am grateful to it for providing me with factual material for today's debate. I shall arrange for the authority to respond to any points that I may not be able fully to answer in the available time.

Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson: May I press my hon. Friend the Minister a shade further on third party insurance? If there were to be such a requirement, would it entail legislation, or could the CAA make such a request to him?

Mr. Bottomley: That is exactly the sort of point to which my hon. Friend may get a detailed response later. The owner or operator of an aircraft is strictly liable for injury or damage to people or property on the ground. That is covered by section 76 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982. As my hon. Friend said, there is no legal requirement for an owner or operator to have insurance. It is for an owner or operator to decide the level of insurance for third party purposes.

It is worth noting that most owners and operators are fully insured. All United Kingdom airlines take out insurance to cover all risks. The vast majority of general aviation is also covered. It is believed that most sporting aviators and private pilots have cover. We shall be grateful to see any evidence that people can provide to the CAA or to the Government. It is the type of issue that Parliament should consider.

Towards the end of 1987, the mounting total of United Kingdom light aircraft accidents began to cause concern in the aviation community. The CAA set up a study group to investigate the scale of the problem and to decide whether there were common causes. The group was required also to identify regulatory and other measures that could be expected to halt and reverse the undesirable trend. I may have to double-check the number of fatal accidents in 1987. I am not absolutely certain whether the total is 25 or 29, but I shall clear up that point. The difference may be the four microlight and helicopter accidents.

My hon. Friend referred to one microlight accident. The CAA investigation concentrated on the major group of powered fixed-wing light aircraft. It was considered that the operating environment and handling characteristics of helicopters and microlight aircraft differ from the main group in so many fundamental ways that their inclusion would hinder analysis. The analysis set out to determine the precise scale of the problem and to relate the significance of the relevant 25 accidents to past records. I shall pass over some of the details of that, but it will be in the CAA report that will come out shortly.

A statistical analysis was applied to the observed variations in accident counts in specific areas, such as technical and weather factors. No individual factors were

found to be significant. In summary, the CAA's statistical work at the end of 1987 suggested that the rise in accident figures for the year may have been significant. The CAA's interpretation was that, based on previous data, the figures were somewhat higher than what one might expect. Satisfactory analysis to verify or to refute the interim interpretation would require accurate figures on hours flown.

The study group found no grounds for complacency. Other major aviation countries, such as the United States of America and Canada, have significantly reduced their general aviation accident rates during the past 10 years. In the same period, the United Kingdom's rate has remained at a fairly constant but higher level. It might be expected that figures for the United Kingdom would, at worst, mirror international levels. There is a clear implication that positive measures to reduce the future United Kingdom accident rate must be implemented.

The group agreed that, irrespective of the final, accurate trend determination, there was a need at present to continue the search for significant accident causes and to develop proposals for remedy. I am sure that the group will be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury for raising the issue in the House.

Four major activity problem sectors have been identified and examined in detail—multi-engined aircraft accidents, weather-related accidents, accidents attributable to technical causes and private — non-club — accidents. Those problem sectors matched the concerns that my hon. Friend mentioned and I am sure that the House will appreciate the research that went into his speech and the way in which he raised the issue.

The selection filter for those areas was simply the fact of their relatively high frequency of occurrence in the 1987 statistics. Specific remedial action might logically be expected to be the most cost-effective.

In all those investigations, the most common recurring theme was "error of judgment." The group felt that general and particular issues should be addressed in the search for improvement. That implies an examination of the pilot error aspects of accidents, with particular emphasis on the need to improve the general level of decision-making made by light aircraft pilots. It also takes account of the four main problem sectors and calls for more specific examination of the factors affecting them.

The CAA concluded that additional general aviation regulation was not likely to be effective in the pursuit of improved decision-making because strict adherence to existing regulations would have eliminated a high proportion of the accidents. The basic problem is determination of the causes of lack of adherence to regulations and the development of remedial proposals. Without them, the imposition of additional regulations would be irrational and probably nugatory.

When pilots fail to adhere to existing regulations they do so either because they have personality problems prompting them to disregard constraints or because they are unaware of the existence or significance of the regulations. In either case, the remedy lies primarily in better training and education and only partly in a more vigorous application or policing of existing regulations.

Despite some concern that has been expressed by the general aviation community, no correlation was established between the weather-related accident count and recent changes in the aviation meteorological services in the United Kingdom. It was accepted that the service can provide all necessary information for safety operations. There is a recognised need to ensure that all general aviation pilots are made aware of the details of the modified service. Action already taken by National Air Traffic Services should largely cover that need. Many pilots operating outside club environments are not easily accessible for information distribution services, but a solution to this problem is needed.

The development of an effective system for preparation and dissemination of appropriate further education material requires more attention. It is improbable that such a programme could be effected without additional cost, and that may be difficult to justify in the face of current debates about the CAA's regulatory responsibility for non-commercial aviation activity.

There is a body of opinion in the sporting and recreational aviation community that supports the concept of self-regulation for such activities. It is argued that such flying is a sport, with no more or less inherent risk than others such as motor cycling, mountaineering, skiing or sailing, and that light aviation should be subject to no more regulation than is applied to those sports.

The view of the CAA is less sanguine. Aircraft in flight over land are regarded by many on the ground as a noisy, physical threat. They share the United Kingdom air space with growing numbers of public transport aircraft, so uniformity of regulation is essential for the continuing safe conduct of flight operations. There is no possibility that this necessary uniformity could be achieved by the fragmented system implicit in the self-regulation concept. The CAA retains the responsibility for aviation affairs right across the spectrum. Included in that responsibility is the duty to establish and sponsor such aviation safety promotion activity as is deemed necessary for a reduction in the accident rate.

The authority cannot provide services for nothing; it is responsible for the health of the whole industry. If it is accepted that recreational flight is a foundation for the commercial structure, it must follow that the limitations of possible cost recovery from general aviation cannot justify a reduction in involvement. The cost will have to be recovered from the industry as a whole.

The further education need also became apparent in the study of accidents to pilots operating outside the flying club environment. Identified causes for 50 per cent. of accidents to the non-club set were miscalculation of aircraft capability and navigation-weather problems. These same problems accounted for only 25 per cent. of the accidents in the club-associated set. The conclusions to be drawn from that disparity must be tempered by the smallness of the sample. It is reasonable to infer that in some respects the non-club set is more at risk than the club-affiliated set. The distribution of safety promotion material must be adjusted accordingly.

The analysis of multi-engined aircraft accidents showed yet again that errors of judgment lay at the root of most of the accidents. Some seven of the 11 pilots involved were professionally licensed and, consequently, subject to regular periodic performance testing. The further examination of the causes of this apparent professional inadequacy will be dealt with by the CAA flight operations inspectorate. There is a suspicion that the current aviation boom has already caused a reduction in the mean experience level of pilots at the air taxi section of the industry, and that may be becoming apparent in accident

[Mr. Bottomley]

levels. Consideration is being given to reappraisal of approval and checking requirements to allow for those reduced experience levels.

In the remaining non-professional sector, it was felt that lack of checking was unsatisfactory. As my hon. Friend said, a twin-engine aircraft rated pilot may remain continuously rated-licensed with only five hours flying per year, including one twin-engined aircraft flight. Under such undemanding circumstances, it might be expected that the impact of the original training lessons would be reduced by the passage of time and the shortage of continuous experience. Nor is it likely that such a regime could provide sufficient opportunity for refresher training in sectors such as asymmetric flight. Within the club environment, there may be reasonable continuous performance monitoring, but the private aircraft operation outside the club is under no constraint except self-discipline.

The group felt that the number of loss-of-control-after-engine-failure accidents was strong evidence in support of a requirement for a more positive and formal system for verification of continuing performance adequacy. Proposals will be made for the introduction of such a system, and this is the only sector in which new regulation rather than further education has been seen to be desirable. Those words will provide some reassurance to my hon. Friend and they show that he has put his finger on one of the more practical issues in which change is likely to be made.

Absolute safety is unachievable. There will always be an element of risk in flying. The aim of the safety regulations must be to attempt to reduce that risk to an acceptable level. Legislation by itself will not improve safety unless it reinforces what is generally agreed and accepted as being good practice. The most effective way to improve flight safety is through better education in its broadest sense. It is also the most expensive solution.

The CAA report on general aviation accidents is more comprehensive than can be outlined here. At present it is on CAA internal circulation for comment and should be made more widely available by the end of next month.

Anyone reporting this debate would be well advised to recognise the distinction between "General Aviation" and "general aviation", as most of us as fare-paying passengers would regard it. Many involved in the light aircraft world apply their skills in an acceptable way. The relatively small number of accidents is welcome. It was the increase in the level of accidents in 1987 that caused concern. It is right to pay attention to any trend that appears to be out of line and I am sure that the House will agree that our aim should be to make the United Kingdom one of the safest countries in the world in light aviation, in the same way that we are on the roads.

AIDS

11.29 am

Mr. Gavin Strang (Edinburgh, East): It is hardly possible to exaggerate the seriousness of the threat of AIDS to our society. It is undoubtedly the biggest crisis in public health for over half a century. It is true that, according to Government figures, only 749 people have died of AIDS and only 1,344, at the last count, were identified as suffering or having died from AIDS. However, as we all know, this is only the beginning of this tragedy and many thousands of people are already infected with the AIDS virus and will develop AIDS and, like all AIDS sufferers, will subsequently die from that illness.

The AIDS syndrome was described only in 1981, and it was in 1983 that the human immunodeficiency virus which is responsible for AIDS was identified. Since that time, a great deal has been learnt about the virus, and we certainly know a lot about the methods of transmission. The virus does not survive easily outside the human body; that means in practice that there are three methods of transmission — sexual, blood to blood and maternal/foetal. It is certainly the case that in England the vast majority of people who have died from AIDS or are suffering from it are homosexuals, but it is wrong to see the problem of AIDS as one that is solely, or even largely, related to the gay community.

I am glad that a Scottish Office Minister is here to reply to the debate, as the position in Scotland is different. Whereas in the coming years the vast majority of AIDS sufferers in England will continue to be homosexual, in Scotland that will not be the case. There is nothing unique about Scotland. The position in Italy and Spain is similar, in that over half the cases of AIDS there are related to drug abuse.

In Scotland the problem is concentrated, to a large extent, in the south-east. It is well known that the situation in Edinburgh is serious. It has been known for a long time that more than half the injected drug misusers are carriers of HIV. It would be helpful if the Minister could confirm the last figures that I have, which show that in Glasgow 5 per cent. of injected drug users were HIV positive.

It is vital that we recognise the enormous importance of tackling the spread of this virus, either within the drug-injecting community or between the drug-injecting community and the rest of society. This is important, first, because there are thousands—in Edinburgh alone there are more than 2,000—of people who misuse drugs and who are HIV positive.

Secondly, it is important to understand that the drug takers are a transient group; they are not a fixed population. People give up drugs and move into general society and, sadly, people, usually younger people, move into that community or habit. It is also the case—again, there has been some misinformation about this, but the research in Edinburgh makes it quite clear—that these drug addicts travel all over the country, so that the infection is spread from major cities, whether Edinburgh or Dundee, to other parts of the country.

Fourthly — this is particularly important — the infection among the drug-taking community will for some time be the main source of transmission into the heterosexual community. The evidence is clear, but it is unfortunate that we still find people writing in the popular

magazines suggesting that the virus cannot be transmitted by normal sexual intercourse. A paper was published recently by a group of Edinburgh workers based on research into partners of HIV-positive drug abusers and one can be fairly confident that the vast majority of these partners have not been injecting drugs themselves. It is clear that a number of them are already infected by HIV as a consequence of a heterosexual relationship with an HIV-positive drug-injecting partner.

Another reason why we attach such great importance to this issue is that the vast majority of the babies who are born HIV positive — of 65 such babies born in the United Kingdom, 40 have been born in the Lothian area — are born to mothers who have contracted AIDS or the HIV virus through the misuse of drugs.

How can we tackle this enormous problem? One approach is to eliminate drug misuse, because if we could do that, we would eliminate this source of infection. We all want to eliminate drug misuse, but we shall not achieve that, certainly not within the time scale that is necessary if we are to avert an enormous increase in the spread of HIV throughout our society. We cannot allow ourselves to get hooked on to that approach. We will want to try to ensure that the measures that are taken to tackle HIV within the drug community are complementary to measures to reduce drug abuse, but one of the mistaken approaches, which I hope that the Minister will reject, is the suggestion that the solution is simply to tackle the problem of drug misuse.

It has been spelt out time and again that the threat of HIV to our society is much greater than the threat of drug misuse. We must fully recognise that fact, which means that we cannot wait until we have tackled the drug problem. We have to persuade drug injectors to alter their habits. How best can we go about doing that? The best information that we have had to date on how to do so is the document of the Government's advisory council on the misuse of drugs, which was published earlier this week. That document represents a valuable statement on how we should go about tackling this problem.

The report emphasises — this is how we see it in Edinburgh on the basis of our experience — the importance of making contact with these drug misusers. We must educate them, and that cannot be done through television or public education programmes. We have to do it by making direct contact with them and, as a consequence, the advisory council has come out strongly in favour of the development of a community-based drug service. We have some experience of this in Edinburgh, where there are a number of drug groups. Historically, partly because of the lack of provision by the public sector, these are voluntary groups which were originally directly funded by the Scottish Home and Health Department but which are now being funded by the local health boards.

These groups are already making a valuable contribution, but they need more resources. The people who are working in the front line are able to relate more effectively to drug injectors than some of the professionals, and they need more resources. They can provide advice and counselling. The most important thing is to make contact, and contact is not made with many drug misusers. The report suggests that so far only a third have been contacted.

The conditions of service of workers in the drug groups should be improved, and this applies to both national and local government funding. Better facilities are needed. To make these workers wait for three years on temporary contracts before telling them that there will be an extension of the programme is wholly unsatisfactory, and I hope that something can be done about that. We need to allow these dedicated people security of employment, because we know that we shall need them for a long time. We also need more provision in the public sector. We need better hospital-based facilities to back up local drug groups and more back-up, in particular, for general practioners who have a high number of HIV-infected individuals within their practice.

It is crucial that we provide additional resources to back up the facility for that kind of contact with injecting drug misusers. Once a dialogue is taking place, we are able to have some influence over them. There is evidence that that influence is already beginning to reduce the risk of their picking up the virus, if they do not already have it, or of transmitting it to other people.

We know that the main method of transmission among drug takers is the sharing of dirty needles. Edinburgh's history in that respect is well summarised in last Session's report of the Select Committee on Social Services into AIDS, which pointed out that during the epidemic of heroin taking — particularly among young people — in Edinburgh in the early 1980s, the practice of sharing dirty needles was very prevalent. That practice was probably contributed to by the police effort to clamp down on the drug problem by virtually eliminating the legal sale of clean syringes. As a consequence, there was a tremendous explosion in the number of people infected over that period.

It is well known that that was the main method of transmission. It was clearly documented in a paper produced by Edinburgh professionals in February 1986. The Scottish Office commissioned a report from a committee chaired by Brian McClelland published in September 1986, which recommended decisively that the Government should bite the bullet and provide clean syringes at an exchange centre, where drug injectors would be able to obtain free needles and syringes.

The Government's response to that call has been so inadequate as to be positively irresponsible. They sat on the McClelland report for months. Eventually, they announced 15 pilot schemes, 12 in England and three in Scotland. Of course such projects involve problems—the Minister may wish to comment on them—but we must make the projects work. It is not sufficient to say that, because there has been a problem in Dundee, such a project will not be possible there. The Edinburgh example shows that the schemes can be made to work. In the long term, the only test of their success is the extent to which they reduce the spread of HIV. But we will not know that for many years. In the short term, the only test can be the number of clients who have been contacted and provided with clean needles, with whom a relationship can be developed and who can be given advice.

Edinburgh has one centre open for half a day a week. We want many more centres throughout the area that are open for much longer. The Government's response to the recommendation in this area in the report by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs is profoundly disappointing. The Minister for Health states:

> "While the evaluation points to some promising features of such schemes, we do not consider that we yet have sufficient evidence to recommend an expansion of schemes in England."

[Mr. Gavin Strang]

The Scottish Office is marginally more positive in its response. The Under-Secretary of State, who will reply to today's debate, states:

"So far as further needle exchange arrangements by Health Boards are concerned, we are not yet in a position to reach general conclusions on whether any extension of the existing arrangements would be appropriate. However, if any Health Board considers that, notwithstanding possible developments in the pharmacy-based field, there is a need for such facilities in their area, we shall be prepared to consider specific proposals." — [*Official Report*, 29 March 1988; Vol. 130, c. *406*.]

I hope that the Government will think again.

Of course we support the provision of free needles through community-based pharmacists. I welcome the Under-Secretary's statement in his response to the ACMD report that he will enter into discussion with pharmaceutical organisations in Scotland with a view to encouraging them to sell clean syringes. Indeed, there is a good example of how that can work in Glasgow.

In some instances, individual general practitioners may also have an important part to play in the provision of clean needles and syringes. However, they are not a substitute for needle exchange centres. The counselling, advice and education that can be provided in a well-established needle exchange centre, where effective dialogue with drug injectors is possible, may well be more effective than a pharmacist could ever be. That is not to detract from what the Minister is trying to do, but his proposals must not be seen as an alternative to support for such centres.

When we had our only major debate on AIDS, in November 1986, the then Secretary of State made the point that the Government wanted this to be an all-party issue. Of course we are all united on the need to tackle the problem. But, as I said in that debate, if the Government want it to be an all-party issue, that can be sustained only if they are prepared to provide the level of resources that the community—the electorate—considers adequate. We are approaching the point — if we have not already reached it — at which the Government are failing to do that.

In some health authorities and health boards in London —and certainly in Lothian and other parts of Scotland —the provision of facilities to look after AIDS sufferers is already a significant proportion of their budgets. I welcome the Government's specific capital allocation for AIDS units in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, and I have no criticism of the level of that allocation. I feel, however, that the Government have fallen down on the expansion of resources to tackle the problem before it reaches the stage at which people suffer and die of the disease.

We need a much larger investment in projects to provide counselling and advice for drug users. Of course, some of the money must come from social work departments. The Minister will know of the disappointment, particularly in Lothian, in the Government's response to the joint officers committee of local government and civil servants which reported jointly to COSLA and to Ministers. The Minister accepted the report's recommendations, and said that the increase already provided for social work would cover the requirements. But that is not really adequate, especially in Lothian, which has a special problem. While I welcome the additional money that is being provided, particularly on the capital side, we need additional, specific resources, not only to support the projects to which I have referred, but also for the social work departments' functions in this area.

There was all-party support for the funding of £500,000 by the Lothian regional council, even in its current difficulties. I believe that Lothian may have to make great sacrifices to find money to tackle the problem. The money should come from central Government.

Lothian is lucky—as the Minister, who has taken an interest in the matter, will probably confirm—in that a number of very able people are working on the subject, some highly qualified professionals and other dedicated workers with the voluntary groups. It is striking that so many people have come forward, including senior public sector professionals, to tackle the problem with such commitment, but we need more resources.

Tragically, Lothian is an archetypal authority in that we are having to tackle a problem of major significance to the entire United Kingdom and other European countries. I believe that we can become a model of how best to tackle the problem if the Government give the funding we need, but that will not be done in a few months.

Although it is not only a question of resources, I must stress that we do need more resources, particularly in Lothian, so that we can set an example that will benefit not only Scotland but the rest of the United Kingdom and Europe.

11.50 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Michael Forsyth): I congratulate the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East (Mr. Strang) on securing this Adjournment debate and on choosing this important subject. I assure him that the Government take the problems of AIDS and drug misuse very seriously. We know that they are of considerable concern in Scotland.

Of those who have chosen to be tested for HIV infection, more than 50 per cent. are intravenous drug misusers, whereas the corresponding figure for the United Kingdom as a whole is only 7 per cent. In Scotland, more than 20 per cent. of those infected are women, the great majority of whom are intravenous drug misusers. In other parts of the United Kingdom, the AIDS epidemic manifests itself in risk groups such as homosexuals, but in Scotland it is predominantly associated with intravenous drug misuse. As the hon. Gentleman rightly emphasised, that carries with it the danger of spreading the infection, through sexual contact, to a wider population.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to confirm figures for the extent of infection among drug misusers in the east, as opposed to the west, of Scotland. He has obviously studied the ACMD report, which in paragraph 7.4 estimates that between 40 and 50 per cent. of intravenous drug misusers in the east of Scotland are infected with the HIV virus, whereas for the west of Scotland the estimate is between 2·5 and 5 per cent.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to acknowledge the imperative that the fight against the spread of AIDS should take precedence over the Government campaign to end drug misuse. I am happy to assure him that it is indeed the predominant priority, and our policies are geared towards that. The main message of the Government's

public education campaign is that drugs should not be injected, but that those who persist in doing so should not share needles or other equipment.

If the spread of the virus among those who inject drugs is to be slowed it is vital that they understand the dangers of sharing syringes and needles, and they should act on that knowledge. The evidence is that that message is getting across. Indeed, one reason for the high level of HIV infection in Edinburgh and the east of Scotland was the injecting culture, where people deliberately shared needles. That resulted in a rapid spread of the disease.

The hon. Gentleman suggested that our response on needle exchanges had been inadequate. The experimental needle exchanges have provided a wealth of useful information about the behaviour of drug misusers and about the ways in which they can be encouraged to change to safer practices. The Dundee scheme was closed because of disruption by some of its clients. The Glasgow and Edinburgh schemes were more successful, although, on the basis of the hon. Gentleman's test of take-up, the Glasgow scheme was a little disappointing.

On 29 March I said that we had informed Lothian and Greater Glasgow health boards that, although central funding would not continue after 1 April, they could continue to operate their schemes if they considered that to be appropriate to local circumstances. The two boards have decided to do so. The drug misusers who have availed themselves of the services of those two boards can therefore continue to do so during the foreseeable future.

The hon. Gentleman emphasised the importance of funding local drug misuse services and voluntary groups that are in touch with drug misusers, and I agree with him. I am sure he knows that central Government funds are not intended to finance every worthwhile drugs-related project throughout Scotland. However, our programme makes a substantial contribution to the encouragement and assistance of such services. We announced last year that we were making an additional £300,000 per year available for a further expansion of drug misuse servies in recognition of the additional demands placed upon them by HIV infection and intravenous drug misuse. To encourage the development of local plans, we asked the health boards to co-ordinate proposals and to submit bids for a share of the additional resources.

We have taken on board the hon. Gentleman's plea that we recognise the special problems faced by Lothian and Greater Glasgow. The additional resources were specifically targeted at the three health boards most affected—Lothian, Tayside and Greater Glasgow. In total, £1·1 million has been set aside in the current year's health programme specifically for the support of drug misuse services, and a similar sum will be made available next year.

The hon. Gentleman asked about resources for social work and rightly pointed out the responsibility that falls on local government. A joint working group of Government and local authority officials estimated that in 1988 social work expenditure to deal with the effects of the AIDS virus would be just over £1 million for Scotland as a whole, probably rising to about £3·5 million in 1990. Those are not the Government's estimates; they were made by those involved in the provision of services. We have taken account of that in our rate support grant settlement for 1988-89 through a 1·5 per cent. increase in real terms, which is in excess of £3 million in 1987-88. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that the Government have done anything other than provide the resources required.

Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Devonport): Will the Minister provide any additional resources as a result of the report, or is it simply a continuation of existing programmes?

Mr. Forsyth: The right hon. Gentleman knows that in answer to a question on Wednesday I made it clear that the Government would take careful cognisance of the report's recommendations. The thinking behind the report has been very much a part of our developing strategy. For example, we said on the same day that we would look to the retail pharmacist as a way to increase the supply of needles, and the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East paid tribute to that decision. It runs very much in line with the thrust of the report's recommendations.

The report also pointed to the importance of finding informal ways to reach out and make contact with drug misusers so that we could get across to them the necessary information that might encourage them to change their behaviour. That aim has been part of our funding strategy for voluntary organisations and support groups, through the health boards.

The hon. Gentleman said that the number of clients of needle exchanges was a test. I cannot help but observe that when I visited the needle exchange at Ruchill it was dealing with about 65 people, whereas around the corner the pharmacist was selling more than 1,500 sets of injecting equipment every month.

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for having raised this subject. I assure him that AIDS and drug misuse have far-reaching social and economic implications which present challenges to the Govermment and the community on several fronts. We intend to meet those challenges. We are grateful to him for the support that he has given us and for the action that he has taken in the House in pursuing the matter.

Rover Group

11.59 am

Mr. Hal Miller (Bromsgrove): I should make it plain at the start that this is in no sense an attempt to pre-empt the debate that is to come. I applied for this Adjournment debate before the statement on Tuesday was public knowledge.

With your permission, Madam Deputy Speaker, I should like to leave a little time for my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) to join the debate. He and I share the Longbridge works and most of the workers live in our constituencies.

I welcome the Under-Secretary of State for Industry, who has had a long connection, in his constituency and now in his official duties, with various forerunners of the Rover Group and who triumphantly concluded the recent deal for the sale of Leyland Bus on which I congratulate him. It is singularly appropriate that he has also had close experience of British Aerospace. He is in a unique position to advise the House on the benefits of the deal, so I do not apologise to him for the inconvenience of bringing him back to London for the debate, because he will welcome the opportunity to expand on the remarks of the Chancellor of the Duchy on Tuesday which, necessarily in responding to questions, were slightly disjointed.

The agreement between British Aerospace and the Rover Group is a great coup. Certainly it is a political coup. It is no wonder that the Opposition are asking for a full-scale debate, as they made such a sorry fist of the questions on the statement. They could not understand that limiting the tax losses was of benefit to the taxpayer. Indeed, they started burbling about child allowances in the context of what most of us concerned with the motor industry would regard as a most significant development and opportunity.

The political aspects certainly reflect the cracking pace that the Department of Trade and Industry under Lord Young has set in moving towards an enterprise basis and in returning to the private sector in a state of health the industries that have been in its charge.

It is worth emphasising that the Rover Group agreement is not just a political coup. It is a commercial coup because the speed with which the agreement has been reached has done a great deal to ease, if not end, the uncertainties that might otherwise have affected suppliers, dealers, customers and those who work in Rover. That confidence is very important.

We should not overlook the fact that while Rover has been in public ownership there has had to be each year full Government consideration of the corporate plans, with a great deal of discussion in the media and elsewhere about whether such plans were being funded in full and whether they responded to the capacity of the industry or its competitive prospects. All that discussion, which was necessarily spread out over some months each year, did a great deal of damage to the certainty that suppliers, dealers and workers in industry naturally expect to enjoy. I am glad that they will no longer be exposed to such intense scrutiny and the expressions of such doubts, whether or not they were justified.

The agreement also marks the care that the Government have taken with the Rover Group. It is not a question of getting rid of it at any price, as the Opposition have been trying to suggest. The Government have sustained it almost at any price, and certainly at great cost to the taxpayer. Therefore the Opposition are in some difficulty. On the one hand they suggest that Rover is being got rid of at any price, and on the other hand the say that the Government are doing too much to help it. The Opposition will have to make up their mind which path they wish to pursue.

Conservative Members certainly take confidence from the progress that Rover Group has made under Mr. Graham Day and his management team to improve the margin on its vehicles, to improve the quality of those vehicles, to develop markets for them, to return the company to a trading profit and enable it to resume its rightful place in the private sector. That is a mark of the progress that has been made. It is not a sign of defeat or failure; it is a very strong signal of confidence in the progress and viability that the company has achieved.

Part of that confidence comes from the collaboration with Honda. In the days of the Ryder report—if we can remember those gloomy days—I said in the House that the future for the company, as it then was, rested in collaboration with other companies. At that stage, we had not envisaged the collaboration with Honda which has been most fruitful in terms of shortening the design cycle, bringing forward new models, sharing the experience of such a skilled engineering company as Honda and developing remarkable products which now enjoy success in the market place.

The additional collaboration with British Aerospace marks another step in the same direction. I welcome the fact that collaboration with a British company is about to start, thereby giving further confidence to dealers that there will be no hiccups in the marketing of vehicles, and that customers may retain their traditional loyalties and continue to support the product.

I wish to make one or two further points that would do a great deal to buttress the confidence of those in the industry and the all-important customer. I refer to the Metro in particular. I shall question the Minister in a moment, but I believe that we already have an assurance that the next model jointly to be produced with Honda will be continued—it is now codenamed the R8.

However, I want to look a little further ahead. If the Metro model is to be replaced, the necessary steps will have to be taken now for it to be produced in 1990. If we were to have the R8 in 1989, we must have the new Metro in 1990. That means that work must be undertaken. That vehicle is clearly important, and not only for those who have the interests at Longbridge at heart. As two of every three vehicles sold by Rover are Metros, and as it is the only model on the best selling list, it is vital for the work force that suppliers and dealers should be able to sustain their businesses.

Is my hon. Friend the Minister able to say anything about the outcome of the discussions in Japan between Lord Young, Professor Smith and Mr. Day? Was there any discussion of models after the R8? Did Honda say anything about its future intentions? Did it say whether it wished to go it alone on a green field site, or is it looking forward to continuing its collaboration with Rover and British Aerospace?

I appreciate that it may be difficult for my hon. Friend to give an open answer to a very important question, but it leads on to my next point. My hon. Friend the Member for Northfield and I believe that it is important to retain

volume car and engine manufacturing at Longbridge, not just for constituency reasons but for west midlands reasons and state of technology reasons.

Never let us forget that at one stage the Longbridge plant accounted for over 50 per cent. of all the robots installed in this country. It is at the cutting edge of technology. That is why it is important to be able to look forward to continuity, so that further development similar to that which is being undertaken in association with Warwick university may proceed.

If there has been any suggestion that Honda may not wish to proceed other than on a model-by-model basis and that it may have long-term plans to proceed independently, why, oh why, should a condition be imposed that British Aerospace must not divest itself of its cars division for five years? It would be foolish to preclude another manufacturer that might wish to take advantage of the excellent K series engine that is being produced at Longbridge, because it would add considerably to economies of scale and would enable the company to send some of its models down the assembly line, thereby reducing costs. What is the reason behind the imposition of that condition?

We have nurtured the Rover Group to the point at which it may at last be returned to the private sector. The agreement is a mark of success. It prepares the ground for the further progress and development to which I am glad to note that British Aerospace is committed.

12.12 pm

Mr. Roger King (Birmingham, Northfield): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller) for allowing me to say a few words in this debate. I warmly support all that he said. He put the case extremely well.

Broadly speaking, I welcome the Government's decision to merge British Aerospace and the Rover Group. I make no comment about price, but it ought to be placed on the record that only two years ago the management was interested in purchasing Land Rover for about £250 million. At that stage, Land Rover was not even in the black. British Aerospace has negotiated a substantial bargain.

The Rover Group is not confined solely to Land Rover and Austin Rover cars. It still retains a 40 per cent. shareholding in Leyland Daf, which is now in profit. My hon. Friend the Minister has an immediate interest in that company. The Rover Group also retains a 25 per cent. holding in Unipart, the spare parts distribution and manufacturing section of the original BL cars group. It is trading very well indeed — as is Istel, the computer software and services subsidiary. The Rover Group is more than just a car manufacturer.

I welcome the deal and the price that has been paid. It has pleased many because of the resultant increase in the industrial strength of the new company. The House will recall that we sought to achieve that in the late 1960s. It was said that we had to be big to be beautiful and that we needed big muscle to succeed, but we learnt that we can be too big and that we can have the wrong muscle. I very much hope that the synergy of this arrangement is correct and that particular parts of this greater organisation will not disappear and wither away.

We hope that the industrial strength of the new company will be great, but we must ensure that there is a commitment to the maintenance of the car industry. It is essential that where the Rover Group is to find its market within the European Economic Community should be clearly defined. The group has at last pulled itself out of the financial quagmire and is now trading in the black. By all accounts, it should be doing a great deal better during this financial year.

I am encouraged by what Mr. Graham Day said in his circular to all employees. He said that the company has made great progress and is determined to maintain it. There could be no better signal of that determination than an announcement that the company intends to retain its present volume of car production at around 500,000.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove referred to the commitment to the new Metro project, which represents two fifths of current production. It is essential that distributors and dealers throughout the world should have such a car in their inventory. If they do not have a supermini car, they cannot face competition from all over the world. The Metro is consistently in third place among the top 10 cars in this country. It accounts for a substantial components input at the Longbridge works, where there are hundreds, if not thousands, of components suppliers. We look forward to the new management endorsing its determination to remain in that market by announcing that the new Metro will go full steam ahead.

If there is to be a change of direction, the £95 million that was spent on developing the K series engine and fitting out a new gear box factory, which the car will use in conjunction with the forthcoming R9 model, will have been largely ill spent. It can be justified only by large-scale production of new engines and gear boxes; 300,000 units a year are needed for the new Metro and the R8 car that is to be manufactured next year. Large-scale production is needed to justify the expenditure that has already taken place and that is still taking place. I look forward to a commitment on that scale.

I recognise that it is impossible for the company to publish confidential details of its forthcoming models. That information is rightly kept secret. However, we are living in unusual times and it is not unreasonable to ask for such a commitment. The Rover Group has the ability to prove that it is a worthy part of the car industry. Enormous strides have been made in productivity and quality. This last outpost of a rich British motoring legacy can deliver the goods and it is doing so. It deserves more than a lingering decline into obscurity. I am sure that the new management will grasp the opportunity to make a great success of it.

Not long ago, Austin Rover ran a slogan, "Now we're motoring." Unfortunately, it did not. Perhaps the smile on Professor Rowland Smith's face shows that he has thought of another one: "Watch us fly." This time it really must.

12.20 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Industry (Mr. Robert Atkins): I am particularly pleased to be answering the Adjournment debate initiated by my hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove (Mr. Miller). It gives me great pleasure to congratulate him on raising this subject; whether by accident or by design, he finds himself in the front line as a result of the announcement made earlier this week.

The House will be aware that my hon. Friend is one of the authorities on the motor industry. He is chairman of the all-party motor industry group, and he is heard on these matters with respect. So it is, too, with my hon.

[Mr. Robert Atkins]

Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfields (Mr. King) who in his past incarnation—and in his present incarnation as the hon. Member for the constituency that includes Longbridge—knows much about the importance of Austin Rover.

This is an ideal opportunity for the three of us—saving the presence of the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke)—to discuss the excellent news of earlier this week. I know a little about the Rover Group, as I represent the constituency that includes the town of Leyland, where it all started. Up there, they still talk about "Spurrier" or "Leyland Motors". I am very much involved, too, on the British Aerospace front and, incidentally, that company is still known as English Electric. The traditional names that abounded have changed.

I know from my experience of Leyland DAF and Leyland Bus, which featured in the press only yesterday, as well as of British Aerospace, just how important and ideal the combination of the Rover Group and British Aerospace will be. To add weight to the success story that is British Aerospace and will be British Aerospace and Rover, let me cite the acquisition by BAe of Royal Ordnance in my constituency, which has been extremely well run by BAe's managers, building on a very good work force.

In engineering terms and in a variety of other ways, the combination is excellent news. I very much agree with my hon. Friends the Members for Bromsgrove and for Northfields that the Opposition have been slightly wrong-footed on this; I put it no higher than that. We shall view with a great deal of interest their contribution to the debate that they have requested, and which I understand we are likely to have. We are very proud of the achievement that this spectacular deal represents in both political and commercial terms. It is an achievement for which my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State should be congratulated. We shall welcome the investigation that the Public Accounts Committee has suggested it may carry out, as well as the close examination of the deal by the Opposition, because we believe that it is an excellent deal that will stand the test of time.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove asked about the commitment of British Aerospace in general terms. I am in no doubt at all that British Aerospace has taken on the company because it wants to develop and build upon it. BAe is keen to ensure that the work put in by Graham Day and his team is properly developed. BAe has said that it wants to abide by the terms of the business plan that Graham Day has produced. While there may be changes as time progresses—I hope that my hon. Friend will be watching for them and will give us the benefit of his advice—the company has told us that it looks on its acquisition of the Rover Group as a long-term investment and that it is committed to the maintenance and development in the longer term of the group's present business. Obviously BAe will address itself to the future well-being of the business and the shape of the product range.

While it would clearly be wrong for the Government to impose constraints on the management of the group, I should draw hon. Members' attention to BAe's own press release, which states that BAe believes that Graham Day and his colleagues have done an excellent job of repositioning Rover Group for the future and is keen to support his future plans for the Rover Group. The company has told us that it is conscious of the importance of Rover as a British-owned manufacturer of cars and four-wheel drive vehicles, not simply in terms of direct employment—to which both my hon. Friends referred—but in terms of Rover's significance to its supply industries, distributors, dealers and customers.

We have had a number of letters from component manufacturers and some from dealers saying how pleased they are that the deal originally suggested would be a British solution. The Opposition underrate the importance of that at their peril. The House will recall that in past discussions we all sought a British solution. British Aerospace further said that its purpose in acquiring Rover was to hold and develop its principal businesses and sees no reason to disturb these. British Aerospace's commitment is there, declared for all to see, and we can look forward to the result with confidence.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bromsgrove referred to Honda. Honda made it abundantly clear to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State, on his visit and in our earlier brief discussions, that it welcomed the continuity of Rover Group's British management team, which would be assured by British Aerospace's ownership of the company. Honda said that it is keen to be involved in the discussions, which may well go wider than the motor industry because of Honda's close involvement with a wide variety of activities connected with electronics and related matters.

My hon. Friend referred specifically to the Metro. My hon. Friends are right to suggest that the Metro has played a substantial part in the achievements of the Rover Group in recent years. As my hon. Friend said, about two fifths of the sales have been Metro sales. British Aerospace recognises that fact. I cannot give my hon. Friend an absolute assurance—I know he understands that—that the Metro as such will continue, but it would be foolish of British Aerospace not to recognise the importance of the Metro and of building on its success in the market place. I am sure that British Aerospace will look to the future along those lines.

Another point that needs to be reiterated, although my hon. Friends did not deal with it in detail, is that, although we have achieved much, we need to ensure that the European Commission hastens its progress in giving its support to the deal. My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State has done much work already with officials in trying to persuade Commissioner Sutherland that much needs to be done. Commissioner Sutherland has said, rightly and properly, that an investigation will have to be carried out. We hope that he will be able to undertake it quickly and efficiently to ensure that the deal gets the go-ahead in the time scale that we seek for it.

It is a source of great satisfaction to me, as the hon. Member for the constituency that includes Leyland, to join my hon. Friends, whose experience is well known to the House as well as to their constituents in welcoming a deal that will do an enormous amount to resolve some of the difficulties faced by the Rover Group over the years and to build on the obvious commitment that the Government have shown to the Rover Group by virtue of the investment of about £2·9 billion since 1976.

The agreement will provide a good deal for the taxpayer and for the shareholders of the companies concerned and, most important, an excellent deal for both British

Aerospace and the Rover Group in their many and various guises the length and breadth of the country. I am pleased to be able to give my support and encouragement to an interesting and exciting future for both companies.

Community Care

12.28 pm

Mr. Tom Clarke (Monklands, West): Community care is in crisis. The plight of the elderly, the mentally ill, the mentally handicapped, the physically disabled and the frail, and the millions—mainly women—who care for them tells us something about our society. For it is right that we should be judged on how we treat the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens.

All the evidence suggests that most community care is provided by a member of the family, a whole family or close friends. Community care should therefore not be considered a marginal policy for a marginal group of people. It involves mutuality — the responsibility of people to each other — which creates the fabric of a society that is worth being part of. There is a clear role for Government nationally and locally.

I hope that we can today examine the Government's record and, perhaps more important, their intentions in these matters, especially following the plethora of reports from Griffiths, to Wagner, Firth and the Social Services Select Committee in the previous Parliament. Almost all of them have met a deafening silence from the Government. Deafening silence is not something that we normally associate with the Under-Secretary of State, so perhaps she will correct that today.

The hon. Lady may be able to tell us why the Griffiths report on community care has all but disappeared. Time and again, when Ministers were pressed on social services, they said that the report would deal with such matters. They advised the House and voluntary organisations to wait for Griffiths. What happened? In contrast to the Griffiths report on the Health Service, the report on social services was quietly published on the morning after the Budget. There was no ministerial statement and no press conference. If ever there was a case of shooting the messenger and attempting somewhat clumsily to hide the message under the carpet, this was it.

The Government may be disappointed with the Griffiths report because it emphasises the role of local authorities. We ought not to be too surprised by that. The former Secretary of State for Social Services, as long ago as 27 December 1986, gave us a hint that, because the Government do not give community care a high priority, and because Sir Roy might feel that there was a role for local government, the Government might not say too much about his report. *The Guardian* of 27 December 1986 reported as follows:

> 'Mr. Fowler has become the odd man out in a Cabinet so plainly contemptuous of local government. He has actually been heard to praise the work of council social services departments, which he knows are pivotal to the success of community care."

The fact that Sir Roy Griffiths may have reached the same conculsion may be the reason for the Government's remarkable silence. I hope that the Minister will correct that silence today.

The Minister will also be aware that Sir Roy Griffiths gave a great deal of attention to the quite staggering report on these issues by the Audit Commission, which found that Government policies were "in disarray". It accused the Government of trying to muddle through in the hope that community care would somehow materialise as long-stay hospitals were closed.

[Mr. Tom Clarke]

If there were not problems in community care, the Government's social security review and their intentions for what is to happen after April have added considerably to the difficulties of many communities and people. There has been a collapse of any recognisable strategy for community care. I should like to give the Minister some examples. If time allowed, I could give many more. I am sure that she is in the same position.

The Edinvar housing association in Edinburgh has written to the Secretary of State for Scotland explaining that six mentally handicapped persons who had moved into a excellent community care project are in danger of losing housing benefit to the extent that their position in community care is in jeopardy. The director, Mr. Robin Burley, recently wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland. I understand that he will await a reply. He wrote:

"Not only will the April changes compound the perversity of the incentives which encourage residential care but in this small scheme six people who last summer moved from hostels to their own homes may have no alterntive but to move back to residential care."

If that happened, it would be an absolute scandal. I regret to say that it is not a isolated case.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) has written to the Secretary of State for Social Services about elderly persons who will have to sell their homes if the property is thought to be worth more than £6,000 before they can even be considered for income support for residential care after 11 April.

Yesterday I received a letter from Age Concern telling me about funding for emergency alarm systems which will cost many of our most vulnerable elderly people about £5 a week. That simply will not be recognised by housing benefit, income support or even the social fund.

Most worrying of all is the problem of school meals and milk for the mentally handicapped and special school pupils. The Minister is rather fond of lecturing the nation about nutrition. It would be a scandal if such vulnerable young people were not thought to be deserving of decent nutrition through meals and milk as of right. I am delighted to learn from my colleague, Councillor Charles Gray, the leader of the Labour group on Strathclyde regional council, that the Scottish Office appears to be taking a civilised view in its interpretation of the measure. I welcome that, and I would welcome still more the hon. Lady's confirmation that the same will be true for meals and milk for mentally handicapped children in the rest of Great Britain.

Hospital discharge and bridging funds worried Sir Roy Griffiths. The Minister must be aware of the many problems which are commonly called the "revolving door syndrome." In the absence of assessment, proper bridging funding and proper arrangements, many people are being discharged from long-stay hospitals to community care which simply does not exist and then find themselves back in hospital. The hon. Lady will be aware of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities' letter to the DHSS about the withdrawal of funding from regional health authorities to local authorities, especially in the north-west and the northern region. She will also be aware of the letter from the Association of Directors of Social Services to my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), who is the Chairman of the Social Services Select Committee, expressing its anxiety on these issues.

On 15 March the hon. Lady gave me some replies when I tried to find out whether information on these important matters was kept centrally. She told me that she did not have that information. That is an indication of Government priorities. After all this time we ought to know what the problem is, why there are variations from one part of the country to another and why people are suffering. When people are forced to leave hospital — sometimes after a short stay — they are often thrown into a community which is not prepared to receive them. The hon. Lady must know that relevant legislation exists in the shape of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

I was happy to note that Sir Roy Griffiths went a step further on this point. That certainly does not allow the Government to sit back and do nothing at all. It is a scandal that should be dealt with and we cannot claim to be giving priority to community care when there are so many people leaving hospital without proper assessment or arrangements. It is a disgrace by modern civilised standards.

Some aspects of the Act would and should apply to any reasonable strategy for community care. That represents true consumerism. When the 1986 Act, which has not by any means been fully implemented, dealt with the right of advocacy and with representation, when it recognised the needs of carers — for example, women in this country who are saving the Chancellor of the Exchequer about £6 billion a year and whose dedication should not be exploited — when it dealt with the issue of hospital discharge and when even the title referred to consultation, we were attempting to establish that people in the care of the social services were entitled not just to be considered as consumers, but to be treated by society in a way consistent with their rights as fellow citizens.

The Minister may agree that that is not always possible in the absence of resources. Although I disagree with many of Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations in respect of YTS, competitive tendering, vouchers, and the social fund, I do not see that as any reason for not having a full debate on his recommendations, especially in the light of the cost of producing his report. When he said that we considered that community care was the distant relation and nobody's baby, that reflected his view of successive Governments' attempts to pursue a policy, while not being absolutely clear about resources. Of course local authorities are often concerned that they are asked to carry out duties and responsibilities without the resources being made available. There are wide geographical variations of provision. I have never believed that community care should vary from region to region. There should be national standards based on the local knowledge of councils and of those who deal with those matters, principally the consumers.

I find it difficult to understand why, for example, in Devon, 8,000 people in residential homes receive supplementary benefit compared with 1,000 in the Lothian region, although the population is about the same. Perhaps the Minister will be able to explain the wide variation in home help provision, respite care and occupational therapy. Surely, as a society still rich in resources, we are not prepared just to dismiss the problems of the mentally handicapped and send them into families which are unable to cope, and to leave the elderly to deal

with the appalling problem of loneliness unassisted. We should act as a genuine community in response to those problems.

I do not regard this as the major debate on the Griffiths report, but it is a start. In the Audit Commission's withering indictment of Government policies on these matters it said:

"The only option that is not tenable is to do nothing".

I hope that the sheer volume of concern about community neglect and human suffering will shame even the Government into doing something.

12.44 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on his success in the ballot and on raising this debate about community care. He has raised many questions and I shall endeavour to answer him in what is inevitably a short debate. I may need to write to him later on some of the topics particularly in respect of detailed examples.

I can answer two of the hon. Gentleman's questions very quickly. First, we do not collect national statistics because we believe firmly in local arrangements. If the hon. Gentleman stays to listen to the next debate on the East Yorkshire health authority, he may hear how that authority is tackling the problems that he has outlined. Secondly, fewer people in Lothian may be obtaining supplementary benefit for care than in Devon because people in Lothian are much better off. The average income in Scotland is the second highest in the United Kingdom. It lags behind only London and the south-east. It is much higher than in my constituency of Derbyshire, South.

Mr. Tom Clarke: The hon. Lady has just confirmed the need for a national survey and for information to be made available on a central basis. She has displayed an appalling ignorance of the problems of Lothian region and of Scotland. If that information were made available nationally, perhaps she would be better informed.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Gentleman did not call a debate on the problems of Lothian region. I propose to answer his points.

The hon. Gentleman asked particularly about the Griffiths report. As he knows, we asked Sir Roy Griffiths to

"review the way in which public funds are used to support community care policy and to advise . . . on the options for action that would improve the use of these funds as a contribution to more effective community care."

Sir Roy presented his report on 12 February and we published it shortly afterwards. We have made it clear that we regard it as a basis for discussion, along with the other recent work mentioned by the hon. Gentleman, such as Lady Wagner's report on residential care, the proposals drawn up by Joan Firth in my Department and the timely comments made by the Audit Commission in 1986. The hon. Gentleman also mentioned the Select Committee on Social Services, which reported in the 1984-85 Session on community care for the adult mentally ill and mentally handicapped. He may recall that I was privileged to be a member of the Committee at that time.

The Government are not suffering from a lack of advice. Sir Roy drew attention to the findings of the Audit Commission to the effect that better value could be obtained from extra resources. We shall take careful note of all that has been said, including the points raised by the hon. Gentleman, and we shall make our views known in due course.

I can report progress on the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, which the hon. Gentleman piloted through the House and which received a great deal of support on both sides of the House, not least from myself. Following the successful outcome of discussions with the local authority associations, sections 5 and 6 of the Act, which relate to the assessment of needs of disabled young people leaving school and which many of us regarded as being very significant, were implemented with effect from 1 February 1988. We implemented sections 4, 8(1), 9 and 10 on 1 April 1987 and we propose to implement section 11 as soon as possible. Discussions have already opened with local authority representatives on section 7, as part of a continuing dialogue on implementation of the Act. My officials intend to resume discussions shortly with the aim of determining costs and a timetable for implementation. Health authorities and the voluntary sector will also need to be consulted. Section 7 is likely to be the next section to be implemented.

As for the sections relating to Scotland, sections 12 and 14 were implemented on 1 June 1987, section 15 was repealed by the National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986 and section 13 was implemented on 1 February this year. That is the Scottish equivalent of the English sections 5 and 6. Technical sections 16 to 18 were implemented on 16 April 1987.

Further discussions are planned with the local authority associations on the cost of other outstanding sections of the Act, and implementation of those will take place as and when the necessary resources can be made available. I should just remind the hon. Gentleman that some of the sections of the Children Act 1975, which was passed at the beginning of the previous Labour Government, took many more years than that to be implemented.

Mr. Tom Clarke *rose*—

Mrs. Currie: I would be grateful if I could get on, as the hon. Gentleman has asked me many questions.

The hon. Gentleman knows that community care is the special brief of my noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale. As I read through the voluminous literature and papers on this matter, I was struck how often I came across phrases such as "Our aim is to provide better services." Our aim is to do all that we can to strengthen and support a competent and responsible society. The aim should be to help individuals achieve their potential within such a society. That means putting our hospitals, homes, doctors, care-workers, services and so on into some kind of context. They are not the aims but the means by which we achieve our aim.

As the hon. Gentleman has said, most people who need help and care live at home. Most are cared for by their families. Children, particularly mentally handicapped children, are now overwhelmingly at home with their families. As we go up the age scale, that gets harder, as the number of old people now match the numbers in the younger age cohort, which would be the caring cohort, so it becomes relatively more difficult for caring families to manage.

I can offer an example from my own family. My mother was one of 10 siblings. They had little difficulty in caring

[Mrs. Currie]

for their parents. My mother and her brothers and sisters, of whom eight now survive, are all aged between 65 and nearly 90. Between them, the eight produced only seven children. That problem is not just common to Britain but to the western world. The whole pattern of demography in the free world has changed dramatically and some aspects of patterns of care will also have to change.

But other changes are more positive. Elderly people are fit, active and, in large numbers, play a far bigger part in society now than ever before, perhaps not always with a pay packet attached, but with their time and experience. We particularly undervalue the role of such people, particularly in the caring services.

We also forget that elderly people are not a separate species and they expect the same degree of choice and control over their lives as they had when they were younger. The elderly, and those who are mentally ill or handicapped or disabled, are not a separate species but citizens. For them, as for everyone else, the job of the state is to enable them to live their lives to the full and make their contribution to society, whether they are able or disabled, frail, failing or as fit as a fiddle. That is the aim of policy and everything else is a means to that end.

Nor should we forget that the part played by the state, particularly in the provision of services, is much smaller in the overall context than we all imply. We have mentioned the family. We should mention friends and neighbours, particularly in constituencies such as mine, a scattered rural area. We should mention what is called the voluntary sector — that always sounds like a product on a supermarket shelf — and the more formal carers' organisations, many of which existed long before the welfare state was established some 40 years ago.

The state's role is to provide and pay for a great deal of care. Roy Griffiths rightly pushes us to think how that might be organised in future. But the state side is only a small part of the considerable, often unseen, network of care. Let me quote someone who described that far better than I can nearly 200 years ago. It was Tom Paine in "The Rights of Man" who said:

> "Society performs for itself almost everything which is ascribed to Government."

I hope that the hon. Gentleman, who has a distinguished record as a Socialist mayor of a great city, will not mind too much if I offer him the words of the philosopher-founder of Socialism as an example of what I am getting at.

The hon. Gentleman particularly mentioned hospital closures and discharges. He knows that the aim of policy is not closure, but the development at a local level of a comprehensive range of well co-ordinated health and social services, matching the range of needs of mentally ill and handicapped people, the elderly and their families. When such local services exist, some hospitals will no longer be needed. The pace of closure is entirely conditioned by the pace of provision of local services. Quality matters more than speed. We say this repeatedly to the health authorities and I hope that the hon. Gentleman recognises that we mean it.

During the past 30 years most mentally ill patients who were well enough to leave hospital have already left and are now in the community. So far, we share the view that not enough resources have followed the patient out of hospital into the community. The 31 planned closures of large hospitals will help to put that right, and the remaining 70 or so traditional hospitals are becoming much smaller and are playing an important part in their own district services. Further discharges are not in themselves an aim of policy. It is for the consultant in charge and his colleagues to decide whether an individual will benefit from discharge.

A similar position applies to the mentally handicapped. The pace of contraction of the large mental handicap hospitals depends on the development of appropriate short, medium and long-stay provision for the residents. We have advised health authorities to aim to accommodate people in small, homely units based in their local communities. None of that should require the establishment of large hospitals, but some might need units with special facilities.

Again, the scale of future NHS residential provision for mentally handicapped people depends on local estimates, particularly of the number of severely and multiply handicapped people or of behaviourally disturbed or mentally ill people. We also need to learn from experience new ways of meeting the needs of such people for medical and nursing care in small NHS and other settings.

However, I am satisfied with — indeed I am pleased to see — the progress being made. For example, the number of mentally handicapped children in NHS hospitals and hospital units fell from over 7,000 20 years ago to barely 490 in 1986. In October 1986 we stated that provision should be made so that no mentally handicapped child receiving long-term care should need to live in a large mental handicap hospital.

Mr. Tom Clarke: The hon. Lady will recall that I asked her a specific question about school meals and milk for mentally handicapped children and those in special schools. I would be grateful if she would reply to my point.

Mrs. Currie: The hon. Gentleman will know that some aspects of those policies are under discussion, but, broadly speaking, our overall policy has been and is to ensure that people receive benefits in cash rather than in kind. That has been the policy for a long time on both sides of the House. As I recall, it was also the policy of the previous Labour Government. However, I shall write to the hon. Gentleman to deal with his point in detail.

The problems of the mentally handicapped are now much better understood in our community. There has been a sea change in services for those people and their families in recent years. I used to be a regular visitor to Monyhull hospital, which was in my ward in Birmingham and which I represented for 11 years. As we made steady progress, one of the porters remarked to me that he could tell the difference because the doctors now had to clean their own cars. It struck me then with great sadness how much we had unwittingly restricted the personal development and happiness of so many thousands of our fellow citizens simply because they had been dubbed "slow" or "in moral danger" decades before in childhood.

The contrast was shown for me up the road outside Collingwood school in Birmingham for children with special needs when I was chairman of the governors. One day, as I chatted to the then headmaster, Bob Dunn, we were shyly approached by a former pupil. She told us that she was working, and, with great pride, showed us her payslip. The headmaster, with great presence of mind, told

her gravely that she was clearly earning more than he was. In another age, in another time, she would have languished all her life in hospital. The alternatives are so much better.

We do have far more difficulty with mental illness. Apart from anything else, the numbers are so much greater. After heart disease, mental illness is the second biggest expense in the Health Service. By 1985-86 the total hospital and community health service cost of mental illness was well over £1 billion, and that does not include, for example, the cost of drugs and care through the family practitioner committees.

I had the figures for mental illness analysed recently and I was surprised to discover the extent to which mental illness is a female problem. In every age group, looking at admissions to hospital for mental illness, women outnumber men. Among men, the commonest diagnoses are schizophrenia and alcohol-related problems, although obviously alcoholism can be an effect of mental illness as well as a cause. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the setting up of a ministerial group on alcohol misuse with membership from 11 Departments, chaired by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. We hope to make progress on a wide range of services and policies that will help that group of people.

Among women, the major group is the elderly and the commonest diagnosis is not, as I would have expected, dementia, but depression. The archetypal mental patient in Britain is a depressed old lady and much of that clinical depression may be postponable, if not preventable. At least we can aim to minimise its effects. Therefore, it follows that the pattern of services in the community and the way in which we treat our old people may need to shift to reflect those new patterns of need.

I am satisfied that we are making progress and I share the hon. Gentleman's feeling that we shall continue to need our hospitals and improvement in our community care for many years to come. We will need our hospitals for sanctuary, respite, teaching and training, research and ultimately, of course, for long-stay care.

In the past there has been tension about the relative contributions of the different providers of care. Most notably, there was tension between the hospital or institutional provision and provision in or by the community at large. I do not believe that that conflict is necessary or real. The whole spectrum of care provision is complementary. In our 1987 election manifesto we said:

"Elderly, disabled, mentally ill and mentally handicapped people, should be cared for within the community whenever this is right for them.

In the past some people who should have been cared for in other ways have remained in hospitals, sometimes for years. That is changing . . . This changing pattern has already brought a better life to many thousands of people. It has the potential to do so for many thousands more."

I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will join me in reiterating those words.

East Yorkshire Health Authority

1 pm

Mr. James Cran (Beverley): I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to raise two problems that affect the East Yorkshire health authority. I know that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security is well aware of them, as I am pleased to say that she visited the authority a week or so ago. The first problem does not necessarily particularly affect any other district health authority. However, I am convinced —unless my hon. Friend can tell me otherwise—that the second problem will certainly affect other district health authorities, and that is why I am raising it now.

The East Yorkshire health authority has not always been successful. It would be silly of me to claim that it has. However, I have no doubt that it is successful now. It delivers services to my constituents and to people in neighbouring constituencies in a way that would draw a certain amount of acclamation from my hon. Friend and her Department. We would be entitled to believe—and I thought that I was entitled to believe—that a successful health authority, like the divine Greta Garbo, has a right to be left alone. I am sorry to report that that is not the case. The East Yorkshire health authority is not being left alone.

The first problem that I want to address to the House involves successive proposals to reorganise health services on the north bank of the Humber. If an attempt at amalgamating East Yorkshire health authority with the Hull health authority had occurred once, I might be entitled to make a small protest. If it had happened twice, I might be entitled to make a rather larger protest. In fact, as my hon. Friend is aware, attempts at amalgamation have not occurred once, twice, or thrice. As far as I can understand from the record, five attempts have been made. Indeed, there might even have been six attempts, depending on one's definition of an attempt at amalgamation. The last attempt occurred this year. The problem is therefore not old. It is still a current issue, or seems to be.

My hon. Friend will be aware of my views on this matter, as they are fairly well known. I lobbied against an amalgamation because I did not see evidence to suggest that the delivery of resources and care for patients would be any greater as a result of amalgamation. A more important consideration, and one that I have applied to local authorities, is that the closer we can get the provision and delivery of services to the consumer, the better.

With that background, my hon. Friend would have been as delighted as I was to receive a copy of the letter that I received on 5 February from the chairman of the Yorkshire regional health authority, who said:

"Dear James,

Whilst we decided not to proceed with the merger"—

now, that was wonderful—

"we did see the need for increased co-operation and collaboration in a number of areas. For this reason we shall be undertaking a full option appraisal on the optimum long term pattern of general hospital services on the North Bank of the Humber for the total population."

I want to reassure my hon. Friend that I am not prepared to argue with that, as that is perfectly legitimate. On the one hand there is an assurance that there will be no merger, and on the other the letter states that an examination must be made of the two health authorities to optimise the services.

[Mr. James Cran]

However, I received another piece of paper with that letter, which was a recommendation dated 28 January 1988 from the Yorkshire regional health authority. That did not seem to be consistent with the chairman's comments. The recommendation was

"that no action be taken at the present time in respect of possible unification of East Yorkshire and Hull Districts."

I am bound to draw the attention of the House, my hon. Friend and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the fact that after six attempts at amalgamation we are entitled to know what "at the present time" means. I am entitled to construe that perhaps it means that someone else will have yet another go at amalgamation. We would be forgiven for thinking that perhaps that would happen not in five or 10 years' time, but in five or 10 months' time. There is therefore a certain lack of consistency in the signals coming from the Yorkshire regional health authority.

With regard to that inconsistency, I have the minutes of a meeting held on 21 March between the regional health authority and the East Yorkshire district health authority and Hull health authority. The minutes state that the chairman of the Hull health authority

"indicated that as far as Hull was concerned, the districting issue was finished."

The regional health authority chairman, Mr. Brian Askew, said that it was

"time that the districting issue was forgotten."

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): Districting?

Mr. Cran: Yes.

If ever I had a confused set of signals, it must be those that I have described to my hon. Friend. Although I may have been entitled to a certain amount of levity on this subject, the serious point is that the regional health authority and my hon. Friend have responsibility to clear up the issue. In saying that, I am not ruling out the fact that we will not look at the whole of Yorkshire or any other part of the country to find a better system of organising the Health Service in future. We may do that, but I am wholly against this piecemeal organisational tinkering which leaves my constituents not knowing which health authority will be in place at any given time.

That also means that the managers within the health authority do not have much confidence in their jobs and how to do them, because they do not know who they are working for. If the authority was a business, the company involved would have a continual takeover threat hanging over it. With such a sword of Damocles hanging over it, how can we possibly expect managers in the East Yorkshire health authority to deal confidently with their jobs and manage the health authority properly?

I humbly submit that under the laughable circumstances that I have outlined, they cannot be expected to do their jobs properly. The managers are doing their best, and they are doing their jobs well, but I would not be surprised if some of them were beginning to wonder what was happening. I therefore want a little clarification of the Government's view of the lack of direction from the regional health authority.

Problems seem to come in multiples for East Yorkshire health authority. The second one relates to the fact that it has with a vengeance got on and done its job. As my hon. Friend knows, it started with 12 inefficient and poorly utilised hospitals, which resulted in a waste of resources. Having established that that was the case, the chairman, the general manager and the board set about considering how to use their resources better and, with everyone's co-operation, reduced 12 inefficient hospitals to seven more efficient hospitals, which is exactly what my hon. Friend, the Government and the community want.

That move freed a large amount of revenue which the authority believed, perhaps naively, it could use to improve its resources. Its property sales during the past three years having been worth £2·5 million, which is a considerable sum, it intended to use the money to transform Castle Hill hospital in Cottingham into a district general hospital, which was an eminently sensible decision. That has only partially been implemented.

The nub of the problem is that that which you have is not necessarily yours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, at a regional health authority meeting, decisions were made on what is called resource allocation, and the minutes state:

"It is therefore recommended that the planned reduction of allocation to East Yorkshire be commenced in 1988-89 by a reduction of £1 million."

All this is a week or so before the new financial year starts, so the problems have been compounded. The minutes continue:

"This then creates the sum"—

it certainly does—

"of £1 million for redistribution within the Region and the RHA is recommended to agree to the following proposals."

The proposals are that East Yorkshire should get back £250,000 of its own money for improvements to be agreed in cardi-thoracic services. It is also fortunate enough to get back a further £250,000 to be held for mental health bridging purposes as proposed by the authority. Details of the programmes are to be agreed by the regional health authority.

That is all right thus far, but the third recommendation is that £500,000 should go to Hull health authority in recognition of its overall RAWP position. There it is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A district health authority creates £2·5 million by getting rid of unused and inefficient resources and it then thinks, "How shall we use those resources for the benefit of our patients?" It then decides to create a district general hospital and embarks upon the project but, all of a sudden, part of the resources are taken away from it and given to someone else. If ever there was an example of banditry at work, I am entitled to say that this is it. East Yorkshire health authority may be forgiven for thinking that it had acted in accordance with the Government's policies. I believe that it has, and if it has not no doubt my hon. Friend will tell me, but it certainly seems to have struck the wrong chord with the Yorkshire regional health authority.

As I am sure my hon. Friend will be aware, at least two other district health authorities in Yorkshire which are also significantly above their RAWP allocations have not had a reallocation of resources in the bandit-like manner that I have just outlined. I suspect that there is a pretty good reason for that: they did not have the foresight of East Yorkshire health authority to divest themselves of resources that they did not want and use the money to improve patient services, which is what they should have done.

The message is that district health authorities must beware of selling assets which they do not require. Any district health authority that decides to sell its unwanted assets should beware, because there may be a robber

somewhere — in the form of another district health authority—ready to nab that money if it has the ear of its regional health authority. It follows that I do not understand the logic of the decision made by Yorkshire health authority. That is not to say that I do not recognise the problems of Hull district health authority. It would be silly of me to say that. The authority has resource problems, and it must cater for patients who originate from the area of the East Yorkshire health authority. But that problem will diminish by allowing East Yorkshire to keep its cash and build its district general hospital. Then it will have the facilities to cater for its own patients. That, not the reallocation of resources, is how to reduce the problem.

It would idle of me not to suggest to the House and to everyone who is fair-minded — I have no reason to believe that my hon. Friend is other than fair-minded— that it will be exceedingly difficult to motivate not only East Yorkshire but any other health authority to divest itself of assets that it does not need when it cannot be sure of keeping those resources. It does not make good horse sense, and I repeat that other district health authorities should beware of what happened in East Yorkshire.

I am also entitled to question the figure of 6·1 per cent. above RAWP target for East Yorkshire for 1988-89. All the figures available to me from the health authority show that there has been a rapid increase of between 20 and 30 per cent. in the number of patients being treated. The regional health authority is using historical figures, and the clear message is that the authority should use more up-to-date figures. It is ludicrous to reduce the allocation while activities are increasing.

After that endless parody of a case that I would not have believed unless I had seen it in action, I wait with bated breath to hear my hon. Friend's comments.

1.17 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mrs. Edwina Currie): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Beverley (Mr. Cran) on winning a place in the ballot. In the short time that he has been in the House he has shown a keen interest in health and welfare matters. I do not know whether he realises it, but so far he has written me 35 letters and tabled 10 questions, and now he has taken up the cause in debate. He is one of the most active of the new intake, and I commend to his constituents, whom he represents so well, his persistent but courteous approach to Ministers, which I am sure will bear fruit.

East Yorkshire health authority covers most of the area known by the old and much-missed name of the East Riding of Yorkshire. It includes the hinterland of Hull, but not the city itself, which has its own health authority. We expect the East Yorkshire and Hull health authorities to work closely together, with Scarborough to the north and York to the west, to plan and provide services for the people of the entire neighbourhood. I am sure that my hon. Friend would agree with that, although I understand his misgivings about formal mergers. I hope that he can support the co-operation that I have just mentioned, since we hope to provide a high standard of cost-effective service to the people of Yorkshire. I note that he is nodding in assent.

I take up with my hon. Friend the word "districting", which I believe he used when quoting from a health authority document. I hope that our friends in Yorkshire, whatever else they may be doing so brilliantly, will be careful about the surgery that they are performing on the English language. I think that they meant the discussion of mergers or boundary changes.

As my hon. Friend will know, the funding of the NHS has increased substantially. This year we will be spending £21 billion on the NHS, and next year we will be spending £22 billion. For the hospital and community health services in England, for which I have responsibility, funding has increased from £8·1 billion in 1982-83 to £11·5 billion this year. This is an increase of 38 per cent. in cash and 11 per cent. in real terms over a five-year period. We might use that to reflect on the 2 per cent. per annum growth that some critics will call for. We have already been getting that level of growth.

Funding for Yorkshire regional health authority has risen from £583 million in 1982-83 to £818 million this year. This is an increase of 40 per cent. in cash and 12 per cent. in real terms, which is slightly more than the national average.

This year East Yorkshire health authority will be spending £40 million. It has also received £80,000 under the waiting list initiative for two of its projects, and it has added to that from its own resources, as my hon. Friend described. Its costs improvement programme amounts to some £820,000, which is 2·1 per cent. of its budget. According to my figures, it also has available £1·25 million this year from land sales.

Those are substantial figures and they reflect considerable credit on the health authority. Indeed, they would reflect credit on health authorities twice its size. I hope that some of the bigger health authorities, including those elsewhere in Yorkshire, to which my hon. Friend referred, whose performances are, shall we say, more sluggish, will take due note of what they have been up to in East Yorkshire health authority. If they are not taking due note, we are. I assure my hon. Friend of that. I take seriously his point about incentives.

Many health authorities have developed a good record of improvements in service—quality, quantity and cost-effectiveness — under the guidance of the Government. East Yorkshire has a much better record than many, particularly in the vigorous examination of patterns of work, which have often been long established, the release through planned change of additional resources — through its own efforts — and the intelligent re-application of those funds to improve local health care. In 1986-87 East Yorkshire achieved cost improvements of £1·36 million, which was just under 3·5 per cent. of the budget. In 1987-88 it will, as I have mentioned, achieve improvements of £818,000, which is 2·1 per cent. of its budget, and next year it hopes to achieve £865,000, or 2·2 per cent. It has achieved that by careful scrutiny of, for example, domestic support services, portering, transport and energy conservation measures, which released £116,000 in 1986-87 and will release a further £55,000 in the year to come.

As my hon. Friend said, I saw all that myself last week when I visited Castle Hill hospital at Cottingham to open the new cardio-thoracic wards. The new wards form part of the major upgrading of the cardio-thoracic facilities that serve the four Humberside health authorities — East Yorkshire, Hull, Grimsby and Scunthorpe —and part of north Yorkshire. It is a magnificent development and demonstrates the commitment of the Government, the

[Mrs. Edwina Currie]

Yorkshire regional health authority and the district health authorities to improving the services for patients suffering from coronary heart disease.

I greatly enjoyed my visit. The sun shone and everybody was dancing around like lambs with two tails. They were so pleased with the new facilities. I would be grateful if my hon. Friend would pass on my appreciation to all his constituents and to Mr. Hooper, the chairman of the East Yorkshire health authority, Mr. Nichols, his district general manager, Mr. Nair and Mr. Moghissi, the consultant surgeons and all the staff and patients for their kindness and hospitality during my visit.

The food that I had was some of the best I have ever tasted. Indeed, I asked for the recipes. It was the first health authority lunch that I have attended in recent times where non-alcoholic drinks were served throughout, and I suspect that the conversation was all the better for it.

The darker side of British life, particularly in Yorkshire, was also brought home to me a little later when, in one of the wards, I met a young girl not yet 30 who was being treated for lung disease. She had been a cigarette smoker since childhood. I was moved that day, as I always am, at meeting so many people suffering from what we now know to be preventable diseases. The Yorkshire regional health authority and the local district health authorities in Yorkshire are taking those matters seriously and have increased their health promotion budget in ways that we hope will bear fruit in years to come.

The new cardio-thoracic wards are not the only capital developments at Castle Hill and in the East Yorkshire health authority. For example, in January work was started at Castle Hill on a major project to build a new surgical unit that will comprise four operating theatres, four wards and a day ward. I could see that work proceeding apace during my visit. In addition, on 5 March the new Bridlington community hospital, which is managed by the East Yorkshire health authority and which was built at a cost of about £16 million, took its first patients. I well remember my hon. Friend's question to me about the new hospital on 27 October, when he reminded me that it was completed ahead of time. That hospital will provide 200 beds for acute elderly and maternity patients, a 60-place day hospital, an operating theatre suite, out-patient departments and support facilities. It is a splendid development and it will clearly make a major contribution to improving health services in East Yorkshire.

I refer now to my hon. Friend's point about the £1 million reduction in the allocation. As he will know, the distribution of resources to district health authorities is a matter for the regional health authority concerned—in this case, the Yorkshire region. Clearly, regional health authorities must take into account the balance of resources between districts and ensure that there is a fair and equitable distribution. What we do as Ministers is allocate money to regional health authorities. They then send it out. The RAWP formula is intended only to assist us in sending money out to regional health authorities. It is not intended to be any more than the vaguest guide for allocation between districts. Indeed, as my hon. Friend knows, we are currently looking at the RAWP formula. There may be some amendments which, perhaps, will take into account changing patterns of population growth in many parts of the country.

The money does not, however, belong to the regional health authority. It does not belong to the district health authority — East Yorkshire or otherwise. It does not belong to any of us. It belongs to the taxpayer. Eventually, we have to account to the taxpayer — him or, more likely these days, her — for every penny that we have. There is total homogeneity about the money. It does not acquire a different colour the moment it is allocated to East Yorkshire. I am afraid that it is exactly the same money, and it is raised and accounted for in exactly the same way.

I understand that East Yorkshire has had its revenue allocation, which it controls, reduced by £1 million for 1988-89. That is because, since 1985-86, East Yorkshire had been treating fewer of its own local patients than had been expected and planned for. This has created additional pressures on the neighbouring authority in Hull. In particular, although East Yorkshire health authority is treating cardiac patients from neighbouring health authorities, large numbers of psychiatric patients are crossing the border into Hull, where resources are being stretched to meet their care.

The pattern of revenue funding that we have had so far has enabled East Yorkshire to transfer considerable sums of money every year from revenue to capital, which does not lead one to feel that the revenue side of its budget has been under enormous strain. I am advised that the adjustment will not adversely affect patient services, although I can well understand that the management of East Yorkshire health authority, which naturally had all sorts of plans for spending that money, could feel somewhat troubled.

We should look at it this way: the NHS money has been redistributed to the benefit of NHS patients. As my hon. Friend said, of the £1 million, £250,000 will be used to improve the super district cardio-thoracic services at Castle Hill hospital. This means that services are available for patients from more than just one district. Thus, that handing back of £250,000 will reflect the movement of patients into East Yorkshire. A further £250,000 will be earmarked by the region as a bridging fund for mental health services in East Yorkshire.

If my hon. Friend was able to hear any of the debate that immediately preceded this one, he will know that we have difficulties in creating the kind of community care services that we all want to see, so that people do not have to travel a long way from home for their care and, particularly, in the case of the long-term chronic sick and mental illness, they can expect to be cared for closer to home. The remaining £500,000 will be allocated to Hull, in part to reflect the cross-boundary flows that I have already mentioned.

This is not a cut, and it is not banditry either. I assure my hon. Friend that spending in his constituency and in the vicinity is still tending to go up, not down. Neither the Chancellor nor the taxpayer will see that £1 million again. I suspect that it will be joined by many more millions of pounds in years to come, as I have already said. People from the north bank of the Humber, including my hon. Friend's constituents, will continue to benefit from this money. It has been earmarked for specific services within East Yorkshire, rather than giving the DHA an entirely free hand with spending, and it will provide services from which East Yorkshire's residents will benefit. The continuing capital development at Castle Hill should not be affected.

As my hon. Friend said, a full-option appraisal will be undertaken on the optimal long-term pattern of general hospital services on the north bank of the Humber for the total population. Further, the two district health authorities have been asked to report within six months on the opportunities for the management of services for mental illness and mentally handicapped people. Perhaps the report will be made by one authority on behalf of both. The revenue allocation in respect of other services will be reviewed. It will have regard to the most recent information on the cross-boundary flow and it will be monitored thereafter, which should pick up some of the points that my hon. Friend mentioned.

We look forward to further co-operation in the health care of local people, which will benefit everyone, including my hon. Friend's constituents.

Crown Prosecution Service

1.30 pm

Mr. Simon Hughes (Southwark and Bermondsey): I am grateful for the opportunity to initiate this Adjournment debate and I am grateful to the Attorney-General for attending to respond to it.

It is unusual for me to be able to debate legal matters because I act as spokesman on environmental matters for my party. I am grateful to take a break from that activity, particularly as it is Maundy Thursday, which is one of the days in the legal year when the Attorney-General, I and others scan the newspapers to see who have been made Queen's Counsels. We congratulate those who have been appointed.

I entitled my application for a debate "the prosecution policy of the Crown Prosecution Service in cases involving death." The cause for my concern dates back to when I was elected to the House, and is coupled with my experience as a practising member of the Bar. My concern was how decisions to prosecute in the name of the Crown on behalf of the public were taken in particularly important cases.

The three cases that have specifically come my way relate to three young men from south London who were killed or died in dubious circumstances as a result of which criminal proceedings were considered. The first case concern a young man called David Sibun, who was assaulted on 1 January 1984. He was a neighbour of mine in Lynton road, Bermondsey, and I knew him and his family. He died in hospital having spent a short period in a coma. Criminal proceedings flowed from the incident. Pleas were accepted by the Director of Public Prosecutions to charges of assault and affray, and two young men were convicted. At that time the Attorney-General was the Solicitor-General. He did me the courtesy of allowing me to see him about the matters arising from that case, such as whether more substantial charges should have been brought, which was what I was seeking to persuade him about, so that, as a Law Officer, he could direct the DPP to prefer more substantial charges, given that the young man died following the assault and would not have died had it not been for that assault.

The second case concerned another young Bermondsey man, Mark Hogg. On 5 October 1985 he died in hospital in Exeter. He had been a prisoner in Exeter prison and had escaped while being transferred to that prison from Yeovil. He subsequently became ill and died in strange circumstances. His case was the subject of the longest inquest in the history of English criminal law and the result was an open verdict. That raised questions whether charges should have been preferred, although matters are still being considered by solicitors and proceedings might yet be taken, but they will probably be private proceedings.

The third case concerned the death on 29 June 1986 of another young man from south London called Robert McHayle. Last Saturday, a private summons was issued. The case is now sub judice, so it would be wrong for us to debate the issues and evidence until the matter has been resolved. Therefore, I will try to steer well clear of those matters while raising the general concerns that flow from the three cases and from the policy as a whole.

I think that I can rightly give the facts of the case concerning this young man, to complete the picture. Robert McHayle, who was 20 years old, was stabbed to

[Mr. Simon Hughes]

death on 29 June 1986. A charge was brought by the police in respect of another young man from south London. After the investigation, the charge was not proceeded with, the inquest was reopened and, as a result of the inquest, a verdict of unlawful killing was reached. The unusual factor was that the coroner asked that the police re-examine the case with a view to proceeding with a charge. I do not propose to go any further. The matter is now potentially back before the courts, with the prosecution being taken privately and not by the Crown Prosecution Service.

The Attorney-General will no doubt remember that there was a substantial public interest, and almost an outcry, at a case in Scotland when the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) was a Law Officer. He decided not to prosecute in a rape case, but a private prosecution, which secured convictions, was taken out. That caused substantial public interest because it raised the same issue. Does not the need for a private prosecution, and the fact of a subsequent conviction, suggest that there should have been a public prosecution and that people guilty of serious offences should have been prosecuted? These three cases of young men from south London all resulted in deaths and the debate is limited to that issue.

The rules, as far as they exist, are clear, in the sense that there is, and has always been, a code governing prosecuting on behalf of the Crown and it is now governed, as the Attorney-General will no doubt confirm, by section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. Section 10(2) provides that a code should be attached to the annual report of the Director of Public Prosecutions to the Attorney-General. One such report was produced last August.

I wish to examine not the way in which the evidence in any of the three cases was considered, but the way in which decisions are generally made about such matters. Does the Attorney-General agree, as many much more learned members of the legal profession than I have argued, that there should be an opportunity for debate, annually or biannually, in the House on the code and on another document, which is not in the public domain in the same way — the manual of policy and practice governing Crown prosecutions?

We often have the opportunity to debate such codes of practice — for example, that for local government. A substantial public interest would be served if the House periodically debated these matters, so that concerns about the way in which prosecutions on behalf of the public are carried out can be subject to scrutiny here and we can helpfully advise Law Officers of the Crown, officers under them and holders of public office, such as the Director of Public Prosecutions and the head of the Crown Prosecution Service, of the view of the legislature. That is my first specific request. That would be beneficial, and there is considerable demand for such a move.

My second request is to ask the Attorney-General whether he can help the House to identify the level at which decisions about whether to prosecute are made in cases involving death. I would argue that it is right and fair, and is seen to be so, if decisions on such cases are made at the highest level — by which I mean that, after advice has been sought in the normal way from the Treasury counsel, the DPP himself reviews the case. Cases that result in death are potentially in the category of the most serious crimes, and should be treated with appropriate seriousness by those to whom we entrust responsibility. It would be helpful if the Attorney-General could tell us about the level at which decisions are made in different types of case.

Thirdly, there is the ability to review initial decisions. That, I suggest, can be done in either of two ways: when there is specific cause for review, they can be put into the public domain — when, for example, a coroner asks for that to be done in his statement, summing up or comments after an inquest verdict; or the police can ask for it to be done. There are, of course, provisions for discretion to take account of the public view, but I ask for a specific procedure whereby it can clearly be seen that a review is taking place. That would be either at the instigation of the DPP, the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General, as the code would provide, or by application to the courts from someone who considered that the proper way to proceed. It would be a form of judicial review. That, I think, would alleviate the concern of my constituents, the family of the deceased David Sibun, that the case had not been heard.

I should like briefly to explore a fourth issue: the tests that are used. There are two tests — the test that the evidence is sufficient, and the test that the matter is in the public interest. It is clear from the code that the Crown prosecutors have substantial discretion, and I do not quibble with that. There must be a realistic prospect of conviction. But paragraph 8 of the code states:

> "The factors which can properly lead to a decision not to prosecute will vary from case to case, but broadly speaking, the graver the offence, the less likelihood there will be that the public interest will allow of a disposal less than prosecution, for example, a caution."

I feel that there should be a possibility in the second test —the public interest test—that, when death has resulted, the balance of the moment — generally a better-than-evens prospect of a conviction, in the public interest and on the evidence—should be reviewed to ensure that the public interest is served. The fear of possible additional evidence — especially after an inquest — or a feeling by the family of the deceased that there has not been enough inquiry into matters that concern them should be brought before the courts and seen to be reviewed.

One of the problems is that in any criminal case dealt with by the police and the Crown Prosecution Service the prosecution is by definition out of the hands of private citizens, be they family or other. Those personally affected feel excluded, and often are excluded in practice.

I feel that if, after the series of events that I have described, a decision is made to issue a private prosecution and a summons is sought and granted—as in the case that has prompted me to speak today — specific consideration should be given by the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General to whether the case should be taken over, as is perfectly permissible, on behalf of the public, so that the prosecution becomes a public prosecution. There are practical reasons for that; not least the cost of pursuing a private prosecution, which can be considerable and often prohibitive. Once it has been decided that a summons is acceptable, and the summons is issued, the matter should normally go into the public domain, subject to clearly certified exceptions.

I ask the Attorney-General to consider whether he or, by direction, the head of the Crown Prosecution Service

will consider taking the McHayle case into the public domain and prosecute on behalf of the public for the convenience of both the public and of the family of the deceased.

1.45 pm

The Attorney-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I congratulate the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) on his success in the ballot, and especially upon the careful and reasonable way in which he dealt with such important and difficult subjects. In some cases, they occasion deep anxiety and strong feelings among our constituents, and they need to be ventilated. They must always be addressed with the greatest care and sensitivity by those who have jurisdiction over them.

Three questions are relevant to my reply. First, what criteria does the Director of Public Prosecutions and, through him, the Crown Prosecution Service apply in deciding whether to institute or to continue criminal proceedings? Secondly, when, in the public interest, should cases be brought before a court by the prosecuting authorities—notwithstanding that they reckon that there is no realistic prospect of conviction? Thirdly, in what circumstances and on the basis of what criteria should the Director of Public Prosecutions intervene and assume responsibility for the conduct of a private prosecution?

The hon. Gentleman referred to the code for Crown prosecutors, and in recent months I have referred to it on a number of occasions in answer to parliamentary questions. As it states in its introductory paragraph, it is:

"A public declaration of the principles upon which the Crown Prosecution Service will exercise its functions."

That code reflects the guidelines published by my predecessor, now Lord Havers. He was the first Attorney-General to publish the criteria upon which prosecuting decisions were taken by him, and which he recommended to all prosecuting authorities.

That code is now issued pursuant to section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. It is included in the annual report which the director makes to me under the Act, and which is laid before Parliament. There is a copy of the code in the Library. It makes it perfectly clear that the Crown prosecutor must ask himself two basic questions, as the hon. Gentleman correctly said, before deciding whether to institute or to continue criminal proceedings. The first is, is the evidence sufficient? Secondly, does the public interest require a prosecution?

It is important to note the order in which those questions are posed. It is fundamental to our system of criminal justice that a person should not be made to stand trial unless there is a sufficiently strong case against him before the proceedings are commenced. It is an important rule of fairness and of practice that someone is not made to stand trial merely because, for example, some might like to see him in the dock, no matter how much sympathy that feeling might reasonably attract. Prosecutions are not, and should not be, instituted simply to clear the air.

The sufficiency of evidence criterion has long been part of our criminal process. It has been explained and described in different ways at different times. In recent years it was expressed thus:

"Whether a reasonable jury, properly directed in the law, would be more likely to convict than to acquit."

In layman's terms, that was sometimes described as the "51 per cent. rule".

The test is now expressed another way, and again I quote fom the code:

"A prosecution should not be started or continued unless the Crown Prosecutor is satisfied that there is admissible, substantial and reliable evidence that a criminal offence known to the law has been committed by an identifiable person. The Crown Prosecution Service does not support the proposition that a bare prima facie case is enough, but rather will apply the test of whether there is a realistic prospect of a conviction. When reaching this decision the Crown Prosecutor as a first step will wish to satisfy himself that there is no realistic expectation of an ordered acquittal"—

that is ordered by the court—

"or a successful submission in the Magistrates' Court of no case to answer. He should also have regard to any lines of defence which are plainly open to, or have been indicated by, the accused and any other factors which in his view would affect the likelihood or otherwise of a conviction."

The code expands on this, in setting out a number of matters to which the Crown prosecutor should have regard when evaluating the evidence. They all go towards that first essential decision: is there a realistic prospect of a conviction?

Having satisfied himself that the evidence can justify proceedings, the Crown prosecutor moves then — and only then — to the second question: does the public interest require a prosecution? I have already this year had cause to remind the House of the universality of that test. The code rightly pays great attention to that important question. It sets out a number of factors that might properly be taken into consideration in a list that is exemplary but not exhaustive.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey referred to offences resulting in death. It is hard to conceive of circumstances in which it would not be in the public interest to prosecute a defendant for murder, provided that there was a realistic prospect of conviction. As I understand it, that matter is not in issue today. The real question is how that first test is satisfied.

The Crown Prosecution Service was set up to ensure that decisions in the great majority of criminal cases were taken by qualified lawyers, independent of the police. Members of the service are charged with the duty to ask themselves those two essential questions to which I have referred. The hon. Gentleman asked whether there should be circumstances in which prosecutions might be allowed to go ahead notwithstanding the fact that the Crown prosecutor is not satisfied that there is a reasonable prospect of conviction.

I do not think that that would be compatible with the purposes for which the Crown Prosecution Service was established. We have a Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that all cases are properly evaluated and that only those likely to result in a conviction are allowed to proceed. The exercise of the power to bring criminal proceedings against someone can be highly invasive of the citizen's liberties. It is not to be undertaken lightly; it must be undertaken upon the application of established principles by a trained mind, and never merely in response to clamour.

I am coming to the specific questions that the hon. Gentleman asked. First, he asked in what circumstances the service would intervene and assume responsibility for the conduct of proceedings that had been started privately. There is no straightforward answer to that question. Each case, inevitably, must be judged on its own facts. The director has the power to take over the conduct of such proceedings at any time, should he think it appropriate,

[Sir Patrick Mayhew]

but, at the same time, section 6 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 expressly reserves the right of private citizens to institute criminal proceedings.

There may be circumstances where, even though there would appear to be a realistic prospect of a conviction, it would not be in the public interest for a prosecution to proceed. In such circumstances, the director might well assume the responsibility for those proceedings and discontinue them. Examples of such circumstances are set out in the passage of the code to which I have referred. Moreover, in rare circumstances I might myself enter a nolle prosequi and bring such proceedings to an end.

However, I do not think that the hon. Gentleman is concerned with such cases today. Where the director's decision not to prosecute or to discontinue proceedings is based solely on the sufficiency of the evidence, it would be highly unlikely that he would intervene so as to discontinue a subsequently instituted private prosecution. There may be cases of such prosecutions where examining justices consider that there is a case on which the defendant should be committed for trial at the Crown court. In such circumstances it would not be unusual for the director to assume responsibility for the conduct of those proceedings and to prosecute them in the Crown court, notwithstanding his own earlier decision not to prosecute.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether, in a case where death has resulted and a private prosecution has been instituted, the almost invariable rule ought to be that the director should take over the proceedings. In those circumstances, the question whether the prosecution should be taken over by the director is always very carefully considered. There are substantial advantages in the director taking over such a prosecution, which I do not need to spell out here; in many cases, they are obvious. However, there may be rare occasions when the director, having taken the decision that the evidence is insufficient, will not wish to take it over. Therefore, I cannot accede to the proposal that it should be an almost inevitable rule, but I assure the hon. Gentleman that most careful consideration is given to that question in the circumstances that he posed. It is quite right that that practice should continue.

The hon. Gentleman asked whether there ought to be an opportunity for an annual or regular debate on the application of the code. I am always happy to be given an opportunity to give the facts about the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service. The hon. Gentleman knows that the allocation of parliamentary time is for my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, not me, but when an opportunity is offered I always find it valuable to tell the House about what the Crown Prosecution Service has been doing and to draw a much better picture of it than is portrayed by the media. I should be happy to have an opportunity to explain the operation of the code, but that does not rest with me.

The hon. Gentleman asked about the level at which decisions are taken to prosecute when offences have resulted in death. It is taken at a high level. One of the advantages of the Crown Prosecution Service is that decisions have been decentralised. Decisions that were taken in almost every case by the Director of Public Prosecutions in London are now taken at chief Crown prosecutor level in the regions. It affords a better opportunity to take into account local considerations, and that change is therefore to be welcomed. It would always be at chief Crown prosecutor level that a decision of that kind would be taken, and in a particularly difficult or sensitive case it would properly be taken by the director, sometimes in consultation with one or other of the Law Officers.

I was asked about the ability to ask for a review of a specific decision if a coroner or the police asked for such a review. That can best be done without referring to me or to the Director of Public Prosecutions. There is no inclination to hold to a decision simply because it has been reached at a certain level and in certain circumstances. In all reasonable circumstances, there is complete readiness to review a decision, not least because everyone concerned recognises the importance of retaining public confidence in the Crown Prosecution Service.

Lastly, I was asked about the tests applied in relation to the rule about sufficiency of evidence and the rule in relation to the public interest. The hon. Gentleman suggested that where death has resulted there ought to be a review always to ensure that the public interest has been served. I think that I dealt with that at the beginning of my reply when I said that it is universally recognised within the Crown Prosecution Service that a case where death has taken place in potentially criminal circumstances needs to be treated with special care and particular sensitivity. Not every case that results in death, however, can properly be prosecuted if the rules are to be adhered to. It is important that we exercise the power of prosecution with care because, as I have already said, it is a highly invasive power with marked effects upon the liberties of the citizen.

I hope that I have replied satisfactorily to the points raised by the hon. Gentleman about this extremely important subject.

Exercise Fire Focus

2 pm

Mr. Cyril D. Townsend (Bexleyheath): I am grateful for this opportunity to initiate a debate on exercise Fire Focus and, in particular, on its diplomatic consequences. I was present when the Minister of State for the Armed Forces told the House on 11 February during the debate on the Royal Air Force:

"Next month we intend to hold the first full-scale reinforcement exercise, known as Fire Focus. The exercise will be directed by HQ RAF Strike Command at High Wycombe, and will take place between 7 and 31 March. It will involve the reinforcement of the garrison's air defences and an airlift of troops to the Falklands, followed by unit exercises to take advantage of the excellent training facilities in the islands." —[*Official Report*, 11 February 1988; Vol. 127, c. 532.]

It is possible that the phrase "full-scale" gave the impression that the exercise was to be bigger than was in fact intended. The Ministry of Defence press release mentioned

"significant numbers of troops and quantities of equipment."

As my hon. Friend the Minister knows, the announcement caused a considerable diplomatic flurry — greater, I suspect, than had been envisaged by the Foreign Office. Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Harding, no less, told an international press conference on 8 March that the announcement had created

"enormous ructions around the world."

In the Argentine, according to the *Financial Times* of 9 March,

"Political groups from the far-right and far-left held separate demonstrations in the capital, condemning not only 'British imperialism', but also the Argentine Government for its supposed weak posture and its seeming lack of clear military contingency plans."

That Government, in a statement put out on 3 March, said of the exercise:

"In addition to violating the sovereign rights of Argentina, such action is in direct contradiction to the United Nations and OAS resolution on this question . . . In case of need the relevant defence plans shall be put in operation."

The armed forces were put on what was described "defensive alert".

On 17 March Senor Danie Caputo, the Argentine Foreign Minister, told a special meeting of the United Nations Security Council that the exercise created tension and insecurity and threatened international peace. The Organisation of American States officially condemned the exercise, as did the Andean foreign ministers. The Group of 8 — the Contadora group — called for it to be cancelled. Brazil asked my hon. Friend the Minister to postpone his visit. A Foreign Office spokesman described bilateral relations with this increasingly important country as "awkward". United States' concern was clear. The Latin American editor of *The Independent* wrote on 18 February:

"The British exercises have caused a diplomatic flurry in Latin America, and irritation in the US State Department, where officials make no secret at their annoyance with what they see as Mrs. Thatcher's intransigence over the Falklands. The United States has been anxious to reduce tensions in the South Atlantic and restore its relationship with Argentina. Their frustration with Britain is exacerbated by specific differences of policy and interests between the two countries. Some US officials, for instance, wish to help Argentina to re-equip its armed forces".

Other countries saw the exercise as a demonstration of force. In Britain, there was a surprising number of hostile comments in the press, and not just in *The Guardian*. *The Times* said that the Foreign Office was left

"with some catching up to do—and at a time when Britain is anxious to raise its trading profile on the South American continent. One must question therefore whether the ground was well enough prepared through Britain's embassies in Argentina's Latin neighbours . . . Britain should act to repair this damage quickly."

The Daily Telegraph headlined its editorial, "Act of Folly". It described Fire Focus as

"an insensitive piece of sabre-rattling".

It went too far. The exercise has undoubtedly restored the issue of the Falklands to international prominence and a number of points and questions arise from that fact.

I have no hesitation in saying that exercise Fire Focus, which finishes today, was a sensible and legitimate military measure and that there was an over-reaction in Argentina and some other Latin American countries.

The garrison in the islands has been reduced from some 5,000 to about 1,500—the figures are not made public. The other side of the coin is that rapid reinforcement by long-haul troop transport aircraft must be possible, and be seen to be possible, through practice. If such exercises do not take place, the Chief of Defence Staff would be right to call for a larger garrison. That is clearly not in the interests of Britain or of Argentina and certainly not in the interests of the islanders.

Exercise Fire Focus, which had been planned by the Ministry of Defence for several months and which involved a battalion of my old regiment — the Light Infantry—and did not involve the Royal Navy, had, I presume, been timed to coincide with the islands' summer, such as it is. In diplomatic terms, however, the timing was unfortunate. The United States has been mediating to try to avoid incidents between fisheries patrol vessels of Argentina and the United Kingdom and, it is hoped, perhaps to obtain a multinational fisheries agreement.

In Argentina, twice in the past year President Alfonsin has had serious problems with elements of the Argentine military which, according to today's papers, are still not completely over. Without doubt, the impression has been given at home and abroad that our Foreign Office played an insufficient part in the planning stages of the exercise. Perhaps its views were not sufficiently pressed home and taken into account. It had inadequately prepared the ground in Latin America—that is clear.

What advance notice was given to the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Swiss ambassador acting on our behalf? We have complained in the past that Argentina has not given us sufficient notice of important developments. How much discussion took place with the United States' State Department beforehand? We clearly had a duty to keep our allies well briefed, and one wonders why it was necessary for the US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs to make an unscheduled visit to Argentina after our official announcement. I trust that the exercise was a success in defence terms.

What is my hon. Friend doing to repair that diplomatic damage and to tidy up the diplomatic debris? Has a new date been agreed for his visit to Brazil? Where does that leave United States mediation on the fisheries regime? Are there draft plans for any such exercises in the future and, if so, how will the Foreign Office improve its performance next time around?

The events of the past few weeks also remind us, if any reminder is needed, that, although the guns stopped firing in the south Atlantic one cold morning almost six years ago, depressingly little progress has been made in patching

[Mr. Cyril D. Townsend]

up our historic quarrel with Argentina, a democratic pro-Western, potentially friendly nation. The Government have not yet achieved the restoration of diplomatic links, even at the most lowly level. How right was a previous Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, which had a Conservative majority and Chairman, when it told the House, following a visit to the islands in January 1983:

"Your Committee do not believe that present policy, however necessary it may be in the short term, offers a stable future for the Islands. Not only are its material and political costs burdensome, but the policy itself is reactive and inflexible, and carries with it unfortunate implications for the wider conduct of foreign policy both now and for the future."

The passage of time has made the shortcomings of that policy even more apparent. Starting from a position of real moral and military strength, we are now on the defensive and find ourselves over this exercise — and, for that matter, every year in the United Nations General Assembly—widely criticised, even by our European and Commonwealth partners. The world does not support us over the question of the islands. It votes against us. The diplomatic initiative has been passed to the Argentine, which has also been inflexible.

The total cost for the financial years 1983-84 to 1987-88 is about £3,340 million, or about £160 per taxpayer. To put it another way, over four years, £3·3 billion was spent on behalf of the 400 families who make up the islands' population, when expatriates and their families are discounted. That was during a time of financial restraint at home.

Some 8 per cent. of the total efforts of the Royal Navy's dwindling number of destroyers and frigates is committed to the south Atlantic. In this country, the opinion polls suggest that, even among Conservative voters, the Government's policy is out of step with public attitudes. The public clearly want to see diplomatic relations restored and do not have a hang-up over the future of the region.

That part of the world is crying out for the diplomatic skills that the Government have been able to deploy and display over Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, and Hong Kong and over negotiations with Spain on Gibraltar. That part of the world is well suited to a timely, vigorous and well-prepared intervention by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister so that we can move on in this Parliament to a new, profitable and, above all, peaceful period of co-operation with all the countries and people concerned with the future of the south Atlantic.

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham) *rose*——

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker): Order. Does the hon. Gentleman have the consent of the hon. Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) and the Minister to speak?

Mr. Townsend *indicated assent.*

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar) *indicated assent.*

2.14 pm

Mr. Jacques Arnold (Gravesham): My hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) considerably overrates the damage that the exercise has done to Britain's relationship with Latin America. It is well known that Latin American solidarity is based on a different scale of priorities in considering its diplomatic position.

The only real tangible reaction that we have seen to the exercise has been the postponement of my hon. Friend the Minister's visit to Brazil. We should note carefully the reaction in Brazil to that decision to postpone his visit. The three major Brazilian newspapers based in Rio de Janeiro strongly criticised the cancellation of that visit and referred to what Brazilians and the Brazilian business community felt was the powerful relationship between Britain and Brazil.

My experience of Latin America is that the solidarity between Latin American countries is as wide as the River Plate, but it is only ankle-deep. Far more important to the individual countries of Latin America is their relationships as individual countries with Britain as one of the leading economies of the western world.

2.15 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath (Mr. Townsend) for raising this subject and to my hon. Friend the Member for Gravesham (Mr. Arnold) for joining in.

A great deal has been said in the press and in international fora about exercise Fire Focus. Sadly, much of the speculation about its purpose and scope has been inaccurate and exaggerated. Perhaps, as a result, some of the international reaction has been ill-judged and inappropriate. Therefore, I particularly welcome this opportunity once again to set the record straight.

Let me begin by putting the exercise firmly in context. The Government are pledged to the defence of the Falkland Islands. Everybody recognises that. It is not a pledge that we take lightly. Our strategy for the defence of the islands depends crucially, as my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath has said, on an ability rapidly to reinforce our military presence there. We made that strategy absolutely clear in the White Paper in 1982.

Mount Pleasant airport was completed in 1985, allowing wide-bodied transport aircraft to land in the islands. Since then we have halved—I repeat halved—the size of the garrison. The garrison is now at the lowest minimum level consonant with a realistic defence capability.

Of course, that major reduction in force levels has been possible only because of the knowledge that we could, and would, be able to fly in reinforcements at short notice. But we cannot take that reinforcement capability on trust. We have to test it regularly. We hope never to have to reinforce the garrison in earnest, but that is an eventuality that no responsable Government can lightly leave to chance.

Many other nations conduct similar, routine reinforcement exercises. Those exercises are accepted as a normal part of the process by which we work to maintain our security. That is well understood. No one can seriously suggest that the holding of such exercises brings us somehow to the brink of hostilities.

Accordingly, let me emphasise that exercise Fire Focus was not in any way a response to an increase in tension in the area. It was not conceived abruptly, or with any provocative intent. On the contrary, as I have already said, we made it clear in 1982 in a White Paper on the Falklands campaign that reinforcement exercises would be carried out as and when necessary—a fact which, I have to say,

some commentators, and even hon. Members, seem conveniently to overlook. I exempt my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath from that.

Following the completion of Mount Pleasant airport, the austral summer of 1988 was timely for operational, logistical and weather reasons. As my hon. Friend has said, my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces announced the exercise in the House on 11 February. He made it plain that the exercise was routine. He also pointed out that, by its very nature, it contributed to an overall lowering of tension in the region as an integral part of a policy of maintaining a reinforcement capability, and, hence, only a minimum permanent garrison in the island.

My hon. Friend has claimed that a decision to hold the exercise shows a lack of co-ordination at the very least between the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence. I want to assure my hon. Friend that the Foreign Office was consulted about the exercise at an early stage. I cannot for one moment agree that the responsibility for maintaining our commitment to the Falkland Islands is incompatible with maintaining and developing our good relationships in the region as a whole.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath asked whether we had informed the Argentine Government in advance about the exercise. The Swiss ambassador informed the Argentine authorities on the morning of 12 February, the announcement having been made in the House the previous evening. My hon. Friend would have been surprised if the Argentine Government had been informed before the House of the decision to hold the exercise. We must remember that the Argentines have been aware for many years of our policy of practising exercises for the reinforcement of the garrison.

Fire Focus was conducted deliberately with the smallest number of troops and aircraft required to provide a realistic test of reinforcement capability. Fewer than 1,000 men and only a small number of aircraft were involved. As my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath said, the exercise was concluded today. The garrison has now returned to its former size. There has been no permanent increase in force levels. I am happy to say that Fire Focus has been a success and we have shown that we can and will honour our commitments to the Falkland islanders.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath referred to the reaction in Argentina to the reinforcement exercise. Following its announcement, the Argentine Government called for the cancellation of the exercise. They sought to apply pressure in the international ora and through third countries. They tabled a resolution before the Organisation of American States and called for a debate in the Security Council. That was a quite unjustified reaction to a purely routine and defensive exercise. The exaggerated nature of the Argentine response was reflected in their public statements. The Argentines spoke of the involvement of 5,000 troops and large numbers of aircraft, figures which frankly were simply plucked out of thin air and did not bear any relation to reality.

Accusations were also made that the exercise was contrary to the spirit of the United Nation's resolution creating a south Atlantic zone of peace. That resolution was instigated by Brazil and we, of course, supported it. Yet the resolution in no way limits the right of states to take adequate precautions to defend their territory.

The exercise was not the result of any increase in tension in the area. We welcome statements by the Argentine Government that they will seek to resolve differences between Britain and Argentina only by peaceful means. We wish Argentina's democratic Government well. We look forward to the day when the Argentine Government will recognise the democratic right of the Falkland islanders to live in peace and security under a Government of their own choosing. However—and this is a very important point—we must recognise that the Argentine Government do not recognise that democratic right at present. So long as the Argentines maintain their claim to the Falklands, we shall have to retain a capacity to deal with the unexpected. The House would rightly criticise us if we shirked that clear national responsibility.

We fully recognised that exercise Fire Focus would arouse interest and perhaps concern in Latin America, even though our policy of carrying out such exercises was already well known. We took considerable care to explain our position to some Governments most closely concerned with the exercise. If some of the public statements from the Organisation of American States failed to reflect what we said to it, of course we regret that. However, I must tell my hon. Friend the Member for Bexleyheath that some of the speeches came as no surprise to us.

My hon. Friends referred to the decision by the Brazilian Government to postpone my visit to Brazil. We have already made clear our attitude to that postponement. Personally, I very much regret the postponement, especially in view of our good bilateral relations and because I wished Brazil to be the country of my first visit to Latin America. It was unfortunate that I was denied an opportunity to explain clearly and to discuss our policies on the Falklands and a wide range of other issues, but I am confident that the overall quality of our relations with the countries of Latin America will not be affected. Other opportunities for interchange will be found in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Townsend: Looking back on it, does my hon. Friend agree that it would have been better if the initial statement had spelt out the small size of the force taking part?

Mr. Eggar: Of course, my hon. Friend has the benefit of hindsight. My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces made it clear in his statement that it was a limited, routine exercise, and there was an overreaction to that statement. I believe that my hon. Friend recognises that.

Finally, since 1982, we have sought ways of restoring more normal relations with Argentina. We see no contradiction between improving our bilateral relations with Argentina and defending the rights of the Falkland islanders to decide their future. To the Argentines, negotiations on sovereignty mean simply the transfer of the islands to Argentina, irrespective of the wishes of the islanders. But the search for more normal relations with Argentina has always been our aim, and it will remain so. My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary has repeatedly made it clear that the desk of the Argentine Foreign Minister is groaning under the weight of our proposals. I regret that the Argentine Government's response has been so disappointing.

Let us consider the facts. In September 1982, we agreed with Argentina to abolish the financial restrictions that both sides had introduced at the time of the conflict. We

[Mr. Eggar]

honoured our undertaking immediately and in full. Argentina has implemented that undertaking only partly, and there are still restrictions against British companies in Argentina. In 1983, we proposed the resumption of air links, but the Argentine Government have yet to reply. The Argentines have failed to respond to our frequent demonstrations of readiness to return Argentine military dead to Argentina. Nor have they taken up our offer to accept a bona fide visit to the islands by Argentine next-of-kin. Further, in 1985, we unilaterally lifted all trade restrictions on Argentina. Once again there has been no reply.

If my hon. Friend wishes to effect an improvement in Anglo-Argentine relations—that has been his objective for several years and he has pursued it assiduously—he should direct his efforts to encouraging a more positive attitude in the Argentine Government. They must respond to the many initiatives that we have taken.

I end on a more positive note. My hon. Friend mentioned the exchanges that have taken place, via the Americans, on fisheries. He knows that more than a year ago we began to exchange ideas with Argentina on how both countries could co-operate on fisheries conservation in the south Atlantic. That exchange stemmed directly from an initiative that we took at the Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome because we were concerned about the conservation of fish stocks in the south Atlantic. I am happy to say that that exchange on fisheries with Argentina continues. I can assure the House and my hon. Friend that we shall do all we can to help that exchange succeed. We very much hope that the Argentine Government will respond positively.

We hope that six years after the Falklands conflict the Argentines will recognise that the only realistic way to improve relations is through co-operation on practical measures of benefit to both our countries.

The Executive (Powers)

2.30 pm

Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South): I welcome the Minister of State, Privy Council Office. I understand that there has been some difficulty in rustling up a Minister to respond to the debate and that the buck has been back and forth between the Minister of State, Privy Council Office and the Minister of State, Home Office and has finally come to rest with the right hon. Member for Shoreham (Mr. Luce) in the Chamber. In the absence of the Prime Minister, I welcome him.

The "Powers of the Executive" is a title that I alighted upon after sound advice from the Table Office. My preferred title would have been, "The drift towards a one-party state". I understand that that would not be entirely in order. I am seeking to draw attention to the growing trend towards authoritarianism in the government of this country over the past 10 years. That has become a matter of concern to people of all political persuasions, including some Conservative Members, and was recently the subject of a debate in the other place.

There is concern that the Government have used their office to dismantle or neutralise legitimate opposition to them and that respected institutions have been reduced to instruments of the state or, in some cases, instruments of the Tory party. There is also concern that the interests of the state and the Tory party are, to some extent, becoming synonymous. There is a growing tendency among persons in office to denounce dissenters as mad, loony or the enemies within, without addressing the issues that such people raise. That is an unhealthy trend and it reverses the long, but by no means complete, journey to democracy in our country over the past 200 years.

Contrary to what has sometimes been alleged, democracy in this country was not a gift from the Conservative party. Indeed, it was seized from long periods of Conservative government after a lengthy period of popular uprising. I and others are under no illusion. We know that the power of the ruling power party in this country is unmatched in the industrial world and probably unmatched outside the countries of the Stalin system. Most of us recognise that, although hon. Members come up for re-election every four or five years, our ruling class does not come up for re-election, any more than does the ruling class in the Soviet Union.

Although from time to time the Conservative party is obliged to concede control over the House of Commons, Tory control over most other institutions in this country is permanent and overwhelming. I do not seek to be controversial but that is a statement of fact which probably would not be disputed, at least in private, by many Conservative Members. Our judiciary, senior levels of the police force, the officer corps of the armed forces, leading elements in industry and finance, many senior civil servants and diplomats, the media, the board of governors of the BBC and, of course, the other side of the House are dominated by persons whose political persuasions are those of one party. That is how it has always been for as long as anyone can remember. It has become more so rather than less so in recent years, despite the appearance of several accountants and estate agents on the Conservative Benches.

Regardless of who is in control in the House of Commons at any given time, the commanding heights of

our society have always been run by people whose loyalty to their class has taken precedence over their loyalty to the elected Government. I accept that there are exceptions and that there are persons of integrity in all walks of life. As I said, I do not seek to be controversial because, privately, many Conservative Members would recognise what I say.

Despite all their rhetoric about their love of democracy, many Conservative Members have a deep distrust of the democratic process. When the electorate fails to deliver, they never hesitate to call upon the vast array of extra-parliamentary forces that are always at the disposal of the Conservative party. Labour Governments have been tolerated as long as they posed no threat to the class interests of those who have ruled us since time immemorial. Anti-democratic forces have never been far below the surface. For example, all of us can remember the attempted coup by Cecil King in 1968 to set up a business men's Government, presided over — I am sure reluctantly, in the face of his objections — by Lord Mountbatten. We can all remember, during the time of the 1974-79 Labour Government, General Sir Walter Walker's efforts to set up some kind of private army, and the rather more sinister operation by, I believe, the founder of the Special Air Service, Colonel David Stirling, and a organisation called GB75. Although General Walker was the subject of some ridicule at the time, he was, after all, a former commander of NATO forces in northern Europe. Of course, more recently, we have learnt from the memoirs of a former senior member of the intelligence services of an attempt by up to 40 members of the intelligence services to destabilise the Government of Lord Wilson.

I and others of my persuasion are under no illusions. The anti-democratic forces that have always been present have at least, on the whole, been kept below the surface. Over the past two centuries the trend has been towards making this country more democratic, more open, less authoritarian and more tolerant. That was the case until seven or eight years ago. The Government have reversed that trend. They have gone over and above what any of their predecessors in our lifetime have done, and are systematically undermining the means by which legitimate opposition and dissent can function. They have shamelessly degraded our democratic institutions. We have a Prime Minister who talks not of defeating the Opposition, but of eliminating the Opposition.

That has happened most in local government. Vigorous local government was one of the hallmarks of our democracy. Very often, the parties in power in the town halls and civic centres in the country were different from the one that was in power in Government. That remains the case. Some local authorities are good, some are bad, but all are accountable to the electorate that put them there.

Since the Government came to power, they have waged a continual war against local government. That war has been cynically targeted against local authorities controlled by the Labour party. Spending figures have been gerrymandered to penalise local authorities controlled by Labour. Perhaps the most cynical example was the abolition of the metropolitan authorities. It was the first time this century — certainly during my lifetime — that any Government had seen fit to abolish elections. All those seven metropolitan authorities were controlled by the Labour party. If just one had been controlled by the Conservative party the exercise might have been a little more credible. It was impossible to avoid concluding that it was merely an attempt to stifle effective opposition because the Government could not rely on the electorate to do that.

One of the more depressing sights of recent times was Lords — many of whom were feudalists, never mind Conservatives — being summoned from their stately homes and castles to abolish elections in London. I have seen members of the other place lecturing the Soviet Union about the need for greater democracy and openness. That was rather rich coming from people who were in the other place because of hereditary title or appointment. Our masters are nothing if not unembarrassable.

The other major sector in which the Government have abused their power against sources of legitimate dissent has been the trade unions. Any student of history knows that the trade unions have not fared well from Tory Governments or Tory judges over the years. But until 10 years ago, trade unions were accepted within the Tory party as being legitimate and as having legitimate functions. We are now beginning to see a return to the days of effective trade unionism becoming illegal.

The political fund ballots rather backfired on the Government because they were intended — this is what made them different from previous trade union legislation — to undermine the source of the funding of the Opposition party. What undermined the Government's rhetoric at that time was that those ballots applied only to trade unions and what they should do with their political funds. There was no hint of any similar obligation on corporations that donated funds to the Conservative party. That was widely regarded as an attempt to bankrupt the Opposition.

Secondary picketing has been outlawed. In so doing it has struck at one of the fundamentals of trade unionism, because solidarity between persons who are not necessarily directly affected by a dispute is fundamental to British trade unionism. It is interesting to note that the judges are increasingly placing a narrower interpretation on what constitutes secondary picketing, with the result that effective trade unionism is becoming very difficult.

At GCHQ, trade unionism has been banned — perhaps on instructions from the other side of the Atlantic. For whatever reason, that was the first time for many years that a Government had seen fit to outlaw trade unionism. It is unusual in the industrial world for such a thing to happen.

Strike ballots have been introduced. No one objects to fair ballots, which, if properly carried out, strengthen and legitimise an industrial dispute. In the past few days the National Union of Seamen has been taken to court and threatened with sequestration of all its assets.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker) *rose*

Mr. Mullin: I am aware that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are probably about to mention the sub judice rule.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I was not only about to mention that but to remind the hon. Gentleman that the subject to which he has chosen to address himself is "The Powers of the Executive". I fear that several times he has wandered well away from it.

Mr. Mullin: I shall do my best to keep to what you say is the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, we have seen in the past few days the remarkable spectacle of a trade

[Mr. Mullin]

union being threatened with sequestration of all its assets if it held a ballot, and that exposes the false rhetoric behind the Government's legislation.

In many industrial workplaces today there is a climate of fear similar—I do not pretend that it is the same—to that which prevails in some eastern European countries. With a number of my hon. Friends, I received yesterday a delegation from the train drivers at King's Cross railway station. They spoke of their members being afraid even to distribute leaflets advertising the ballot that they wanted to hold for fear of the sack. There was a recent unexplained break-in into their trade union office, and such incidents have become more frequent. This is an unhealthy trend, which is getting worse.

Many people not necessarily of my persuasion fear that recently the Government have grossly misused the police. Many police themselves are unhappy. They are in the unenviable situation of having to enforce unjust laws. They have been turned, on some occasions, into the paramilitary wing of the Tory party and I know that that is deeply resented by many policemen. Some six or seven years ago, police were obliged, as the result of a court order, to surround an engineering works in Manchester while the work force stood by and watched machinery being evacuated by helicopter to be sold off in Spain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I find it difficult to see what relevance these matters have to the subject that the hon. Gentleman has chosen for the debate.

Mr. Mullin: The subject that I have chosen to debate is the concentration of power in the Executive and I am alleging, and no doubt the Minister will respond——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. Gentleman is referring to disputes between employers and trade unions and workers. It is difficult to see how the hon. Gentleman can raise these matters, particularly events that happened several years ago.

Mr. Mullin: They arise from legislation passed by the House and I am alleging, although I am sure that the Minister will respond robustly, that the Government have accumulated to themselves many powers which were unusual by the standards of previous Governments, both Conservative and Labour. We saw the use made of the police during the recent coal miners' strike when fantastic violence was unleashed in the coalfields. All of us were struck by a picture that was not published widely in this country, although it appeared abroad, of a mounted policeman attacking an unarmed civilian woman. As far as I know, no action followed that incident, which would have been inconceivable several years ago. After the coal strike, there were mass trials of 80 or 90 people at a time in Mansfield and massive perjuries were committed. Those charged were acquitted, but no charges were laid against those who committed the perjuries. Meanwhile, away from the picket line, crime soared.

Another aspect of the Government's exceptional concentration of powers has been a misuse of the courts, which has undermined the credibility of the judicial system. All of us remember that during the miners' strike a member of the Conservative party, or at least a supporter of it, Mr. David Hart, persuaded a number of working miners to take action under the Government's legislation against the National Union of Mineworkers and the judges moved in immediately with massive penalties, including sequestration of property. This has induced a fear of, but not respect for, the courts, which is regrettable. In 10 years, we have gone back beyond Taff Vale to the Combination Acts and many people now feel scared of becoming involved in union activity. That is an unhealthy development.

The manipulation of the news media has been another hallmark of the present Government. As I think is commonly understood, this country has a uniquely servile media, although there are many honourable exceptions. I recollect that the hon. Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Mr. Shepherd)—who is not a member of my party—described the media as the Hallelujah chorus, and I cannot improve on that description. In many instances, they seem to be here not to protect our liberties, which are under unprecedented threat, but to be used as an arm of the ruling party to trivialise, distort, lie and distract people from the realities of life with a diet of television soap opera and stories about the royal family.

Two of our newspapers are now featuring massive headlines with words like "rats" to describe their enemies. That is unfortunate; it has the ring of Fascism. The newspapers are used remorselessly, and at times cynically, by Ministers to hound enemies of the ruling party.

The BBC has always paid lip service to impartiality, which many Opposition Members regard as phoney. At times of rejoicing or national crisis, it has often become an arm of the state—for example, during the Falklands war or at royal weddings. It has always been possible, and still is to some extent, for dissenters to be heard without a Government health warning such as "hard Left", "extremist", or "terrorist" prefixed to their names, but that is now coming under serious threat. The BBC board has been blatantly stacked with supporters of the ruling party. There was a coup against the director-general, Alasdair Milne; there have been raids on the BBC in Scotland; we have seen pictures in our papers of members of the special branch kicking down——

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. Gentleman that it is a convention of the House to allow the Minister time to reply.

Mr. Mullin: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall wind up my remarks.

I do not wish to be melodramatic. I acknowledge readily that in this country we enjoy liberties that are unknown in many parts of the world. I merely wish to draw attention to what has become an unmistakable trend over the last 10 years. I thought it right to identify that trend while time remained, and while it was still permitted.

2.52 pm

The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce): Let me start by congratulating the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin) on choosing the powers of the Executive as the subject of the debate. That, however, is as far as my congratulations can go. The rest has been thorough entertainment.

I have noted down some of the language used by the hon. Gentleman. He referred to the development of a one-party state; to authoritarianism; to servile media; to extra-parliamentary activities; to anti-democratic forces; to

degraded democratic institutions; to a climate similar to that in East European countries; to paramilitary wings; and to the misuse of the courts.

I have been looking at the hon. Gentleman to see how sincere he is. I believe that he is very sincere. I think that he believes what he is saying, and that, to my mind, is the most extraordinary thing of all. My only suggestion to the hon. Gentleman is that he is in need of a very long holiday, and I therefore wish him a very happy Easter. He deserves a holiday after a speech like his. He is living in cloud-cuckoo land if he believes what he has just been saying.

I accept that opponents of the Government are looking desperately for ammunition, which often takes the form of what might be described as hackneyed and mindless campaigns to suggest that the Government of the day—and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister—do not care about democracy, are becoming more authoritarian and dictatorial and are taking more power unto themselves. The hon. Gentleman has fallen into that trap—in so far as I could understand any of what he was trying to say.

For the remaining few minutes allowed to me, I should like to show the hon. Gentleman exactly what we have achieved in the past nine years—and I shall do it in five minutes. It is the very opposite of what the hon. Gentleman suggested.

I shall cite two examples that show that we are not concentrating power in the Executive. First, there are fewer central controls and, secondly, we have dispersed more power to individuals. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is longing for examples, so I shall give him some. There has been a real bonfire arising from the elimination of central Government controls. We have ended the price and dividend controls, a whole range of controls in planning and industrial development, and exchange controls. We have pursued a sustained policy of deregulation. We have removed unnecessary restrictions on business to the particular benefit of small businesses. We have removed taxes that hamper enterprise, such as the development land tax.

During the past few years, all our policies have been geared towards disposal of central Government control over the individual—*[Interruption.]* If the hon. Member for Newham, North-West would listen, he would hear even more examples. It is all very exciting. We have been doing a great deal while he has been concentrating on other issues during the past nine years.

There has been a diffusion of power away from the Executive and towards the people. Our privatisation policies have removed 16 major businesses from central control—that is a dispersal of power from the centre. The state-owned sector has been reduced by almost 40 per cent. There has also been a dispersal of power to individuals through the introduction of employee share ownership schemes that allow the individual to participate in business. The number of individual shareholders has increased from 3 million in 1979 to more than 9 million—20 per cent. of the adult population.

There has been dispersal of power to the individual in housing matters. More than 1 million householders have had the opportunity to buy their council homes. We are currently strengthening the rights of occupiers of rented property.

The hon. Member for Sunderland, South mentioned the trade unions. Our legislation has strengthened the powers of the individual trade unionist. There must now be elections of union officials, which gives more power to the individual member. Legislation is going through the House to establish a commissioner for the rights of trade union members.

Our education legislation will strengthen the position of parents who are concerned about their children's education. It will bring more autonomy to schools. We are dispersing power and authority to schools, parents and individuals.

The hon. Gentleman, in his quite extraordinary speech, mentioned local government. The abolition of the tiers of local government does not concentrate power at the centre, but rather gives more power to local authorities, such as borough councils, and makes them more accountable to their electorates.

The Civil Service has a policy of devolution of managerial authority, so that managers can take decisions — although Ministers should, of course, remain responsible.

What did the Government do first when they took office in 1979? They established a stronger Select Committee system that allows the legislature to challenge the Executive of the day. That is yet another example of this Government's interest in and concern for the right of a democratic society to challenge the Executive. As for the hon. Gentleman's views about the judiciary, there is clear evidence of our commitment to an independent judiciary which is at the heart of our system. Much has been done to strengthen that. Altogether, the hon. Gentleman lives in a world of his own, because everything that has happened in the past year has been in the opposite direction to that which he has alleged.

Planning in Towns and Cities

2.59 pm

Mr. Graham Riddick (Colne Valley): I am very pleased to have the opportunity to introduce a short debate on the subject of planning in towns and cities. I am delighted that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier) is here. As he is a conscientious and diligent Minister, he will be delighted to be here at this late hour on the last day before the recess when many of our hon. Friends are jetting away to the sun or the slopes in Switzerland.

I have not initiated a debate on the issue of planning per se because the issues surrounding planning in the countryside and in rural areas are complicated, difficult and contentious. I do not wish to get involved in the great debate about how far we should encroach on the green belt and how far we should allow house building into the countryside, but I should point out that it is not only the south of England which is under pressure to provide more houses in green field sites. Areas such as the Holme valley in my constituency are also increasingly sought after and popular. My concern is specifically about how the planning system relates to towns and cities in Britain.

Despite the fact that economic prosperity is increasing and spreading rapidly under the present Government, there is clearly a major problem of deprivation and decay in many of our cities and towns. As we all know, the Government have embarked on a number of significant programmes to reverse that trend. Clearly, the Government, with their many schemes, are doing all they possibly can to improve the fabric and conditions of those areas of urban decay.

There are many reasons for the rundown in inner cities and certain parts of the towns. The decline of the old traditional industries and the appalling municipal housing policies of the 1960s created so many social problems such as increasing lawlessness.

A number of factors are hindering the resurgence of those areas. Not least is the fact that the vast majority of them are dominated by Left-wing Labour councils which spend more of their resources on the policies of social engineering and less on essential services such as road repairs. Included in the factors holding up progress are the planning regimes which do so much to decide the future of developments within those areas. My experience of talking to industrialists and entrepreneurs is that the planning regulations and restrictions cause them more problems than practically anything or anybody else when they are trying to set up new enterprises or expand existing ones.

My hon. Friend is aware of my interest in this matter as I have raised it in the House on a number of occasions. I make no apology for raising it once again. While planning is not a particularly exciting or sexy subject, particularly when compared with setting up a new enterprise zone or a new urban development corporation or handing out millions of pounds in urban development grants, I believe that planning plays a vital part in the regeneration of our inner cities and towns.

Good, imaginative and helpful planners who do not stick rigidly to the regulations will certainly help to oil the wheels of economic progress. By the same token, however, inflexible planners can do more than probably anything or anybody else to hinder economic development, to stop enterprises getting off the ground and to stop the process of urban regeneration.

I included "towns" in the title of the debate because towns such as Huddersfield have problems similar to those that are to be found in the inner cities, yet they do not enjoy the benefit of urban development corporation, enterprise zone, or assisted area status. The Colne valley is another example. That old industrial valley has taken something of a hammering because of the decline of the textile industry over the last 20 years. Huddersfield and the Colne valley are good examples of the fact that not all Britain's problems are confined to the inner cities. Unemployment is still in double figures—10 per cent.—in the Huddersfield travel-to-work area.

When I referred in my maiden speech last July to planners impeding progress—and what a long time ago that now seems to be—I was stongly criticised by a few local Labour councillors. It appears that I had touched on a raw nerve. A number of other people, particularly business men, congratulated me on voicing sentiments that they had never ventured to express. I acknowledge that it was perhaps unfair of me to single out Labout councils alone as having been responsible for creating planning obstacles. There are restrictive planners in Conservative councils and there are progressive planners in Labour councils. For example, Conservative-controlled Harrogate council harassed the marvellously innovative dairy farm in Weeton when it started to be too successful at producing an alternative product, ice cream. Another example is a small vilage shop in Killinghale, where I have lived for many years. It was told to remove a sign outside the shop that simply said, "News." The fact that it had been there for at least 15 years and had drawn the attention of passing motorists to the fact that newspapers were on sale was wholly irrelevant to the bureaucrat who decided that the sign should come down. The proprietor of that village shop appealed to the Department of the Environment and won his case but not before he had suffered a great deal of worry, hassle and expense.

I know of a brewery in Manchester that wanted to expand one of its pubs. It made an appropriate planning application but then had to wait two years before it could get any sense out of the council. The lesson to be learnt is that eventually the brewery decided that it was not prepared to put up with the hassle. It said, "To hell with this development" and dropped the proposed extension to the pub. The jobs that would have been created by building that extension and increasing the bar staff were never created, not to mention the increased social amenities that were lost to the local people.

Such problems can arise all over the country, but it is natural that I should talk about the ones in my constituency and in the surrounding areas. I referred in my maiden speech, all that time ago, to a small printing company that had been refused planning permission to move into larger premises because its application went against the local plan that specifies that any change of use of existing buildings for office purposes will not be allowed unless the buildings are in the town centre. That was despite the fact that those premises had been used for commercial purposes, though not as office space, for more than 20 years. I regret that the Department of the Environment also refused permission on appeal.

The firm is still in its cramped offices looking for somewhere to move to and unable to expand and develop

its business as it would wish. Who knows how many jobs might have been created by now had that firm moved into larger premises and had it been able to chase the extra business that it would undoubtedly have needed to survive in its expanded form? That is just one example of planning regulations having stopped a firm expanding.

One cannot directly blame the planners for sticking strictly to the local plan, although one would wish them to show more flexibility. My concern is that the planners want to be too involved with development at times and that they sometimes impose conditions that can reduce the effectiveness of the enterprise. Let me give an example. A garden centre in my constituency was granted planning permission, but with the proviso that the majority of the products that it sold had to have been grown on the premises. On the face of it, that may seem a reasonable enough request, but it was a direct and unnecessary interference in the commercial life of the enterprise, and it could have seriously jeopardised the firm. The proprietor is extremely unhappy that he has to abide by the conditions.

On the subject of garden centres, it seems extraordinary to me that the Colne valley local plan should say:

"garden centres will be acceptable within rural locations and on land not allocated for development only if retailing is ancillary to the main activity of plant production".

That is a wholly unnecessary bureaucratic restriction. The plan further states:

"retailing of goods from farm shops, mill shops and similar establishments"—

the very sort of activity that we need to encourage to develop new jobs——

"will only be permitted if the goods are produced wholly or mainly on the premises, and if the area devoted to sales is small."

That seems to me an unnecessary interference in a company's commercial life, which should be a matter entirely for its manager or owner.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will reconsider the drawing up of local plans. Perhaps there is an argument for the Government's laying down that unnecessary restrictions which interfere with the commercial running of an enterprise must not be included in the local plan.

Mr. Hugo Summerson (Walthamstow): Does my hon. Friend agree that all too often planning is looked upon as a professional discipline in itself, rather than as a means of serving local communities?

Mr. Riddick: My hon. Friend makes an excellent point, and I fear that that is true in many areas of the country. Clearly that needs to change. The planners must realise that they are part of the economic process: that is one of the important lessons to be learnt.

I hope that I have explained why I am concerned about the planning regulations. I have mentioned only a small number of the problems that people have brought to my attention. I could have cited many more. In all the cases that I have described business men, enterpreneurs and industrialists are having unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles placed in their way, which either completely halt new developments or slow them down.

Having outlined the problems, let me suggest some solutions. I fully recognise the Government's efforts to simplify the planning process. The circular issued to local planning authorities by the Department of the Environment in 1980 clearly recognises the important part that planning has to play in economic development and calls for efficiency and speed in decision-making. That is wholly admirable, and I agree with practically everything that the circular says.

The Government have taken a number of initiatives to reduce planning obstacles still further. Firm planning policy guidance on development and employment was given to local authorities in 1985 and the Housing and Planning Act 1986 tried to simplify and improve the planning system.

The Government have recognised that there is a problem. More changes are needed. Planning restrictions are still too great. One of the key components of an urban development corporation or an enterprise zone is an enormously simplifed planning system. That demonstrates that the Government are aware of the problems.

Neither Huddersfield nor the Colne valley is designated as a special area, so they have to live under the full panoply of planning regulations. I welcome the introduction of simplified planning zones, and I strongly urge Kirklees council to consider whether it would be appropriate to turn some of its area into SPZs.

The problem with all these designated areas is that they apply only to certain areas. The advantages of a simplified planning system are not enjoyed by other areas. My hon. Friend the Minister should consider how we can make planning law, especially that which affects built-up areas, more relevant, responsible and positive in terms of the development of enterprises.

Planning authorities should be stopped from making any commercial judgments or imposing conditions on how an enterprise is run. They should not be allowed to impose conditions that relate to how an enterprise takes commercial decisions.

We must put the onus on planning authorities to justify refusals and the conditions that they impose when they grant permission. I realise that reasons have to be given already, but it should be for planning authorities to justify each negative decision.

We must reduce non-essential and petty regulations and change the environment in which decisions are made. We must make planning officers and councillors realise how important they are to the economic development of their area. They should feel more responsible for economic development. Perhaps an authority which refuses a permission should have to calculate and publicise the number of jobs that have been lost because of the refusal.

Councils with economic development departments—most have them in some form—should put their planning departments under the direct responsibility of the economic development people. We might thus encourage a more responsible and positive attitude.

Planning is an immensely complicated subject. Having put a bit of work into the subject this week as a result of getting this debate, I have come to realise just how complicated it is. The fact remains, however, that the application of planning law will continue to play an important part in the country's economy. In my experience, entrepreneurs are good at saying what can be achieved and why new jobs will be created. Planners can be just as good at saying why something cannot be done, perhaps because a plan does not comply with a certain regulation.

If today's planning controls existed 150 years ago, Britain would never have enjoyed the industrial revolution. We cannot have a development free-for-all,

[Mr. Riddick]

but the restrictions have gone too far and planners have too much power. Although the Government have made excellent endeavours, more must be done to free entrepreneurs so that they can create the extra wealth and employment in areas such as Colne valley which we all want.

3.20 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. David Trippier): I am delighted to respond to the matters raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) and I congratulate him on obtaining this Adjournment debate. I know, both from his maiden speech last July and from the questions that he has put to me in the House, that he takes a close interest in this topic. He has quickly earned himself a reputation as a first-class constituency Member and a powerful advocate for those whom he represents.

I set the scene for my response by emphasising that the Government are committed to lifting the burden of regulation on industry. My hon. Friend mentioned several times the importance of small businesses or enterprises and I hope that it will be a comfort to him that, in the four years preceding the general election — when, I am delighted to say, he was elected to this House—I was responsible for small businesses and for deregulation. I am delighted to say that I played quite a part in the two White Papers introduced by the Government, "Lifting the Burden" and "Building Businesses . . . not Barriers". Given my present responsibilities for inner cities, it is important that I should recognise that development has an important role to play in regenerating our inner cities through providing offices, factories and homes and in creating an environment in which people will want to invest.

I also stress that there is no conflict between that objective and our equal concern to conserve the environment of urban and rural areas alike. It is the responsibility of local planning authorities, when they determine proposals for development, to achieve a reconciliation between the twin aims of enabling development and protecting the environment.

On one hand, there is a general presumption in favour of development. That has come with this Government and my hon. Friend has acknowledged that. That has been inherent in the system of town and country planning since the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, but has been emphasised in the White Papers to which I referred. It was included in a Government circular to local planning authorities as far back as 1949. We reiterated it in a planning policy guidance note issued in January this year.

On the other hand, it has long been recognised, and the Government fully accept, that the presumption in favour of development does not give developers carte blanche. It is subject to a proviso that development should not cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.

What does that mean in practice? It means that those who decide whether to grant planning permission — whether local authorities or my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on appeal — have the important and critical task of weighing various factors before they reach a conclusion. They have to consider what weight to give to local policies in development plans, which may be several years old, or may have been adopted or approved only recently. They have to assess the importance to attach to relevant national planning policies. Against this background, they have to appraise the intrinsic merits of the particular development proposal because the courts have held that every planning application must be determined on its merits in the light of all material considerations.

I hope my hon. Friend will agree that in some respects the judgments which have to be made about individual development proposals are very daunting. It is pithily, if not glibly, said that one man's development opportunity is another man's chance to raise an objection. That may be true in some instances, but I believe the beneficial effect of development is generally acknowledged, especially, as I have said, when it brings investment and jobs to a deprived area.

I should like to deal with the specific points raised by my hon. Friend. He said that he would like to see every planning application form contain a space to show how many jobs would be lost if the proposed development does not proceed. That is an interesting idea which, I am sure, local authorities will consider. The Government have considered a standard application form in the past. We want to avoid imposing uniformity just for the sake of it, but there could be advantages to large developers and we are continuing to consider that.

My hon. Friend also mentioned urban development corporations. Although I understand the point that he is trying to make in regard to UDCs, I have only a limited budget. As he well knows, there are now 11 UDCs, one in Cardiff bay and 10 in England. The Government are supporting the UDC programme with funding in excess of £200 million in 1988-89, but there is a limit to how much we can spend effectively in this way. Alternative approaches are necessary. I shall turn to one of them in a few moments.

I recognise that the developer and the local planning authority will not always agree about the merits of development proposals. Often, that can be a failure of communication. The developer may not have discussed his proposal with the local authority. If he had done, he might have been able to modify it to meet points to which the authority attached considerable importance and which the developer regarded as mere trifles.

Equally, the authority may operate a policy which discriminates in favour of one kind of development and against another. I know that some authorities are seeking to restrict office development because they want to preserve sites for industry. That may be understandable in some parts of the country, but in general the Government believe that the planning system should reflect the reality of the national economy in 1988. That is why we introduced a new business use class in the Use Classes Order 1987. It means, broadly, that a developer can change between general office use, use for research and development, and use for a light industrial process, without obtaining planning permission. My hon. Friend will welcome that.

Inevitably, there will be some weak spots in the way in which policies are translated into practice. Some local planning authorities may be slow to come to terms with the reality of economic life in 1988 — my hon. Friend touched on that and what he said was right — just as, no doubt, some developers will obstinately withstand reasonable argument and refuse to accept that the

development control system cannot, by its nature, say yes to each and every development proposal. But to be fair to my hon. Friend, he was not suggesting that. He did not want a free-for-all.

Urban development corporations have successfully encouraged, physically, the redevelopment of large tracts of land in inner-city areas. I have already mentioned that there are 10 in England and one in Wales. Six UDCs are already under way in England and we have announced proposals for another four. Obviously, other initiatives will be coming forward which will contribute considerably to inner-city development.

Three weeks ago further initiatives were announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and I am sure that my hon. Friend will welcome those. In particular, I am sure that he will welcome the new city grant within the Department of the Environment, which streamlines the grant mechanism and gives easier access to the private sector, particularly those in the construction industry—the developers—and cuts out much red tape, very much in line with what my hon. Friend would wish.

We are also stepping up our drive to bring on to the market unused and under-used publicly owned land—not just that of local authorities but of some of the large public organisations which are part of the Government. We introduced the land register system in 1981. Since then, some 50,000 acres of publicly owned land recorded on the register have been sold or brought into use. But the new proposals announced by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister will, I hope, speed up the process and bring land that is currently not in use on to the open market.

My hon. Friend mentioned simplified planning zones. The measure we introduced to bring those about has obviously gone through and we are looking now to Derby as the first local authority to be granted SPZ. The Act places a duty on local planning authorities to consider as soon as practicable whether part or parts of their area could, with benefit, be designated an SPZ, to prepare schemes for those parts, and to keep the matter under review. It is important that Kirklees should comply with that Act. I have no doubt that my hon. Friend will make sure that it does.

However, my hon. Friend may not be aware that individuals or a private sector company can also apply for an SPZ. The Act provides specifically an opportunity for any person to request the local planning authority to make an SPZ. If the authority refuses to do so, or does nothing within three months of the request, that person can require the authority to refer the matter to the Secretary of State. Following proper consideration of the issues, the Secretary of State can direct the planning authority to make a scheme. That might be appropriate in my hon. Friend's constituency. We shall have to see.

Criticism has been directed at the procedures which the statutes lay down for consulting the public, prior to designation by the local council, but those are necessary safeguards to protect the wider public interest in the absence of any requirement for approval of SPZ schemes by the Secretary of State. After all, SPZs provide planning permission for 10 years.

The SPZ mechanism is a very flexible one. Authorities can choose to designate schemes at any time, unrelated to progress on their development plans. Alternatively, they can prepare SPZ schemes in tandem with the preparation of local plans and unitary development plans in metropolitan authorities.

I mentioned earlier the changes that we made in the use classes order last year. They were only part of many reforms that we have made to the planning system. I am grateful to my hon. Friend for referring to the progress that we have made.

I hope that my hon. Friend agrees that this is a useful, even an impressive, list of achievements. I want to reassure him that we are by no means complacent. We shall constantly, and with vigilance, look at all the proposals, including those that he has put forward in this excellent debate today. I thank him for once again bringing this important subject to the attention of the House with his customary skill.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at half-past Three o'clock till Tuesday 12 April, pursuant to resolution [25 March].

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 21 March 1988

ENVIRONMENT

Home Insulation (Stoke-on-Trent)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the number of people in Stoke-on-Trent, North who have ceased to be eligible for grants under the home insulation scheme which came into force on 1 February; and what percentage of those are on low incomes.

Mrs. Roe: The information is not available. For householders with adequate means, loft insulation is a very cost-effective measure which pays for itself very quickly. The new scheme provides a 90 per cent. grant, up to an increased ceiling of £137, to eligible householders on low incomes, that is, those in receipt of supplementary benefit, housing benefit or family income supplement.

Drinking Water

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment in which areas in England and Wales the maximum nitrate level in drinking water of 50 mg of nitrates per litre, set by the European Community, is exceeded; and how many people are affected.

Mr. Moynihan: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 13 January to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) at column *279*.

Local Authorities (Bartering Agreements)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has anything to add to his statement on 9 March, with particular reference to bartering agreements between local authorities and property developers.

Mr. Chope: It is my right hon. Friend's intention to table amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill to secure that where a local authority acquires properly, or where works or improvements are carried out to local authority property, in return for valuable consideration, prescribed expenditure will be scored regardless of whether the consideration is or is not in money.

Gipsy Sites

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals his Department has to revise or update planning guidance on gipsy sites, including specifying the varying responses which local authorities should make to applications for *(a)* individual plots of land for use by a gipsy and *(b)* sites for gipsy encampments.

Mrs. Roe: My Department has no immediate plans to revise or update planning guidance on gipsy sites, though the matter is kept under review. In his statement to the House of 6 February last year my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that the need for gipsy sites would continue to be a material consideration in planning decisions.

92 Ormside Street, SE15 (Sale)

Ms. Harman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to when the London residuary body will complete the sale of 92 Ormside street, SE15.

Mr. Chope: This is a matter for the London residuary body.

Housing Starts

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many housing starts were made in each of the last 10 years in *(a)* the public sector, *(b)* the private sector, and *(c)* the housing association sector.

Mrs. Roe: In 1987, it is provisionally estimated that there were 197,300 dwellings started in England for the private sector and 24,600 for the public sector including 9,500 for housing associations. Figures for the earlier years appear in table 6.1(a) of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1976-1986" which is available in the Library.

Rating Reform

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give estimates for the total number of adults expected to register for community charge in England and Wales.

Mr. Howard: I estimate that there are 38·3 million adults in England and Wales. About half a million of these are expected to be exempt from the community charge. As I said in my reply of 16 March to the hon. Member for Falkirk, West (Mr. Canavan) at column *82*, I do not believe that evasion will be a serious problem.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will reconsider joint and several liability of spouses in respect of the proposed community charge, in the light of the planned changes to the income tax status of married women from 1 April 1990.

Mr. Ridley: No. The changes to which the hon. Member refers will affect married women with incomes. Joint and several liability for the community charge is designed to ensure that the charge is paid where a person (man or woman) has no income of his or her own and is married to or living with a person who has an income.

G-Mex Exhibition Centre, Manchester

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of the total financial contribution made by his Department to the G-Mex exhibition centre in greater Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Litherland: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will detail his involvement with the G-Mex centre in Manchester; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: My involvement with the G-Mex Centre in Manchester has been to provide urban programme funding of £8·9 million towards an estimated main project

cost of £23·7 million and a further UP contribution of £0·9 million towards the cost of landscaping and other works on the site. I retain a continuing interest as there is a provision for grant to be paid back if sufficient income is generated.

House Condition Survey

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when the results of the English house condition survey will be available.

Mrs. Roe: I refer to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Construction on Wednesday 3 February 1988 at column *650*.

Grant-related Expenditure

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the studies into alternative or improved methods of calculating grant-related expenditure which have been funded by his Department since January 1980; and if for each study listed he will give *(a)* the name of the body or bodies undertaking the study, *(b)* the terms of reference of the study, *(c)* the names of other bodies tendering for the study, *(d)* the criteria by which the successful applicants were selected, *(e)* the cost of the study and *(f)* the outcome of the study.

Mr. Ridley: The following studies into grant-related expenditure assessment have been funded by my Department since January 1980:

1. (i) 'Grant Related Expenditure Assessment: A Review of the System and Potential Development In It'.
   (ii) Conducted by the School for Advanced Urban Studies at the University of Bristol.
   (iii) A comprehensive general review of the system seeking to clarify the objectives and underlying principles of GRE, and to evaluate how far the system developed in practice measured up to these objectives and principles. Followed by in depth case studies examining the case for, feasibility and implications of alternative methods of GRE assessment in relation to particular components of local authority expenditure. The four case studies dealt with recreation, adult education, capital finance and public transport.
   (iv) Cost: £38,300.
   (v) Outcome: Published Reports (1983-84) of the overall review of the GRE system and of each of the four case studies.
2. (i) The 'Measurement of Inter Authority Cost Differences'.
   (ii) Conducted by Cambridge Economic Consultants.
   (iii) The objective of the project was to investigate whether and how to extend and improve the existing system for unit cost adjustments such that it covered authorities outside the London Weighting area and inputs other than labour.
   (iv) Cost: £16,000.
   (v) Outcome: Unpublished Report (1983).
3. (i) Development of the Grant Related Expenditure Assessment for Personal Social Services for the Elderly.
   (ii) Conducted by the Centre for Health Economics, York University.
   (iii) The objectives of the research are to assess the feasibility of the main options for improving the method of calculating PSS GRE for the elderly; to then develop a more simple and comprehensible method of assessment whilst taking full account of the requirement to adequately reflect variations in needs between authorities; and to consider and report on the future stability of the new methodology as well as its effective presentation.
   (iv) Cost: £36,566.
   (v) Outcome: The research is still in progress.
4. (i) 'Review of Statistical Methods Used to Construct Indicators of Social Disadvantage'.
   (ii) Conducted by Professor Bartholomew, London School of Economics.
   (iii) The objectives of the research are to review the methods of constructing composite measures of disadvantage at present used in GREs; to examine the applicability of new developments in the construction of such indexes; and to recommend the most appropriate of these statistical techniques.
   (iv) Cost: £3,000.
   (v) Outcome: The research is still in progress.

Four organisations tendered for the second of these projects; the measurement of inter-authority cost differences. These were Cambridge Economic Consultants, Coopers and Lybrand and Associates Ltd, Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co. and the Public Sector Economics Research Centre at the University of Leicester. The contract was placed on the basis of price and of quality of tender proposal. The other three research contracts were placed on a single tender basis.

Local Authority Expenditure

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list for *(a)* each county council, *(b)* each metropolitan district, *(c)* each London borough and *(d)* each non-metropolitan district those services on which authorities spend below the national average; and by how much.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 15 March 1988]:* I have today placed this information in the House of Commons Library.

Waste Disposal

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the disposal of potassium waste by France and Belgium in the English channel; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given today by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Malaysia (Waterworks)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department took to ensure the technical soundness of Biwater's project to equip 174 Malaysian villages with waterworks before allocating funds from his 1986 water sector budget to support it.

Mr. Eggar: Assistance for the rural water supply project in Malaysia was provided from the aid and trade provision in association with export credit finance. As in all such cases, approval of ATP assistance was subject to satisfactory appraisal of the economic, financial and technical viability of the project. In this particular case, assistance was approved in the light of the findings of an ODA appraisal mission to Malaysia.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why his Department

approved a grant of nearly £60 million towards Biwater's Malaysia contract which was not subject to domestic competitive tendering.

Mr. Eggar: Within the aid programme, we seek to secure value for money for the taxpayer and for the recipient country. This is generally best achieved by competitive tendering. In the absence of competition, the ODA carries out value-for-money checks. In this case, the Malaysian Government wished to proceed with the project by negotiating a contract with a single contractor (Biwater). An independent check established value for money.

Cameroun, Chile and Thailand (Waterworks)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department will submit to domestic competitive tender proposals which it is currently considering for water supply or sewerage projects in Cameroun, Chile and Thailand.

Mr. Eggar: Before deciding whether or not to provide aid and trade provision support for these projects, we shall consider how best to secure value for money for the aid programme in the circumstances of each particular case.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Polytechnics

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science which polytechnics in England and Wales provide specialist non-advanced further education on a nationwide basis; what subjects are covered by such provision; and how he intends that such provision should be funded following the establishment of the Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council.

Mr. Jackson: There is no settled definition of specialist non-advanced further education. The Government have said that it will be open to local education authorities, as part of their duty to secure the provision of adequate facilities for further education in their areas, to contract for the continued provision of non-advanced further education courses in polytechnics and colleges which, under the provisions of the Education Reform Bill now before Parliament, will transfer to the new polytechnics and colleges funding council (PCFC) sector. Local education authorities' will receive credit for such provision in that grant-related expenditure. The Government are also ready to consider, in consultation with the local authority associations, whether it would be desirable to put the PCFC in funds to support a tightly defined category of further education courses whose provision in PCFC institutions is essentially national in character.

Consultative Document

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this be not done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mrs. Rumbold: The treatment of responses to consultation documents will depend on the purpose and nature of the consultative process. In the case of the recent consultation carried out by the Department of Education and Science preceding the introduction of the Education Reform Bill, copies of all responses, other than those from individuals, were placed in the House Library.

Religious Instruction

Mr. Dover: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of primary schools and secondary schools in each local education authority are not adhering to the locally agreed syllabus of religious instruction for that authority.

Mrs. Rumbold: This information is not collected by the Department.

Education Reform Bill

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any plans to amend the pupil register regulations for the power of holding ballots in relation to the Education Reform Bill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend intends to amend the pupils' registration regulations to ensure that all parents will be given the opportunity to have their names recorded in schools' admission registers.

Local Financial Management

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to discuss with head teachers the implementation of local financial management; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: Both Ministers and officials of my Department have had a number of meetings with representatives of the head teacher associations and with groups of head teachers about local financial management. My right hon. Friend will shortly be consulting LEAs, head teachers and others on preliminary guidance.

DEFENCE

Prisoners of War (Experiments)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received about progress in investigating allegations of experiments on prisoners of war held by the Japanese at Mukden and elsewhere during world war 2; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 22 April 1987 at column *586*. Since that date, the Ministry has received a further 16 inquiries. Of these two had been addressed to the Prime Minister and 14 to Ministers. During this period our inquiries have continued. But despite further and lengthy investigation we still have no proof that the Japanese experimented on Allied prisoners of war held at Mukden.

Low Flying (Wales)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received concerning low-flying military aircraft over Wales.

Mr. Freeman: Between 1 January 1988 and 14 March 1988, the Ministry of Defence received some 70 inquiries or complaints from Wales about low-flying military aircraft.

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this be not done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Sainsbury: Yes, arrangements will be made for responses to formal consultative documents, such as Green Papers, to be available, provided that the respondent has not asked that his response should be kept confidential.

RAF Molesworth

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on future uses of RAF Molesworth.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 20 January at column *764*.

RAF Wethersfield

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any limitations are planned on activities at RAF Wethersfield in the light of proposals for expansion of Stansted airport.

Mr. Freeman: RAF Wethersfield is a standby deployment base at which no regular flying activity currently takes place, aside from weekend gliding by air cadets. Therefore any question of the expansion of Stansted airport affecting base activities does not arise.

RAF Feltwell

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the rôle and function of the proposed satellite receiver dishes and ancilliary equipment at RAF Feltwell; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: Subject to the appropriate planning approvals, the United States Air Force proposes to site a deep space tracking station at RAF Feltwell. This will be a passive facility for tracking man-made objects in deep space.

Montebello Decision

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current position with regard to SACEUR's 1985 proposals to implement the Montebello decision.

Mr. Ian Stewart: As part of the continuing process of reviewing NATO's nuclear force requirements, NATO Defence Ministers at the 1983 nuclear planning group meeting in Montebello examined the question of the future size and composition of NATO's theatre nuclear stockpile and agreed both to a reduction of 1,400 warheads from NATO's land-based nuclear stockpile in Europe and on the need for improvements to ensure the continuing effectiveness, responsiveness and survivability of remaining systems. SACEUR was asked to come forward with proposals for implementing this decision and his recommendations were presented to the nuclear planning group Minister at their meeting in Luxembourg in March 1985.

The reduction in warheads has been completed. Recommendations for improvements are being pursued by SACEUR with the nations concerned, and progress with implementation is being kept under review by the nuclear planning group. The details of the recommendations as they affect individual countries are classified, but in broad terms they include the deployment of a tactical air-to-surface missile, the deployment of a follow on to Lance, the introduction of improved nuclear artillery shells, and the continued modernisation of NATO's dual-capable aircraft. No decisions on the specific modernisation measures addressed by SACEUR to the United Kingdom have yet been taken.

Other measures called for by SACEUR involve the correction of some maldeployments of nuclear forces and improvements in their effectiveness, survivability and command and control. In this context the United Kingdom is withdrawing completely from the 8 in. nuclear artillery role in order to concentrate resources on the 155 mm dual-capable gun now in service, as explained by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 23 July 1987 at column *390*.

NATO Heads of Government at the summit on 2-3 March reaffirmed the long-standing policy of the Alliance, that it should continue to maintain

"an appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces which will continue to be kept up to date where necessary".

The United Kingdom will play its full part in this process.

Armed Forces (Alcohol Abuse)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on measures to control alcohol abuse in the armed forces; whether non-alcoholic beers are stored in service bars; what is the ratio of alcoholic to non-alcoholic drinks stocked in service bars; and what is the price differential.

Mr. Freeman: Drunkenness is a specific offence under the service discipline Acts. If service personnel, whilst not committing actual drink related offences, become by regular heavy drinking a risk or burden to their service that is also regarded seriously.

A series of alcohol education programmes, making use of pamphlets, films and lectures has been produced to alert all personnel to the dangers of abuse. Where abuse occurs, the aim is to rehabilitate abusers where this is possible. Adequate facilities for medical treatment are available. A range of deterrent administrative and disciplinary actions are also available and persistent offenders may be discharged.

Stocking of service bars and the pricing of drinks are matters for mess committees or NAAFI managers and are not centrally directed by the Ministry of Defence, but non-alcoholic or low-alcohol beers and soft drinks would normally be available. The ratio of alcoholic to non-alcoholic drinks would depend on demand.

Exercises

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list Royal Air Force participation in Maple Flag exercises in Canada since 1979, giving the number and type of Royal Air Force aircraft involved and dates of the exercise on each occasion.

Mr. Freeman *[holding answer 4 December 1987]*: The information requested is as follows:

Year	*Date*	*Aircraft involved*
1979[1]	28 April—12 May	8 × Buccaneer
		2 × Jaguar
1980[1]	14 April— 7 May	8 × Harrier
1981[1]	14 April—16 May	8 × Buccaneer
1982[1]	14 April—17 May	8 × Harrier
1983[1]	12 May—27 May	8 × Buccaneer
		2 × Hercules
1984	28 April—26 May	8 × Harrier
1985	27 April—25 May	8 × Tornado
1986	27 April—24 May	8 × Harrier
1987	27 April—25 May	8 × Jaguar

[1] Precise central records are not available for the period before 1984 although the details given above are thought to be broadly accurate.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Violent Crime

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a table depicting the percentage change in violent crimes, by category, in all regions of the United Kingdom from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. John Patten: Statistics of notifiable offences recorded by the police, by type of offence and police force area, are published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, 1979" (Cmnd 8098, table 32), and in the "Criminal Statistics Supplementary Tables Volume 3" (table S.3.1.) for each year from 1980 to 1986. Copies of these volumes are available in the Library. Recorded numbers of some types of violent offences are small and subject to appreciable year-to-year fluctuation so percentage changes calculated from them might be misleading.

Safe City Scheme

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which urban areas are to be initially targeted by the safe city schemes; and when they will commence.

Mr. John Patten: It is our intention over the next three years to establish some 20 "safer city" projects in areas selected from those which are currently urban programme areas. The participating areas will be chosen and announced after consultation with local interests in the areas concerned.

Seaside Promenades

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to approve new byelaws regulating the use of seaside promenades; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Last month, Thanet district council submitted five draft schemes of byelaws for provisional approval. We will reply to the council as soon as possible, but there are a considerable number of other applications awaiting attention.

Firearms

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms certificates are at present held by owners in England and Wales.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The latest available information relates to 31 December 1986 and is published in table 2 of the Home Office statistical bulletin, issue 2/88, "Statistics On The Operation Of The Firearms Act 1968", a copy of which is in the Library. Figures for the end of 1987 will be published in a similar bulletin later this year.

Dogs

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give figures for the number of stray dogs reported to the police in England and Wales during 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No central record is kept of the number of stray dogs reported to the police. The information requested could, therefore, be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dogs were destroyed, annually, in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Dogs are destroyed by owners and by a wide variety of organisations and individuals. We have no information on the total numbers destroyed.

Hounds (Organised Packs)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence to allow an organised pack of hounds to attack cats or dogs, with a range of fines and imprisonment available against the master of such hounds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are concerned about any unnecessary suffering which is caused to domestic animals. However, existing legislation — in particular the Dogs Act 1871, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 — provides for the control of dangerous dogs. We have no plan to introduce further measures.

Immigration (Entry Clearance)

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer by the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex on 22 February, *Official Report*, column 4, whether the 130 outstanding entry clearance applications included applications which had been referred to his Department by entry clearance officers but had not yet been allocated to an immigration office.

Mr. Renton: The total of 130 outstanding entry clearance applications given in my previous answer referred to those cases which had been received from entry clearance officers abroad and had been passed to the immigration service to arrange interview. The number of

applications made abroad which had not reached that stage is not recorded centrally under the location of the sponsors, and information in respect of the Birmingham area is therefore not readily obtainable.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ethiopia

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criticism the United Kingdom's representative at the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva made about the human rights record of the Government of Ethiopia.

Mrs. Chalker: My hon. Friend the Paliamentary Under-Secretary of State drew attention in his statement at the Commission on 18 February to the particular problem of long-term prisoners in Ethiopia. In a subsequent statement under the agenda item dealing with human rights violations in any part of the world, the United Kingdom representative again expressed our concern about the continued detention of long-term prisoners in Ethiopia, some of whom have been held without trial since 1974.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why Her Majesty's Government made no attempt to have Ethiopia included on the agenda of the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission recently convened in Geneva; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chalker: In 1986 the United Kingdom supported a draft resolution on Ethiopia tabled at the Commission by the United States which would formally have put the situation in Ethiopia on the Commission's agenda for its 1987 session. This resolution was defeated on a procedural motion. We have continued to raise the matter of long-term prisoners in Ethiopia in our statements at the Commission.

CND (Representations)

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the Washington summit of December 1987.

Mr. Mellor *[pursuant to his reply, 2 March 1988, c. 589]:* I should have said that we have received one direct representation from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament since the Washington summit of December 1987.

EMPLOYMENT

Deaf People (Training Schemes)

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average number of hours of communication support required by a YTS trainee under the communication service for the deaf.

Mr. Cope: Information on the average number of communication support required by YTS trainees is not available. Communication support is provided for a maximum of 500 hours per trainee over a two-year scheme. Trainees' use of this resource varies according to their individual needs.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will give a regional breakdown of the number of people receiving payment under the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: The number of people receiving the enterprise allowance at the end of February 1988 is shown below, by region.

Region	*Recipients*
South East	11,951
London	10,085
South West	10,006
West Midlands	9,402
East Midlands	10,194
Yorkshire and Humberside	9,102
North West	14,330
North	5,118
Wales	5,863
Scotland	8,739
Total	94,790

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to increase the size of the payment under the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: No. Demand is buoyant and £40 per week remains sufficient compensation for the loss of unemployment or supplementary benefit that occurs when an unemployed person starts up in business.

Children

Mr. Archer: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to bring the pay of working children within the ambit of wages council legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: No.

Youth Training

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the current provision made for young people to undertake part-time study whilst they are on a YTS programme.

Mr. Cope: All YTS training programmes must include a minimum period of planned and directed learning away from the normal workplace and outside the day-to-day pressures of a job. Any study which is of direct relevance to a training programme may therefore be considered for inclusion as part of such "off-the-job" training. Trainees are also free to pursue additional studies outside YTS, and managing agents are encouraged to offer support by allowing time off to study and sit for examinations which would contribute to the training programme.

Midland Professional Cleaning Services Ltd., Wolverhampton

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if any applications for payments in lieu of

wages from the insolvency fund have been accepted by former employees of Midland Professional Cleaning Services Ltd. of Stewart Street, Wolverhampton.

Mr. Nicholls: No applications are at present being considered. I understand the company is not formally insolvent.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service

Mr. Cran: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he proposes to make changes in the prices charged by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service for its commercial services.

Mr. MacGregor: I have instructed ADAS that the prices it charges for its commercial services should be adjusted from time to time taking account of changes in costs, the competitive position in the market place as well, of course, as the legal requirement that such charges must be reasonable. The first adjustments will be made from the beginning of the 1988-89 financial year.

The most familiar ADAS charges are perhaps those for advice. For these the hourly charge will remain at £28 (plus VAT) for up to two hours of advice which will help protect smaller farmers. However, if a contract necessitates over two hours of advisers' time, charges for the excess period over two hours will, from 1 April 1988, be levied at a rate of £30 (plus VAT) per hour.

Drainage Authorities

Mr. Paice: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to issue revised guidelines to drainage authorities on discharging their environmental and conservation responsibilities.

Mr. Gummer: The revised guidelines, issued jointly by the Minister and my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales, are being distributed to land drainage bodies and conservation organisations today. Copies have also been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The guidelines have been completely revised in the light of a thoroughgoing review of the experience of the past five years and I should like to put on record our gratitude to the many organisations both in the fields of conservation and of land drainage whose assistance has been of such value in the drawing up of the new guidelines. My colleagues and I are confident that the strengthened and consolidated guidance that we are publishing today will serve to enable drainage authorities to proceed with their necessary work in ways that will further the conservation interest and enhance environmental features affected by these operations. Much progress has been made in this direction in recent years and we must see to it that we build on what has been achieved. The new guidelines are central to this. I commend them to drainage and conservation organisations alike.

Bass

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what progress is being made towards the European Economic Community accepting a bass quota.

Mr. Gummer: There are no proposals for establishing an EC bass quota. The European Commission has been informed of the Government's proposals for the management of the bass fishery and if these are confirmed in the light of our consultations with the industry, we shall be asking the Commission to propose an increase in the Community minimum landing size for bass to 36 cm.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how he intends to ensure that the proposed bass regulations prevent the French from fishing the adult spawning stock in mid-channel.

Mr. Gummer: I have no plans to prevent fishing for adult bass.

Waste Disposal

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has on the disposal of potassium waste by France and Belgium in the English channel; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* From our contacts with the relevant authorities in France and Belgium and with the secretariat to the Oslo convention on sea disposal, it has been established that up to 750 tonnes of salt wastes from the potassium mining industry were disposed of at sea by France last month on an experimental basis, at a point five miles north of Dunkirk, and some 28 miles from the nearest United Kingdom coast. This disposal will be discussed at next week's meeting of the Oslo commission's standing committee for scientific advice when more detailed information on its likely environmental impact, and on any plans for future disposals of this nature, will be sought from the French authorities.

J. R. Perkes and Son, Brixham

Mr. Steen: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will now reply to the hon. Member for South Hams' letter of 9 February asking him to deal, as a matter of urgency, with the matter of J. R. Perkes and Son, Brixham fishermen, and requesting a meeting.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* I have been giving very careful consideration to the matter of J. R. Perkes and Son about which my hon. Friend the Member for South Hams wrote to me on 9 February, and I hope to be able to reply to my hon. Friend very shortly.

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will amend his recent regulations in relation to the community charge to give individuals who appear on the community charge register the option as to whether or not they would like their name and address to be sold;

(2) if he will amend his recent regulations in relation to the community charge so that individuals who appear on the community charge register will be told of the fact that their name and address may be sold without their knowledge or consent.

Mr. Lang: I refer to the answers I gave on 3 November 1987 at columns *550-51* on 28 January 1988 at column *325*

and on 6 July at column *35*. My right hon. and learned Friend is still considering these matters. Pending that consideration, I do not consider that formal notification to individuals of the present position is required.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he has taken to account for the problems of adult literacy, dyslexia or English as a second language when producing the regulations in relation to the community charge.

Mr. Lang: The notification and inquiry forms prescribed in the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 have been made as simple and straightforward as possible in the light of comments made on the draft regulations.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, if he will give the latest unemployment figures for Motherwell.

Mr. Lang: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in Motherwell district was 10,314.

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest unemployment figures for Motherwell, North.

Mr. Lang: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Motherwell, North parliamentary constituency was 5,689.

Incontinence

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give his latest estimate of the number of males and females in Scotland who suffer from incontinence; if he will express this figure in percentage terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available centrally.

Inverclyde Initiative

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on Friday 8 March, *Official Report*, column *135*, he will break down the figure for Scottish Development Agency expenditure of £8·75 million on the Inverclyde initiative, showing on what it has been spent.

Mr. Lang: The expenditure of £8·75 million by the Scottish Development Agency on the Inverclyde initiative is detailed in the table:

	£ million
Pre-project development studies and development grants	2·20
Factory Building	0·50
Environmental Improvements	2·55
Land acquisition	3·50

Solicitors (Code of Practice)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether it is his intention to introduce legislation to implement the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Legal Services in relation to a legally binding code of ethics and practice for solicitors in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No. I understand that the Law Society of Scotland is committed to the preparation and early publication of guidance on professional standards and ethics.

Lay Observer

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases were referred to the Lay Observer in 1987; in how many of these she found some justifiable complaint against the Law Society in its dealing with complaints; and what were the comparable figures in 1986.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Lay Observer for Scotland handled 248 cases in 1987 and in 62 of these she criticised aspects of the handling of the complaint by the Law Society of Scotland. The comparable figures in 1986 were 232 and 43 respectively.

Solicitors Discipline Tribunal

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many cases were heard by the Scottish Solicitors Discipline Tribunal in 1987; what were the results of the cases heard; and what were the comparable figures in 1986.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is as follows:

		Penalties imposed				
Year to	*Number of cases heard*	*Struck off*	*Suspended*	*Fined*	*Practising certificate restricted*	*Case dismissed (no finding)*
31 October 1986	38	1	2	18	7	7
31 October 1987	31	1	2	14	6	3

The number of cases heard does not necessarily correspond to the total number of penalties imposed. More than one case may be dealt with by a single penalty.

Grant Thornton

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 11 March, *Official Report*, column *384*, what information he has as to when Messrs Grant Thornton were appointed.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I understand that Grant Thornton were engaged in December 1987 by health board general managers acting jointly.

Mr. Darling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 10 March, *Official Report*, column *384*, how much money from public funds has been paid to Grant Thornton; and in respect of what services.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Grant Thornton were engaged by health board general managers acting jointly to provide assistance to boards in the preparation of tender documents and in the financial and technical vetting of major firms of contractors. The fee for these services is a matter covered by commercial confidentiality.

Radioactive Discharges

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list all the non-nuclear industrial sites in Scotland making authorised discharges of radioactive substances into the atmosphere.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 11 March 1988]:* The following are authorised by the Scottish Development Department to discharge low level gaseous waste to the atmosphere:

National Semiconductors (UK) Ltd., Larkfield Industrial Estate, Greenock.
Crowther Arts Display Ltd., 5 Hawbank Road, College Milton North, East Kilbride.
Ferranti Ltd., Dunsinane Avenue, Dundee.
Organon Laboratories Ltd., Newhouse Industrial Estate, Newhouse, Lanarkshire.
ICI plc in respect of the Brae B platform in the North Sea.

In addition the South of Scotland Electricity Board is authorised to burn, at its power stations at Longannet and Inverkip, waste oil contaminated with trace amounts of radioactivity; authorisations are held also by Aberdeen and Dundee district councils permitting them to burn combustible low-level radioactive wastes in their waste disposal incinerators.

In all the cases, the limits of discharge permitted by the authorisations are very low and the quantities of radioactivity being released to atmosphere are entirely negligible in radiological terms.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest comparative figures for levels of gross domestic product per capita in each of the United Kingdom regions, taking the figure for the United Kingdom as a whole to be 100.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the November 1987 edition of *Economic Trends*. The latest figures are available on page 86 of that document.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest figures for levels of gross domestic product per capita in each of the United Kingdom regions, including the continental shelf.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the November 1987 edition of *Economic Trends* which presents the latest available data. As the November edition of *Economic Trends* states, it is not possible to include the continental shelf in the calculation of regional GDP per capita figures.

Civil Service Redeployment

Dr. Marek: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will update table 1(4) in annex A of the Hardman report, Cmnd. 5322, on Civil Service redeployment.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* Information on the division between headquarters and non-headquarters staff is no longer held centrally. The latest available figures for population by region and for non-industrial Civil Servants are as follows:

Region	Population (1986)[1]		Non-industrial Civil Service (1 April 1987)	
	Number ('000s)	Percentage	Number[2]	Percentage
Scotland	5,121	9·3	50,214	10·1
Northern	3,080	5·6	31,359	6·3
North West	6,374	11·5	50,902	10·2
Yorkshire/Humberside	4,899	8·9	31,055	6·2
East Midlands	3,920	7·1	20,123	4·1
West Midlands	5,181	9·4	29,876	6·0
East Anglia	1,992	3·6	13,390	2·7
South East	17,264	31·3	195,826	39·4
South West	4,543	8·2	47,031	9·5
Wales	2,821	5·1	27,336	5·5
Great Britain	55,196	100·0	497,112	100·0

Source:
1. Population Estimates, Scotland, 1986; Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys Monitor PP1 87/1
2. Full time equivalents.

Income Tax

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has about the starting rates and top rates of income tax and the level of gross income at which those rates become payable in *(a)* Canada, *(b)* France, *(c)* Germany, *(d)* Italy, *(e)* Japan and *(f)* the United States of America, for a married couple with no children.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[pursuant to his reply, 16 March 1988, c. 566-68]:* I regret that the figure for the level of gross income at which the top rate of tax becomes payable in the United Kingdom was wrongly given as £19,301. The figure is £23,396. The revised table is as follows:

Country	Starting rate Per cent	Starting rate threshold (£)	Top rate Per cent.	Top rate threshold (£)
Canada	25·5	5,003	43·5	25,000
France	12·8	6,698	56·8	53,463
Germany	22·0	3,439	56·0	65,670
Italy	22·0	3,358	62·0	253,924
Japan	17·5	4,286	78·0	152,607
United States of America	15·0	5,086	34·7	22,086
United Kingdom	25·0	4,096	40·0	23,396

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Judges

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Attorney-General how many judges in England and Wales are *(a)* from ethnic minorities and *(b)* women; and what is the total number of judges in England and Wales.

The Attorney-General: No records are kept of the ethnic origin of members of the judiciary. As at 16 March 1988, there were 20 women judges, comprising one Lord Justice of Appeal, two High Court Judges and 17 circuit judges. The total number of Court of Appeal, High Court and circuit judges in England and Wales is at present 500.

Magistrates

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Attorney-General what is the total number of magistrates in England and Wales; and how many are *(a)* members of ethnic minorities and *(b)* women.

The Attorney-General: At January 1988 there were 27,846 active lay magistrates, of whom 11,934 were women. There are currently 48 metropolitan stipendiary magistrates of whom eight are women and 14 provincial stipendiary magistrates, of whom none are women.

No records are kept of the racial origins of magistrates, but surveys conducted last year revealed that 528 lay magistrates were members of an ethnic minority.

Hunts (Trespass)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Attorney-General what is his prosecution policy in respect of alleged offences of criminal trespass by hunts on British Rail land.

The Attorney-General: The prosecution policy of the Crown prosecution service, in respect of all offences prosecuted by that service, is contained in the code for Crown prosecutors, which is issued pursuant to section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act, 1985.

PRIME MINISTER

Education Testing (Leak of Letter)

Mr. Tam Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister if, pursuant to her answer of 14 March, she will set up an inquiry to discover the source of the leak of a letter from Mr. Paul Gray to Mr. Tom Jeffrey on educational testing.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 14 March, at column 425.

Biwater

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister on what assessment of Biwater's previous record in the supply of waterworks to Nigeria she gave Biwater her personal backing in the negotiations for a contract to supply Malaysia with similar equipment.

The Prime Minister: One of the main purposes of my visits abroad is to support the efforts of reputable British companies to secure contracts. The Biwater contract was therefore raised in discussion with Ministers on my visit to Malaysia in 1985.

ENERGY

South Normanton Depot

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will issue a direction to British Coal to name the consortium and the cost involved in the purchase of south Normanton depot and other transport undertakings including the mobile plants in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

Mr. Michael Spicer: No; these are management matters for the British Coal Corporation.

"Bribes, Brothels and Nuclear Waste"

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will seek to obtain a copy of the transcript of the Thames Television programme "This Week" entitled "Bribes, Brothels and Nuclear Waste" broadcast on 10 March for his departmental library.

Mr. Parkinson: No.

Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his plans for the Berkeley nuclear laboratories following plans for the privatisation of the electricity supply industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for discussion with the industry.

Nuclear Power Stations (Decommissioning)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with the Central Electricity Generating Board about withdrawal of funds from research into the decommissioning of nuclear power stations; and if he will take steps to prevent any delay in the Sellafield research project.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The CEGB's decision to withdraw its contribution towards the cost of UKAEA research into decommissioning of the Windscale advanced gas cooled reactor is a management matter for the board. The Department will be discussing with UKAEA the implications of the CEGB's decision in the course of negotiations on the authority's R and D programme.

Dounreay

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether Dounreay has been in receipt of any consignments of nuclear waste *(a)* before May 1979 and *(b)* since May 1979.

Mr. Michael Spicer *[holding answer 14 March 1988]*: Since 1986, some 423 cu m of wastes arising from the development of fast reactor fuels at Sellafield have been moved to Dounreay. Prior to 1986 very small quantities of waste totalling less than 7 cu m and arising mainly from work undertaken in support of the Dounreay programme were transferred from other UKAEA sites to Dounreay. Small quantities of waste are transferred regularly to Dounreay from the adjacent Vulcan naval reactor test establishment.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is Her Majesty's Government's policy towards proposals by the Central Electricity Generating Board to build new nuclear generating capacity, in the context of the overall development of national electricity supplies.

Mr. Parkinson *[pursuant to his reply 17 December 1987, c. 639-640]*: It appears to me, on the information so far available to me, that the following economic, safety, environmental and planning matters are likely to be relevant to my consideration of the CEGB's application to construct a pressurised water reactor at Hinkley Point:

(1) the applicant's requirement for the power station (particularly in the light of Government policy as set out in the answer given on 17 December 1987 and in the White Paper "Privatising Electricity" (Cm. 322), in particular paragraphs 44-49);

(2) the safety feature of the design, construction and operation of the station, taking into account the conclusions on the safety of the Sizewell B PWR contained in the report of Sir Frank Layfield QC and the views of the nuclear installations inspectorate, as representing the Health and Safety Executive (the licensing authority);

(3) the on-site management of radioactive waste arising from the station and radioactive discharges from the station to the environment in the light of the views of the authorising Departments; and

(4) the implications of the proposed development (including construction, operation and decommissioning) for: *(a)* agriculture and fisheries; *(b)* the local economy including employment; *(c)* water supply and disposal; *(d)* transport requirements; *(e)* coast protection and sea defences; *(f)* housing and public services generally; *(g)* local amenities and in particular areas of special landscape value or nature conservation interest; *(h)* emergency arrangements.

I am pleased to announce that I have appointed Mr. Michael Barnes, QC, to act as inspector at the public inquiry. The inspector will hold a first pre-inquiry meeting, starting on 1 June 1988, at the Somerset college of agriculture and horticulture at Cannington near Hinkley Point and it is expected that a second pre-inquiry meeting will be held in the period 12-14 July 1988.

I consider it impracticable to open a major inquiry of this kind in a busy holiday area during the season. The inquiry is therefore expected to open on 4 October 1988, the earliest date I consider practicable. Further details about the second pre-inquiry meeting and the inquiry itself, including details of the times and places, will be announced at a later date.

The inquiry will also consider the CEGB's separate application for my consent to realign the final span of each of the Hinkley Point-Melksham and Hinkley Point-Taunton double circut of 400 kV overhead transmission lines.

The electricity generating stations and overhead lines (inquiries procedure) rules 1987 will apply to the inquiry. The code of practice "Electricity Generating Stations and Overhead Lines — Preparing for Major Inquiries in England and Wales" will also apply. I have placed a copy of the code of practice in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Support for Design Scheme (Northern Ireland)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proposals he has to replace the support for design scheme in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I am discussing the implications of the termination of the support for design scheme with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. An announcement will be made in due course.

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this not be done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Butcher: No. Frank expression of views could be inhibited if there were a presumption in favour of publication. But I continue to be ready to do so in appropriate cases and when the respondent has explicitly agreed to publication.

Film Industry

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the turnover of the British film industry in 1986-87, exclusive of overseas earnings.

Mr. Maude: I regret that this information is not available.

Company Registrations

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many new company registrations there have been in Yorkshire and Humberside to the nearest convenient date since 1983.

Mr. Maude: The number of companies which presently have their registered offices in Yorkshire and Humberside and which were incorporated in the period 1983 to 1986 is 15,096. To date 2,499 companies formed during 1987 have registered offices in Yorkshire and Humberside. This figure may change appreciably over the next few months

as many companies are bought off-the-shelf from registration agents and their address in this early period is therefore the address of these agents.

Country of Origin Labelling

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he proposes to introduce any changes regarding country of origin requirements in the labelling of manufactured goods; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: Provision is made in the Consumer Protection Act 1987 for the repeal of the Trade Description Act 1972 which is concerned with the origin marking of imported goods generally. I propose to introduce successor requirements, by means of an order under section 8 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 at the same time as effect is given to the repeal of the 1972 Act and to this end my Department is currently considering paper and draft order issued on 18 December last.

Departmental Accommodation

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give the accommodation costs per square metre of his Department's buildings in London at *(a)* 1-19 Victoria street, *(b)* Allington towers, *(c)* Ashdown house and *(d)* Kingsgate house; and how many civil servants are employed in each location.

Mr. Butcher: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer, given on 2 March at column *584* by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment. Details of accommodation costs on leasehold buildings are treated by the Property Services Agency as commercially confidential. The numbers currently employed in the buildings referred to are:

Location	*Number*
1-19 Victoria Street	1,101
Allington Towers	259
Ashdown House	783
Kingsgate House	672

Saudi Arabia (Trade Missions)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list in the *Official Report* the trade missions from the United Kingdom to Saudi Arabia since 1 January 1982, indicating *(a)* which received financial assistance from his Department, *(b)* the main organising bodies, *(c)* the purposes, and *(d)* the precise destination of each.

Mr. Alan Clark: The following trade missions have visited Saudi Arabia with DTI assistance since 1 January 1982:

Year and sponsoring organisation	*Other countries visited*
1982	
London Chamber of Commerce	—
North of England Development Council	—
Engineering Industries Association	—
Cardiff Chamber of Commerce and Industry	—
City of Westminster Chamber of Commerce	—
Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry	—
Association of British Offshore Industry	—
Export-IT (British Information Technology Export Organisation)	—
Federation of Sussex Industries and Chamber of Commerce	—
1983	
Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce	—
Defence Manufacturers Association	Dubai, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE
London Chamber of Commerce	—
Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Yemen Arab Republic
Engineering Industries Association	—
Export-IT (British Information Technology Export Organisation)	—
Engineerng Industries Association	—
British Food Export Council	Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Yemen
Federation of Sussex Industries and Chamber of Commerce	—
1984	
British Water Industries Group	—
London Chamber of Commerce	—
Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce	—
British Food Export Council	Gulf States
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce	—
1985	
London Chamber of Commerce	—
Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Ltd.	—
Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce	—
Engineering Industries Association	Bahrain
Export-IT (British Information Technology Export Organisation)	—
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce	—
British Health-Care Export Council	—
1986	
British Food Export Council	Middle East scatter, Gulf States scatter
Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry	—
1987	
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce	—
The Middle East Association	—

Year and sponsoring organisation	*Other countries visited*
Federation of Sussex Industries	
Birmingham Chamber of Industry and Commerce	
British Health-Care Export Council	
Croydon Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Oman
1988	
BEAMA (Federation of British Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturers Association)	Dubai, Kuwait
London Chamber of Commerce	
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce	

The purpose of each mission was the promotion of British exports.

Information about missions since 1982 receiving no DTI financial assistance is not readily available.

Airbus

Dr. Marek: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many aircraft have been firmly ordered and how many options have been secured since his Department announced official support for the A330 and A340 aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: As at 15 March 1988, the total number of commitments for the Airbus A330-340 was 145 aircraft. As the programme is still in its early stages, figures broken down between the A330 and the A340, and between firm orders and options, are not available.

Dr. Marek: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many aircraft have been firmly ordered and how many options have been secured since his Department announced official support for the A320 aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins: As at 15 March 1988, 294 firm orders and 189 options had been placed for the Airbus A320 aircraft.

Departmental Logos

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make it his policy that in redesigning logos, and so on for his Department, he will continue to use the historical emblem of the Board of Trade of which the Secretary of State is President.

Mr. Butcher: The historical emblem of the Board of Trade will continue to be used in selected areas where it is particularly appropriate, but in the majority of cases the new DTI logo will be employed. This logo covers all the activities of the Department of Trade and Industry rather than those of just one of the predecessor Departments. It has been introduced to support the major restructuring of DTI policies set out in the White Paper "DTI — the department for Enterprise" which was presented to Parliament on 12 January 1988.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will now make it his practice to answer questions concerning the Export Credits Guarantee Department's involvement in *(a)* particular transactions and *(b)* particular countries.

Mr. Alan Clark: It has been the policy of successive Administrations not to make public the terms under which guarantees issued by the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) are made available for particular markets nor to disclose details of the support provided by ECGD for individual transactions. Such disclosure of commercially confidential information could prejudice the negotiating position of the United Kingdom exporters. Disclosure of the ECGD's assessment of other countries' creditworthiness could damage relationships between Her Majesty's Government and the Government concerned.

Animal Skins

Mr. Hinchcliffe: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many *(a)* dog pelts and *(b)* cat skins were exported in each of the last five years and to which main countries; what checks are made on the sources of such skins, with particular regard to their legality; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark *[holding answer 4 March 1988]:* Statistics on the export of dog pelts and cat skins, other than wild feline skins, are not available. No checks are made on the sources of such skins.

WALES

Neonatal Facilities

12. **Mr. Anderson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the provision of neonatal facilities in hospitals in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I am pleased that improvements in services for newly born babies and their mothers have been accompanied by a dramatic reduction in the perinatal mortality rate in Wales, which has fallen from 15·6 per 1,000 births in 1979 to 10·3 in 1986.

Inward Investment

18. **Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give a county by county break-down of inward investment in Wales for the last year for which full figures are available.

Mr. Peter Walker: The total recorded number of inward investment projects secured for Wales during 1987 was 113, involving investment of £244 million. I have arranged for a breakdown by county to be placed in the Library of the House.

Health Disadvantage

19. **Mr. Ted Rowlands:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he plans to take to compensate for the relative disadvantages in health experienced by residents of *(a)* Mid-Glamorgan and *(b)* other parts of Wales.

Mr. Grist: Relative health needs are taken account of in the formulae used in determining the allocation of resources to district health authorities.

Tourism and Leisure

20. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what new proposals he has to support or initiate measures to increase jobs in the tourist and leisure industries in *(a)* Gwent and *(b)* Wales.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The increase in resources we have made available for the Wales tourist board and assistance announced under the Enterprise Wales package will help the tourist industry create jobs in all parts of Wales.

A55 (Chester-Bangor)

21. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what further schemes are required to complete the dualling of the A55 between Chester and Bangor; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Five schemes are under construction. Four further schemes—the Traveller's Inn, Pen-Y-Clip, Aber and Rhaullt Hill improvements — are planned. Dualling is expected to be completed in the early 1990s.

Labour Statistics

22. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were *(a)* unemployed and *(b)* employed in Wales in May 1979; and what are the latest figures.

Mr. Peter Walker: On a seaonally adjusted basis, there were 73,100 and 136,700 unemployed claimants in Wales in May 1979 and February 1988 respectively. At September 1979, there were 1,160,000 in employment in Wales. The comparable details for September 1987, the latest available, are 1,021,000.

25. **Mr. Roy Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the most closely comparable basis.

Mr. Peter Walker: On 11 February 1988, the number of unemployed claimants in Newport district, Gwent and Wales were 7,841, 22,923 and 145,458 respectively. Unadjusted figures for 1979 are not available on a basis that enables a valid comparison to be made.

Council House Building

23. **Dr. Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many council homes were started in 1987 in Wales; and how many were completed.

Mr. Grist: A total of 908 dwellings were started by local authorities in Wales in 1987 and 795 were completed.

Welsh Language

24. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to promote the use of Welsh in official business.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: This is one of several issues which the working group, established by my right hon. Friend under my chairmanship, is considering.

Lamb (Radioactivity)

26. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set up an inquiry into the alleged sale to the public of radioactive lamb above the official safety levels.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. I am satisfied that controls on the movement and slaughter of sheep have ensured that there has been no threat to public safety.

Kidney Dialysis

27. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what plans he has to expand kidney dialysis treatment in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Kidney dialysis treatment in Wales has expanded rapidly under this Government, and the acceptance rate for new patients is now well above the average for the United Kingdom. Further progress will be made this year with the construction of two more subsidiary renal units in south-east Wales and an expansion of the Morriston hospital unit.

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this not be done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is already the policy of my Department to make responses to consultative documents available to the public on request except where a respondent has specifically asked for this not to be done. These arrangements are made clear when consultative documents are issued.

AIDS

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what special arrangements have been made for the treatment of persons suffering from AIDS ; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: In December 1985 all district health authorities were encouraged to establish AIDS co-ordinating teams to ensure the proper management of the response to AIDS in their areas, and to ensure that treatment and care facilities were available for those who needed them. In May 1987 district health authorities were asked to prepare district operational plans on AIDS. Planning guidelines were published which contained advice on the arrangements for the treatment of AIDS sufferers including the need to consider the provision of facilities for treatment in hospital and in the community. The Welsh Office has responded to draft plans received from all authorities. Final plans are due to be submitted by 1 April 1988.

School-Industry Links

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he proposes to take to strengthen contacts and co-operation between senior classes in Welsh comprehensive schools and local industries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: A Welsh Office survey conducted last year indicated that there was a generally high incidence of school-industry interaction in Wales. This is an encouraging base on which to bring in new initiatives on top of existing ones, such as general work experience currently provided through schools, local authorities, TVEI and link bodies. On 13 January I announced the Enterprise Wales package, a significant and important element of which is the business and education initiative. An aim of the initiative is that, within two or three years, every young person in Wales should be given personal experience of the world of work during their last year in school.

I am also exploring the possibilities of establishing one or more compacts in Wales, which would considerably strengthen links between schools and local industrial and commercial concerns. Finally "Working Together for a Better Future", the careers initiative launched last year in England and Wales, affirms the key place of careers education in the school curriculum, to inform school leavers in their choice of occupation, including careers in industry.

Repair Grants

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to improve the position of elderly householders whose dwellings are in need of repair and whose grant applications have not yet been met.

Mr. Grist: We are aware of the particular problems elderly home owners face and have made available substantial financial support to establish care and repair home improvement services to assist them in repairing and improving their homes. A number of the changes we have suggested to the home improvement grant arrangements could be of particular help to the elderly.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from representatives of sufferers from myalgic encephalomyelitis; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: In the past year we have received two representations from hon. Members, and an application from the national chairman of the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association for grant-aid under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968. We shall be making our decision on this application shortly.

Incontinence

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give his latest estimate of the number of males and females in Wales who suffer from incontinence; if he will express this figure in percentage terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The information is not available centrally.

Home Insulation Grants

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has received any representations concerning the change in regulations affecting home insulation grants in Wales.

Mr. Grist: Before the new arrangements for the homes insulation scheme were introduced our Department consulted the Association of District Councils in Wales. Two district councils have written to the Welsh Office since the introduction of the new scheme.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Social Security Regulations

28. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any estimate of the number of gainers and losers in Wales when the new social security regulations come into force in April.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that statistically reliable estimates for Wales only cannot be provided.

Cohabitation Rule

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many women have been cut off from social security benefit as a result of the cohabitation rule in the following categories *(a)* women receiving widow's allowance, 60 plus years, *(b)* women receiving widow's allowance, under 60 years, *(c)* women receiving supplementary pension, 60 plus years and *(d)* women receiving supplementary allowance, under 60 years; and how many men have been cut off benefits, pensions and allowances as a result of the cohabitation rule.

Mr. Portillo: The information available is as follows, given for the latest possible date. Records of disqualification do not show the age and sex of the beneficiaries.

Widow's benefit: 1,722 disqualifications in year ended December 1987.

Supplementary benefit: 8,152 disqualifications in year ended November 1987.

(i) Widow's benefit records include recipients of war widows' benefit but exclude industrial widows' benefit for which records are not kept centrally and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

(ii) Widow's benefit recipients over age 60 have concurrent title to retirement pension which does not carry a similar disqualification.

Medical Treatment (Reciprocal Arrangements)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services which countries have reciprocal arrangements with the United Kingdom for free medical treatment of their nationals.

Mrs. Currie: Normally, arrangements for reciprocal health care between countries do not provide for free treatment but for treatment to be provided to visitors to the host country on the same basis as to residents of that country. The Department's information leaflet SA41 "The Traveller's Guide to Health: Before You Go" lists those countries and territories with which we have reciprocal agreements on pages 18 to 19 and 24 to 27. Copies of this leaflet, and its companion SA40 "While You're Away", have been placed in the Library and are available from DHSS local offices, and travel agents and a number of other outlets.

Computer Purchases

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to introduce greater accountability for computer purchasing by the health regions; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Decisions relating to the purchase of computer equipment and any other goods and services are for local health authority management to take, having regard to value for money. Such decisions are subject to normal audit scrutiny.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will take steps to introduce compulsory tendering for all National Health Service computer equipment costing over £10,000; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The decision on what equipment to purchase and how to purchase it is a matter for individual health authorities, having regard to their standing financial instructions and value for money. The Department has, however, recently issued guidance which draws attention to current public purchasing policy, which recommends the use of competitive tendering.

Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham (Radiology System)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services which companies tendered for the supply of a computerised radiology system for the Queens medical centre, Nottingham; which system was requested by the medical staff at the centre; on what basis the contract was awarded to Datamed; what operational experience the Datamed system had; what assessment was made of the ability of HM Systems to provide the service; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The following companies tendered for the supply of the Queens medical centre radiology system:

Datamed
AJR Systems (now HM Systems)
Guardian
SIFO

I understand that the medical staff at the centre were fully consulted during the procurement process and were satisfied with the decision to proceed with the successful company. The Datamed system was selected on the basis that, while a new development, the operating system it employed was compatible with other computing developments within the region and the company offered comprehensive support arrangements. The solution proposed by HM Systems was considered against the same criteria as those for Datamed.

I further understand that a number of districts within the Trent region are now using the Datamed system, and several others are considering its use.

AIDS

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to revise upwards the official figures for deaths from AIDS in the light of the evidence

given to a recent conference on AIDS by Dr. Anna McCormick, senior medical statistician at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We are aware of Dr. McCormick's interesting study and we understand that a full report will be published shortly. The current system of voluntary reporting of cases of AIDS that meet the internationally accepted definition of AIDS is working well. If this system were extended to include other HIV-related deaths, the United Kingdom's system would then not be consistent with that used in other countries. The reporting arrangements for AIDS and other HIV-related deaths are being kept under review.

London Postgraduate Teaching Hospitals

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now announce details of the appointment and reappointment of chairmen of district health authorities and of the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals from 1 April.

Mr. Newton: I am placing in the Library a list of the appointments made with effect from 1 April.

Incontinence

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his latest estimate of the number of males and females in England who suffer from incontinence; if he will express this figure in percentage terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 25 February 1988 at column *294-5*.

The epidemiological survey conducted by the Medical Research Council's epidemiology and medical care unit, which is the latest source of information available, was completed in 1978 and was part of a 10-year survey on incontinence. I regret that there are no figures to show the prevalence of incontinence in England alone, nor is it possible to give details in the form requested.

However, the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys is currently carrying out a major survey of the numbers, circumstances and needs of disabled people. The results, which will include statistics on incontinence, will be published in a series of reports starting later this year.

Medicines (Raw Materials)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are taken to verify sources of raw materials following approval by the Committee on Safety of Medicines and the issue of generic licences by his Department.

Mr. Newton: An applicant for a product licence must state the source of all active ingredients and specify the tests and limits he will apply to them. If products are to be imported in a finished state, the applicant must detail the checks which are to be carried out on importation. In all cases, the finished products must conform with the agreed specification. Lack of compliance can result in action being considered to suspend or revoke the relevant licence.

The applicant for a product licence must state the source of all active ingredients and specify the tests and limits he will apply to them. If products are to be imported in a finished state, the applicant must detail the checks which are to be carried out on importation. In all cases, the finished products must conform with the agreed specification. Lack of compliance can result in action being considered to suspend or revoke the relevant licence.

The medicines inspectorate has power to check the origin of raw material in the course of its visits to pharmaceutical manufacturers and for biological raw materials checks extend back to the primary manufacturer.

Samples are also taken from the market for independent analysis on behalf of the licensing authority.

East Anglian RHA (Holidaymakers)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce a pilot National Health Service internal market experiment into the East Anglian regional health authority with due weight given to the annual population increase in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney district health authority caused by the influx of visitors and holidaymakers.

Mr. Newton: I understand that there is a good deal of interest, within the East Anglian region, in the possibility of mounting an experiment.

I will ask the regional health authority chairman to ensure, if the experiment goes ahead, that account is taken of any particular local factors within the region.

My hon. Friend may like to approach the regional chairman for further details.

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy on allocating funds to East Anglian regional health authority to take account of the increased use of family practitioner and hospital facilities by the influx of summer holidaymakers every year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Our policy is to bring allocations to regional health authorities into line, over time, with targets calculated using the Resource Allocation Working Party formula to reflect each region's relative need for health care. These targets include an adjustment to take account of the past pattern of hospital treatment provided to patients from outside the region's own boundaries.

Family practitioner services in the East Anglian regional health authority are provided under arrangements made by family practitioner committees. Payments are made to general medical practitioners for treating temporary residents—including holidaymakers—and for providing treatment in an emergency to people not on their list. Fees paid to general medical practitioners in the East Anglian regional health authority area in 1986-87 for treating temporary residents amounted to £525,383 and for emergency treatments to £90,896. This exlcudes the cost of drugs. Information on the proportion of these payments made in respect of holidaymakers is not separately available.

Medicines Commission (Appeals)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many appeals to the Medicines Commission against recommendations from the Committee on Safety of Medicines were heard in each of the years 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987; in how many of these cases the Medicines

Commission allowed the appeal; and in each of these cases where the advice from the Commission differed from that of the Commission on Safety of Medicines, what decision the licensing authority took and on what basis.

Mr. Newton: The information is as follows:

Year	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*
1984	9	5	4	1
1985	7	5	4	1
1986	3	2	2	—
1987	12	2	2	—

Key:
Column 1: Hearings before the Medicines Commission and written representations considered by the Medicines Commission against advice by the Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM).
Column 2: Advice by Medicines Commission to determine application other than as advised by CSM.
Column 3: Determined by the licensing authority in accordance with Medicines Commission advice.
Column 4: Determined otherwise.
Notes:
1. The case determined otherwise in 1984 would have required amendment of the Prescription Only Order to make a substance legally available without prescription.
2. In the 1985 case determined otherwise than on the Commission's advice, it was ascertained after the Medicines Commission proceedings that information relevant to the safety of the medicine had not been made available to them by the company concerned. Current Medicines Commission practice requires companies to make available all relevant information for these proceedings.
3. In other cases, the licensing authority's own judgment on the information available to it gave it no reason to differ from the advice of the Medicines Commission.
4. In most cases, new evidence unavailable to the CSM was submitted to the Medicines Commission; or the proposed licensing conditions were altered by the company; or both.

Acute Medicine

Mr. Dover: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown of the additional £20 million for 1988-89 for alleviating pressures on the acute sector between the various regional health authorities.

Mr. Newton: Allocations to regional health authorities did not identify any specific sum for this purpose.

CHCs (Birmingham)

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will reply to the letter of 20 November 1987 from Central Birmingham community health council on behalf of the joint committee of community health councils in Birmingham.

Mr. Newton: I replied to the community health council on 17 March.

Single Payments

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for single payments were outstanding at the local social security offices at Kingsbury road and St. Margaret's road in Birmingham on 18 March.

Mr. Portillo: The office at Kingsbury road (Erdington ILO) had 363 single payment claims outstanding on 18 March. The office at St. Margaret's road (Washwood Heath ILO) had 900 single payment claims outstanding on 18 March.

Income Support

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what deadline has been established for the conversion of benefit payments to income support; what additional resources have been made available for this work at the local social security offices at Kingsbury road and St. Margaret's road in Birmingham; and whether he is satisfied that the deadline will be met.

Mr. Portillo: The deadline for the conversion of supplementary benefit payments to income support is 11 April 1988. The offices each have nine posts in addition to their normal staffing for the conversion exercise. They have also been helped by a special team from the regional office. This team stayed at Kingsbury road office for three weeks and at St. Margaret's road for four weeks. Both offices are confident that they will complete the conversion by 11 April 1988.

Ms. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether an expectant mother who suspends a full-time course of study during her pregnancy will be entitled to income support.

Mr. Portillo: If an expectant mother ceased to be a student, she would be eligible for income support. If she remained a student she would be eligible for income support during the summer vacation only and should look to an education grant for support at other times.

Place of Safety Orders

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will detail the number of place of safety orders taken out in respect of children and young persons during 1987, showing which authority took them out.

Mr. Newton: Statistics on children and young persons removed to a place of safety during the year ending 31 March 1987 are given for 87 local authorities in the provisional feedback "Children Removed to a Place of Safety, England, 1987", copies of which are available in the Library. Information subsequently received from a further 18 local authorities is shown in the table.

These figures relate to cases where the local authority was responsible for the removal to a place of safety or where the local authority made provision for a child removed by the authority of some other person or body.

Children and young persons removed to a place of safety during the year ending 31 March 1987[1]

Authority	*Number*
Cleveland	285
Newcastle upon Tyne	13
Barnsley	33
Doncaster	53
Kirklees	30
Bury	20
Manchester	300
Warwickshire	63
Buckinghamshire	32
Camden	26
Greenwich	69
Hackney	44
Lewisham	57
Barking	22
Enfield	18
Devon	130
Gloucestershire	35
Isles of Scilly	0

[1] Figures are provisional.

Handicapped Children (Kent)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what percentage of children in each district health authority in Kent, in each of the last 10 years, has been born with physical and mental handicaps.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the exact information requested is not available centrally. However, the hon. Member may be interested in the table, which shows readily available information from the registration of live and still births, and from the notification of congenital malformations. These notifications are based on a voluntary system of reporting malformations noticed at birth, or within seven days of birth, and may therefore exclude certain anomalies.

Number of total live and still births, and number of notifications of congenital malformations to mothers resident in District Health Authorities (DHA) in Kent

1983 to 1986

Area of usual residence DHA	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Total live and stillbirths				
South East Kent	2,981	2,968	3,190	3,319
Canterbury and Thanet	3,235	3,225	3,390	3,555
Dartford and Gravesham	2,810	2,839	3,037	3,013
Maidstone	2,217	2,388	2,387	2,443
Medway	4,815	4,845	5,016	4,964
Tunbridge Wells	2,130	2,033	2,210	2,165
Notifications of congenital malformations				
South East Kent	49	39	37	65
Canterbury and Thanet	35	37	33	24
Dartford and Gravesham	64	92	75	116
Maidstone	23	33	46	26
Medway	86	79	65	60
Tunbridge Wells	29	36	35	29

Infant Mortality (Kent)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the infant mortality rate in each of the district health authorities in Kent for each of the last ten years.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Infant mortality rate[1] for health areas in Kent 1977-1986

Area of usual residence	*Year*									
	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
South East Kent	8·8	12·5	15·3	10·3	10·4	11·4	7·8	9·5	8·5	8·2
Canterbury and Thanet	13·7	13·5	10·6	9·9	10·1	12·7	10·9	11·5	9·2	8·2
Dartford and Gravesham	10·2	13·0	9·6	13·6	10·2	10·3	[2]5·7	7·8	10·0	8·7
Maidstone	11·0	11·4	12·1	11·5	11·5	[2]7·5	10·5	[2]7·6	8·8	11·1
Medway	12·6	13·1	12·8	11·5	13·5	9·3	13·0	8·7	8·8	7·9
Tunbridge Wells	10·6	9·9	8·8	14·2	12·9	[2]9·3	[2]6·6	[2]8·4	[2]8·2	[2]6·0

[1] Deaths under one year per 1,000 live births. Figures for 1977-80 are for health districts, rather than district health authorities.
[2] Rates calculated from less than 20 events which may affect their reliability.

HIV Infection

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the additional costs, apart from the running of an anonymised screening programme for pregnant women, of establishing a full counselling service for women found to have an HIV infection, assuming a full take-up of the scheme.

Mr. Newton: The cost of such counselling would depend on the number of women found to be infected, and the amount of counselling each needed. We do not have information on which to make estimates on either factor.

Crewe District Health Authority

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* other technical personnel employed by the Crewe district health authority (i) in the latest year for which figures are available and (ii) 10 years previously.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 30 November 1987]:* Such information as is available is shown in the table. I regret that information to this level of detail is not centrally available for 1976. Figures for medical and dental staff exclude senior registrars and consultants whose contracts are held by the regional health authority, and not by the individual district.

National Health Service directly employed staff in post Crewe district health authority at 30 September

Staff	[1] *Whole-time equivalents 1986*
Medical and dental[2]	90
Nursing and midwifery[3]	1,790
Professional and technical (excluding works)	260

Source: DHSS annual censuses of National Health Service medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten whole-time equivalents.
[2] Includes all permanent paid, honourary and locum staff in the hospital and community health services.
[3] Includes agency staff.

Pontefract District Health Authority

Mr. Lofthouse: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the numbers of *(a)* nurses, *(b)* doctors and *(c)* other technical personnel employed

by the Pontefract district health authority (i) in the last year for which figures are available and (ii) 10 years previously.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 30 November 1987]*: Such information as is available is shown in the table. I regret that information to this level of detail is not centrally available for 1976. Figures for medical and dental staff exclude senior registrars and consultants whose contracts are held by the regional health authority, and not by the individual district.

National Health Service staff in post
Pontefract district health authority at 30 September

	[1] *Whole-time equivalents 1986*
Medical and dental[2]	70
Nursing and midwifery[3]	1,100
Professional and technical (excluding works)	190

Source: DHSS annual censuses of National Health Service medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Figures are independently rounded to nearest ten whole-time equivalents.

[2] Includes all permanent paid, honorary and locum staff in the hospital and community health services.

[3] Includes agency staff.

Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the levels of staff, by National Health Service category, working with psychogeriatric patients in the Central Nottinghamshire health authority area for each year from 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

(2) if he will give the levels of staff, by National Health Service category, working with geriatric patients in the Central Nottinghamshire health authority area for each year from 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

(3) if he will give the levels of staff, by National Health Service category, working with mentally handicapped patients in the Central Nottinghamshire health authority area for each year from 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

(4) if he will give the levels of staff, by National Health Service category, working with mentally ill patients in the Central Nottinghamshire health authority area for each year from 1979 to 1987, inclusive.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 15 January 1988]*: The table shows medical and nursing staff employed in the Central Nottinghamshire district health authority, who were recorded as working in the geriatric, mental handicap and mental illness areas of work. Staff working with pschogeriatric patients are included within the total figures for mental illness. Staff within other NHS staff groups cannot be identified as working with specific types of patient.

The table gives staff employed for each year from 1982 to 1986 inclusive. Figures for 1987 are not yet available to this level of detail. Figures prior to 1982 are not available on a comparable basis with those given in the table, due to the effects of the 1982 NHS reorganisation.

NHS Medical and Nursing Staff in Post Central Nottinghamshire District Health Authority

Area of Work	*Whole-Time Equivalent[1] at 30 September Each Year*				
	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Geriatric: Total	288	281	288	304	299
Nursing Staff[2]	282	274	280	296	291
Medical Staff[3]	6	8	8	8	8
Mental Handicap: Total	344	347	345	361	388
Nursing Staff[2]	343	345	344	359	386
Medical Staff[3]	1	2	2	1	2
Mental Illness: Total[4]	77	76	88	90	97
Nursing Staff[2]	71	71	86	89	95
Medical Staff[3]	6	5	2	1	1

Source: DHSS Annual Censuses of NHS Medical and Non Medical Manpower.

[1] All figures are independently rounded to the nearest whole-time equivalent.

[2] Includes Nursing Learners where recorded. Excludes Agency Staff.

[3] Includes permanent paid and honorary medical staff. Excludes Senior Registrars and Consultants where contracts are held by the Regional Health Authority. Excludes Locum Staff.

[4] Includes staff working with Elderly Severely Mentally Infirm patients.

Administration-Beds Ratio

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the present ratio of administration to beds in *(a)* the Northern regional health authority and *(b)* the Sunderland district health authority; and what percentage change has taken place in these two health authorities over the past eight years.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 7 March 1988]*: Such information as is available is shown in the tables. Because of the 1982 NHS reorganisation, figures for district health authorities on a consistent basis are not held centrally for the years prior to 1982. For comparison purposes, figures for the Northern regional health authority are given for the same years as for Sunderland district health authority.

Administrative and clerical staff cover a wide range of health services activity, not just those related to hospital bed provision. Staff in post figures are a "snapshot" on 30 September, whereas average daily available beds are a daily count averaged over a full calendar year. For these reasons any staff in-post/beds ratio would be crude and might be misleading.

National Health Service administrative and clerical staff[1] in post at 30 September

Whole-time equivalents[2]

Year	Northern RHA	Sunderland DHA
1982	6,090	570
1986	6,260	630
Percentage change[3] 1982 to 1986	+2·8	+9·9

Source: DHSS annual census of National Health Service non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes general managers.

[2] Figures have been independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

[3] Percentage calculated on un-rounded figures.

Average daily available beds in National Health Service hospitals

	1982	1986	Percentage change
Northern RHA	24,679	23,239	−5·8
Sunderland DHA	2,338	2,273	−2·8

Over this period the number of patients treated has increased, as follows:

Total in-patients treated

	1982	1986	Percentage change
Northern RHA	376,067	441,095	+17·3
Sunderland DHA	45,559	48,820	+7·2

In-patients

Dr. David Owen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for each year since 1979 the average length of in-patient stay in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland;

(2) what was the average length of stay in acute hospitals for each year since 1979 in England, Wales and Scotland.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 4 March 1988, c. 747]:* I regret that, although a table was mentioned in my previous reply, it had been omitted in error. The table is as follows:

Average length of stay, by sector, National Health Service hospitals in England

Year	Acute	Geriatric	Maternity
1979	9·3	77·5	6·0
1980	8·8	70·1	5·7
1981	8·6	66·1	5·5
1982	8·6	62·3	5·3
1983	8·1	57·1	5·1
1984	7·8	52·6	4·8
1985	7·6	47·8	4·6
1986	7·3	44·8	4·4

TRANSPORT

Bus Services

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the proportion of bus services registered in England *(a)* operating on Sundays and *(b)* operating after 6 pm on weekdays, and how regularly his Department proposes to produce figures on these matters.

Mr. David Mitchell: Information is not available precisely in the form requested. Twenty-two per cent. of bus services registered in England and Wales operate on Sundays; and 17 per cent. operate between 8 pm and 10 pm on weekdays. We do not intend to produce regular figures.

Dual Carriageways (Crash Barriers)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport where in the north-west crash barriers have been installed on dual carriageway central reservations since January 1987.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On the A74 between Carlisle and the Scottish border, the A66 near Skirsgill roundabout, and the A590 and A5092 at Greenodd junction (all in Cumbria) and on the A54 Kelsall bypass in Cheshire.

Faulty Seat Belts

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he is taking steps to monitor the progress of checking faulty seat belts recently called in by Ford (UK) Ltd.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Yes. The Department is monitoring this recall under the recalls code of practice.

Private Cars (Registration)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many private cars are at present registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre, Swansea.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: As at December 1987, 17,421,236 car body-type vehicles were currently licensed and registered at the driver and vehicle licensing centre; 15,251,312 of these were registered in the names of individuals, as distinct from companies.

Energy

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of energy dedicated to transport is used by *(a)* railways and *(b)* road transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: The data requested are published in "Transport Statistics Great Britain 1976-1986", table 1.24 (HMSO), a copy of which is available in the Library.

HM Coastguard

Miss Emma Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement about the work of Her Majesty's Coastguard.

Mr. Channon: Over the past 10 years, the operations of HM Coastguard have been progressively adapted to reflect rapidly advancing technology in radio and telecommunications, together with the greatly strengthened search and rescue helicopter services which are now available. Visual watch from the coast is now generally confined to places and times which present a higher than average risk of an accident, but a radio listening watch is maintained throughout the year covering all waters around the coasts of the United Kingdom out to 40 miles to seaward. The VHF radio sites are being progressively fitted with direction finding equipment which enables the location of a vessel in distress to be determined quickly. In addition, coastguard stations are being equipped with the MF digital selective calling system

to operate with the equipment to be carried on vessels under the International Maritime Organisation's global maritime distress and safety system. The Coastguard also has links with the world wide satellite maritime communication system, and the international satellite beacon detection system.

When the coastguard modernisation plan was started in 1978, the radio listening watch was managed from 28 operations centres which between them controlled about 70 sites. With greater experience of the new system of operations, it has proved possible to control a larger number of aerials from a smaller number of operations centres, and there are at present 24 such centres with aerials at 84 sites. I have now decided that, in the light of technical developments, these operations can be further refined with no detriment to safety, and that it will be possible to control the same number of aerials from 21 centres. I have therefore decided that the maritime rescue sub-centres at Hartland Point, Moray (Peterhead), and at Ramsey on the Isle of Man should be closed in March of next year, after which the responsibility for the aerials which they presently use will be transferred to neighbouring centres. At Peterhead and Hartland Point, a coastguard presence will be maintained by the sector officer and the management of the local auxiliary companies will be unaffected.

In the case of the Isle of Man, the Government have also proposed that responsibility for search and rescue on the coast of the Island should be transferred to the Manx authorities, but radio listening watch and responsibility for search and rescue co-ordination in the waters around the island will be maintained by coastguard stations on the mainland and in Northern Ireland. The special fishermen's open line currently operated from the Moray sub-centre will be transferred to the co-ordination centre nearby at Aberdeen.

I am consulting the National Union of Civil and Public Servants about the staffing implications of these changes: I do not anticipate that redundancies among regular coastguard staff will arise.

I am satisfied that changes will in no way impede the ability of Her Majesty's Coastguard to respond to calls from vessels in distress and to co-ordinate search and rescue operations if they are required.

Concessionary Fares

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the regional transport authorities which operate a concessionary fares scheme for retirement pensioners; and in each case if he will state the age of eligibility for the scheme for *(a)* men and *(b)* women.

Mr. David Mitchell: According to information supplied on a voluntary basis to the Department of Transport in 1986-87, the local authorities in England listed in the table provided concessions, either individually or jointly with other authorities, to women on reaching the age of 60 and to men on reaching the age of 65, subject in some cases to other restrictions as to income and state pension status. Two other local authorities, Bristol city and Tendring district councils made concessions available to both men and women from the age of 65.

Passenger Transport Authorities
Greater Manchester
Merseyside
South Yorkshire
Tyne & Wear
West Midlands
West Yorkshire

County Councils
Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Cheshire
Derbyshire
Durham
East Sussex
Essex
Humberside
Isle of Wight
Kent
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Nottingham
Suffolk
Surrey

District Councils
Adur
Allerdale
Alnwick
Amber Valley
Arun
Ashfield
Aylesbury Vale
Babergh
Barrow-in-Furness
Bath (City)
Basildon
Basingstoke and Deane
Bassetlaw
Berwick Upon Tweed
Beverley
Blaby
Blackburn
Blackpool
Blyth Valley
Bolsover
Booth Ferry
Bournemouth
Bracknell
Braintree
Breckland
Brentwood
Bridgnorth
Brighton
Broadland
Broomsgrove
Broxbourne
Broxtowe
Burnley
Cambridge (City)
Cannock Chase
Canterbury (City)
Carlisle City
Castle Morpeth
Castle Point
Chelmsford
Cheltenham
Cherwell
Chester (City)
Chesterfield
Chester-Le-Street
Chichester
Chiltern
Chorley
Christchurch
Cleethorpes
Colchester
Congleton
Copeland
Cotswold
Craven
Crawley
Crewe and Nantwich
Dacorum
Darlington
Dartford
Daventry
Derby (City)
Derwentside
Dover
Durham (City)
Easington
Eastbourne
East Hampshire
East Hertfordshire
Eastleigh
East Lindsey
East Northants
East Staffordshire
East Yorkshire
Ellesmere Port and Neston
Elmbridge
Epping Forest
Epsom and Ewell
Erewash
Exeter (City)
Fareham
Fenland
Forest Heath
Forest of Dean
Fylde
Gedling
Gillingham
Glanford
Gloucestershire
Gosport
Gravesham
Great Grimsby
Great Yarmouth
Guildford
Halton
Harborough
Harlow
Hart
Hartlepool
Hastings
Havant
Hereford (City)
Hertsmere
High Peak
Hinckley and Bosworth
Holderness
Horsham
Hove
Hyndburn
Ipswich
Kettering
King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Kingston upon Hull
Kingswood
Lancaster (City)
Langbaurgh
Leicester (City)
Leominster
Lewes
Lichfield
Lincoln (City)
Luton
Macclesfield
Maidstone
Maldon
Malvern Hills
Mansfield
Melton
Mendip
Mid Bedfordshire
Middlesbrough
Mid Suffolk
Mid Sussex
Milton Keynes
Newark and Sherwood

Newbury
Newcastle-Under-Lyne
New Forest
Northampton
Northavon
North Bedfordshire
North Devon
North Dorset
North East Derbyshire
North Hertfordshire
North Kesteven
North Norfolk
North Shropshire
North Warwickshire
North West Leicestershire
Norwich (City)
Nottingham (City)
Nuneaton and Bedworth
Oadby and Wigston
Oswestry
Oxford (City)
Pendle
Peterborough (City)
Plymouth (City)
Poole
Portsmouth (City)
Preston
Purbeck
Reading
Redditch
Reigate and Banstead
Restormel
Ribble Valley
Rochester Upon Medway (City)
Rochford
Rossendale
Rother
Rugby
Runneymede
Rushcliffe
Rushmoor
Rutland
Ryedale
St. Albans (City)
St. Edmundsbury
Scunthorpe
Sedgefield
Sedgemoor
Selby
Sevenoaks
Shepway
Shrewsbury and Atcham
Slough
Southampton (City)
South Bedfordshire
South Buckinghamshire
South Cambridgeshire
South Derbyshire
Southend-on-Sea
South Herefordshire
South Kesteven
South Lakeland
South Norfolk
South Northamptonshire
South Oxfordshire
South Ribble
South Somerset
South Staffordshire
Spelthorne
Stafford
Staffordshire Moorlands
Stevenage
Stockton-on-Tees
Stoke-on-Trent (City)
Stroud
Suffolk Coastal
Swale
Tamworth
Tonbridge
Teesdale
Test Valley
Tewkesbury
Thamesdown
Thanet
Three Rivers
Thurrock
Tonbridge and Malling
Torbay
Torridge
Tunbridge Wells
Tyndale
Littlesford
Vale of White Horse
Vale Royal
Wansbeck
Wansdyke
Warrington
Warrick
Watford
Waveney
Waverley
Wealdon
Wear Valley
Wellingborough
Welwyn and Hatfield
West Derbyshire
West Lancashire
West Oxfordshire
Weymouth and Portland
Wimbourne
Winchester (City)
Windsor and Maidenhead
Woking
Workingham
Worcester (City)
Worthing
Wrekin (The)
Wychavon
Wycombe
Wyre
Wyre Forest
York (City)

Departmental Offices (Access)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what provisions his Department has made to improve its offices in Marsham street to make them accessible for disabled people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have been at pains to make these fully accessible to wheelchair users and other people with disabilities.

Facilities in the building include wheelchair-accessible toilets, all lift buttons at wheelchair height and fitted with braille symbols and several conference rooms equipped with induction loops for people with impaired hearing.

The edges of all steps leading up to the building are colour-contrasted to help partially sighted people.

Ramped access to the building from Marsham street has been available for some years. An additional ramp has been installed within the past few weeks to improve access further.

All these facilities are regularly used by both visitors and staff.

Dartford Crossings (Delays)

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will give estimates for the likely delays, in minutes, for heavy goods vehicles carrying hazardous goods travelling north and south through the Dartford tunnel for each of the years 1988, 1989, 1990 1991 and 1992 at currently projected traffic levels;

(2) if he will give estimates for the likely delays, in minutes, for heavy goods vehicles carrying hazardous goods travelling north and south following completion of a new Thames bridge at Dartford.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Vehicles carrying a defined range of hazardous goods — about 3 per cent. of all commercial vehicles — are escorted in convoys through the Dartford tunnels, minimising the danger to the vehicles, to other traffic and to the structures. It is intended to continue this system if Parliament passes the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill, which would transfer the tunnels from Essex and Kent county councils to the Secretary of State.

The new bridge, which the Bill would authorise, is intended to be open early in 1991. It will take all southbound traffic and vehicles carrying hazardous goods in that direction will not then be escorted. Northbound traffic of that kind will continue to be escorted.

Vehicles carrying hazardous goods now wait for five to 10 minutes for an escort. When the bridge opens, the flexibility offered by two northbound tunnels may make it possible to provide more frequent escorts.

At present, vehicles suffer varying delays at certain times when the tunnels cannot cope with the volume of traffic. It is not possible to calculate an average delay due to this cause.

Hunts (Trespass)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the disruption of services, staff and passengers caused by hunts trespassing on British Rail land.

Mr. David Mitchell: One from the hon. Member, none from the public.

Ferries

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of the number of inspections performed by marine inspectors on ferries in port and on board ferries whilst at sea *(a)* in the two years and two months period prior to the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise and *(b)* since that date to 29 February.

Mr. David Mitchell: Separate statistics were not kept for inspections of ferries by marine surveyors prior to the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise. From 6 March 1987 to 29 February 1988, 259 ferries were inspected in port and 114 whilst at sea.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received since 29 July 1987 from ferry owners and others about modifications to ferries built under the 1960 convention and the 1965 (PSC) rules;

(2) what representations he has received since 29 July 1987 from ferry owners and others about competition from non-British companies in the event of changes to the design of ferry hulls under the 1960 convention and the 1965 (PSC) rules.

Mr. David Mitchell: My Department received a number of representations from shipowners, in response to consultative document No. 3 and at meetings with the General Council of British Shipping, about the recommendations in the report of the court of formal investigation into the loss of the Herald of Free Enterprise relating to ferries built under the 1965 rules. In addition, I received a letter from the president of the general council and will place a copy of that letter and of my reply in the Library.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about his plans to adopt the recommendation of the formal investigation into the Herald of Free Enterprise of section 49 concerning ferries built under the 1960 convention and the 1965 (PSC) rules.

Mr. David Mitchell: On 31 July, my Department called for full data on all roll-on/roll-off ferries built before 1980 to be submitted to the Department by 1 April, to enable assessments to be made of how these ships measure up to the current requirements for survivability following collision damage. The Government intend to analyse this information fully, and to reach conclusions upon the recommendations in the report of the court, by the end of September.

Railways

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to maximise the environmental benefits to be gained from the railways as compared to other forms of transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Government offer grants under section 8 of the Railways Act 1974 to facilitate the transfer of freight from road to rail where that would lead to significant environmental gain.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Students (Rating Reform)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to what extent Northern Ireland students attending universities in Great Britain whose parents are already paying rates in Northern Ireland will be required to pay poll tax; and to what extent student grants will be increased accordingly.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax.

Devolved Government

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the views recently expressed by the Prime Minister of the Irish Republic on devolved government for Northern Ireland have been officially conveyed to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I was provided with a copy of the Taoiseach's remarks as a courtesy and I have noted the comments that he made.

Diplock Courts

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress on the adoption of Viscount Colville's recommendation that cases of robbery and aggravated burglary should not be tried in Diplock courts.

Mr. Stanley: During the debate, on 25 February, on the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts (Continuance) Order at column 475, my right hon. Friend said that we certainly want to see as many jury trials as we can and that we shall be considering Lord Colville's suggestion of removing robbery and aggravated burglary from the scheduled list. That consideration is continuing.

Incontinence

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give his latest estimate of the number of males and females in Northern Ireland who suffer from incontinence; if he will express this figure in percentage terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: No reliable estimates are currently available.

Dogs

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registrations have been recorded since the implementation of the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1982.

Mr. Needham: The number of registrations, which deal only with breeding establishments and guard dog kennels, made since the provisions of the Dog Order (Northern Ireland) 1983 became operative on 19 December 1983 are:

	Breeding Establishments	*Guard Dog Kennels*
19 December 1983— 31 December 1984	519	12
1 January 1985— 31 December 1985	420	10
1 January 1986— 31 December 1986	336	10
1 January 1987— 31 December 1987	351	6

Brendan Burns (Warrants)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for East Londonderry of 10 March, *Official Report*, column *304*, if he will indicate in what way the original warrants for Brendan Burns were held to be defective.

Mr. Stanley: I understand that the original warrants were held to be defective because they were issued by a different justice of the peace from the one before whom the "complaint" had been sworn.

Mr. Colin Wallace

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Mr. Colin Wallace was ever personally interviewed by an official inquiry or by other official persons in connection with *(a)* psychological operations, *(b)* an alleged shoot-to-kill policy, *(c)* alleged political disinformation activity and *(d)* any alleged use of forged documentations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 7 March 1988]:* Not as far as I am aware.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 22 March 1988

WALES

Farming Statistics

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated area of land devoted to each predominant farming activity in Wales for the latest available date.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is based on the June 1986 agricultural census and is as follows:

	Area in hectares
Dairying	320,120
Livestock	1,052,298
Cropping	49,087
Pigs and poultry	8,966
Other	67,216
TOTAL	1,497,687

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the estimated annual total income derived from, and value of each predominant farming activity in Wales for the latest available date.

Mr. Peter Walker: Total gross receipts from farming activity in Wales in 1987 (including grants and compensation payments) were provisionally estimated to be £827·7 million; of which milk and milk products represented £274·5 million; cattle fattening and rearing, £199·2 million; sheep, lamb and wool, £159·8 million; and other products, £128·5 million. Other receipts (including grants and compensation payments) were £65·7 million.

Total net income from farming activities in Wales after taking account of all farming costs including feeding stuffs, fertilisers, machinery, veterinary and medicines and so on and after allowing for depreciation, interest payments, rent and labour costs, was £57·3 million.

Agricultural Land

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the average value per hectare of agricultural land in Wales for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Walker: Based on transactions notified to the Inland Revenue, the average value per hectare of agricultural land in Wales for each of the last 10 years was as follows:

Year	*£ per hectare*
1978	1,215
1979	1,655
1980	2,418
1981	2,212
1982	2,032
1983	2,261
1984	2,727
1985	2,467
1986	2,530
1987	2,464

Hotels (Classification)

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, pursuant to his reply of 17 November, *Official Report*, column *466*, what is the latest information on the numbers of establishments accepted for crown hotel classification; how many hotels have failed to meet the specifications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: According to the Wales tourist board the information as at 21 March 1988 is as follows:

Category	*Number*
Listed	130
1 crown	46
2 crowns	305
3 crowns	275
4 crowns	177
5 crowns	31
Awaiting classification	16
Total	980

Since the Wales tourist board introduced classification, 55 hotels have failed to meet the criteria, with 11 establishments having been rejected since 1 April 1987.

The Wales tourist board, following wide consultation, has announced its intention to introduce a qualitative grading scheme for hotel and other serviced accommodation by 1990. The new system is similar to that in operation in Scotland, and will supplement the present crown classification scheme under which establishments are classified by available facilities.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total area of land approved for forestry planting grants in Wales in each of the last four financial years for which figures are available; and what was the figure for the period 1 April 1987 to 31 January 1988.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*Area of land (hectares)*
1984	2,175
1985	1,811
1986	2,466
1987	4,580

The total area of land approved for planting in the period 1 April 1987 to 31 December 1987 was 2,406 hectares. Figures are not yet available for January 1988.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what environmental guidance he will be giving to the Forestry Commission concerning grant approval for new forestry planting in the uplands of Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The existing consultation arrangements, the effectiveness of which will be enhanced by the proposed new grant regime, will continue to balance the environmental and forestry planting objectives in the upland areas of Wales.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

MBFR Talks

150. **Mr. Kirkhope:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what time table the Government envisage for an agreement in the forthcoming conventional arms talks in Vienna; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We hope the Vienna discussions on a mandate for conventional stability negotiations will reach early agreement and that substantive talks will begin later this year.

Panama

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's response to the recent events in Panama.

Mr. Eggar: We have followed closely recent events in Panama. On 2 March, together with our European Community partners, we issued a statement expressing deep concern at developments and appealing to the present rulers of Panama to open the way for internal peace and democracy.

Uranium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the current agreements by *(a)* the European Community Council of Ministers and *(b)* the Commonwealth Heads of State on the import of uranium originating in *(a)* South Africa and *(b)* Namibia for processing and subsequent re-export for use in a third state, in each state party to such agreements.

Mr. Mellor: None specifically. A package of restrictive measures agreed by the European Community Council of Ministers in September 1985 included a prohibition on all new collaboration with South Africa in the nuclear sector. The package of economic measures agreed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in October 1985 included a ban on new contracts for the sale and export of nuclear goods, materials and technology to South Africa.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he possesses concerning the rules currently adopted by the United States Treasury Department pursuant to the comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act 1986 covering the import and safeguarding of South African and Namibian origin uranium *(a)* processed in the United Kingdom before re-export and *(b)* contracted before 1 July 1987.

Mr. Mellor: The United States Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 prohibits the import of South African origin uranium ore or uranium oxide to the United States. However, articles such as uranium hexafluoride, which are produced from uranium ore or uranium oxide, and which the United States customs service determines to have been substantially transformed outside the United States, are not subject to the import prohibition.

PRIME MINISTER

Turkish Prime Minister

Q14. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to meet the Prime Minister of Turkey.

The Prime Minister: I expect to meet the Prime Minister of Turkey when I visit that country next month.

Granborough (Visit)

Q38. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Granborough, near Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Port Glasgow (Visit)

Q154. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Port Glasgow in the near future.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Engagements

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 22 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, and I also attended the launch of the Tidy Britain Group's litter initiative. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the Prime Minister of Kuwait. This evening I hope to have an Audience of Her Majesty The Queen.

Gwynedd

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister what plans she has to pay an official visit to Gwynedd.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

ENVIRONMENT

RNAD, Coulport (Floating Jetty)

151. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if there has been any slippage in the timing of the announcement of the placing of a contract for a floating jetty for the RNAD, Coulport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The tendering period has been extended by six weeks at the request of the tenderers. A decision on the placing of a contract is expected in the late summer.

Canary Wharf

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps have been taken by the London Docklands development corporation to set up the employment monitoring group incorporating the local boroughs and the docklands forum as prescribed in the

master building agreement with the Canary wharf developers Olympia and York; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The master building agreement allows for the monitoring of local employment. Olympia and York Ltd has instituted written procedures which will be contractually enforced on all companies working on Canary wharf to submit, on a monthly basis, returns of people employed locally and people undertaking training from local areas. These will be submitted directly to the LDDC and the London borough of Tower Hamlets. The LDDC will then at regular intervals provide this information to the docklands forum.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many square feet of offices on Canary wharf the master builder agreement between the London Docklands development corporation and Olympia and York commits the developer to build; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: The master building agreement commits the developers of Canary wharf to build 5·4 million sq ft of development in phase 1. The whole development provides in aggregate 12·2 million sq ft of office, retail and hotel floor space. This is a bold and innovative development. It will provide an enormous increase in employment opportunities in docklands, and will add further impetus to the regeneration of docklands as a whole.

Urban Development Corporations (Land)

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the average value of land per acre when invested in each of the currently existing urban development corporations; and at what average price it is currently being sold to developers.

Mr. Trippier: Land has been vested in two of the six English urban development corporations. For information on the London Docklands development corporation I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-East (Mr. Banks) on 8 March at column *118*.

The average value of land vested in Merseyside development corporation was £9,200 per acre. Land prices in the urban development area currently range from £35,000 per acre to approximately £250,000 per acre, depending on size, location planning use and MDC expenditure on site preparation and infrastructure.

Derelict Land

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how much of the 632 hectares of derelict land in Humberside that was thought to justify reclamation during the 1982 survey of derelict land in England has been reclaimed and developed; why the remaining 254 hectares of derelict land in Humberside was not thought to justify reclamation; and where this land is located.

Mr. Trippier: Information on how much of the 632 hectares of derelict land has been reclaimed since April 1982 is not presently available. The 1988 derelict land survey is currently under way and the results are expected to be published next year. The information sought will than be readily available.

The decision that 254 hectares of derelict land did not justify reclamation was based on local authorities' own assessments at that time and would include those sites in remote rural areas which were not sufficiently obtrusive to warrant expenditure and sites for which it would be impracticable to consider reclamation because of technical and—or financial reasons.

The location of the land and the nature of the dereliction is as follows:

Nature of Derelict Land

Hectares

	Spoil Heaps	*Excavation and Pits*	*Military etc. Dereliction*	*Derelict Railway Land*	*Other Forms of Dereliction*	*Total of Derelict Land Not Justifying Reclamation*
Beverley	—	—	—	8	—	8
Boothferry	—	—	—	19	—	19
Cleethorpes	—	—	—	—	—	—
Glanford	—	21	—	—	1	22
Grimsby	—	—	—	9	62	71
Holderness	—	22	—	—	—	22
Kingston Upon Hull	—	—	—	—	—	—
East Yorkshire	—	—	—	112	—	112
Scunthorpe	—	—	—	—	—	—
Humberside	NIL	43	NIL	148	63	254

Urban Development

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* *(a)* the number of projects approved under the urban development grant programme, *(b)* the amount of funds provided, *(c)* the number of jobs created, *(d)* the number of homes built and *(e)* the number of acres of derelict land reused since the programme began in 1982.

Mr. Trippier: Since 1982, a total of 282 urban development grants have been approved. A total of almost £137 million of grant has been offered securing private sector investment of £545 million. The grants approved will lead to 25,700 jobs, the construction of 4,700 new homes, the refurbishment of a further 1,900 homes and the reuse of 1,100 acres of land.

Unified Business Rate

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state *(a)* the estimated increase in the level of rates that businesses in each of the district council areas of Devon will face when unified business rate is introduced and how that increase will be phased in, and *(b)* the estimated effect of the proposed rates revaluation on Devon businesses.

Mr. Howard: A national non-domestic rate (NNDR) set at the 1987-88 average level would have been set at 224·1p in the pound. This compares with the present poundages in the district council areas of Devon as follows:

District Councils	*Pence*	*Percentage difference*
East Devon	207·4	8·0
Exeter	203·3	10·2
North Devon	212·7	5·4
Plymouth	207·0	8·3
South Hams	212·3	5·6
Teignbridge	211·9	5·8
Mid Devon	210·6	6·4
Torbay	220·8	1·5
Torridge	215·6	3·9
West Devon	209·2	7·1

Rates in Devon in the coming year alone are changing by 10 to 12 per cent. as a result of the spending decisions of the local authorities there. Detailed information on the effects of the revaluation is not yet available. Some forecasts suggest it might result in moderate average increases in rateable values in the south-west as a whole, with rather large increases for prime shops and reductions for older factories.

There will be arrangements to phase in changes in the rates bill resulting from revaluation and the NNDR. There will be an annual ceiling on the amount by which rate bills can increase in any one year. We are considering whether a lower ceiling might be set for small businesses. We intend to take a power to allow for further transitional arrangements after 1995.

Rates Increases

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state the total rates increase for businesses for each of the years in the period 1980 to 1987 in each of the district council areas of Devon; and what was the increase in the rate of inflation in each year.

Mr. Chope: Following is the available information:

Annual changes in business rates in Devon percentage

	1980-81 to 1981-82	*1981-82 to 1982-83*	*1982-83 to 1983-84*	*1983-84 to 1984-85*	*1984-85 to 1985-86*	*1985-86 to 1986-87*	*1986-87 to 1987-88*
East Devon	8·6	14·3	5·5	8·0	4·8	18·8	6·3
Exeter	9·3	13·4	5·4	6·2	4·7	18·0	6·7
Mid Devon	11·2	14·4	5·5	8·3	4·8	19·4	6·5
North Devon	8·2	14·8	5·5	8·3	6·2	18·3	6·0
Plymouth	8·7	15·4	5·8	7·6	5·1	17·5	6·6
South Hams	9·1	14·1	5·7	8·0	5·8	18·5	6·8
Teignbridge	8·6	14·0	6·4	8·3	4·8	17·8	6·3
Torbay	6·7	13·4	5·4	9·2	6·5	19·9	8·0
Torridge	8·0	14·7	6·3	8·6	5·9	18·6	7·1
West Devon	9·0	14·6	5·7	7·4	5·6	19·0	7·4
Increase in inflation (RPI index at April)	12·0	9·4	4·0	5·2	6·9	3·0	4·2

Prospect Estate, Hampshire

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of the cost to the borough of Rushmoor in Hampshire to effect the major technical repair programme on the Prospect estate for 1988-89 and subsequent years will be met by subsidy.

Mrs. Roe: In the first place, this will depend upon the cost of the work undertaken by Rushmoor borough council. The Department is considering a request by the council that the subsidy rules be relaxed in this particular case.

Cars (Lead-free Petrol)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to publish regularly updated lists of cars which run on lead-free petrol.

Mr. Moynihan: A list of cars capable of running on unleaded petrol without adjustment was prepared by the Department in September 1987. This list and a simplified chart have been made freely available to interested organisations and inquirers. An updated list will be available by the end of this month. Details for all new cars are now published twice a year in the Department of Transport's "New Car Fuel Consumption" booklet.

Petrol

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what percentage of cars at present on British roads have been designed to operate both on leaded and unleaded petrol;

(2) what percentage of cars cannot run on unleaded petrol due to risk of engine damage;

(3) what information he has on the locations in England and Wales where unleaded petrol may be purchased;

(4) if he will estimate the number of cars that are fitted with three-way catalytic converters;

(5) if he will make a statement on lean-burn engine technology in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: Figures provided by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders on the ability of cars to run on unleaded petrol are as follows:

Per cent.

	R	*U*	*L*	*E*
Vehicles on the road at December 1986	56	—	35	9
New vehicles registered during 1987	57	—	20	23

In the above, *R* denotes refer to dealer for advice on conversion to operate on either unleaded or leaded petrol, *U* denotes unleaded fuel only, *L* denotes leaded fuel only, and *E* denotes either unleaded or leaded fuel may be used without adjustment.

To date in the United Kingdom a few cars used solely for experimental and test purposes have been fitted with three-way catalytic converters. I understand that the first vehicles fitted with three-way catalytic converters to go on sale in the United Kingdom will do so on Wednesday 23 March.

The approach of British and other European car manufacturers to the use of "lean-burn" technology is discussed in volume 4 of the Fellowship of Engineering's "Manual of Acidic Emission Abatement Technologies" prepared for the Department. Copies of this have been placed in the Library of the House. "Lean-burn" technology is one of the principal approaches to meeting the new European exhaust emission limits.

The Department regularly receives a list from the United Kingdom Petroleum Industries Association of petrol stations in the United Kingdom where unleaded petrol may be purchased. A map showing these locations is prepared by the Department and both the list and the map are made freely available to interested organisations and inquirers.

Litter

Dr. Michael Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what new proposals he has to tackle the litter problem: and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: The Government have supported the Tidy Britain Group (formerly the Keep Britain Tidy Group) for many years in its educational and promotional programmes for litter abatement. At my suggestion, the group has rethought its strategy and approach. Over the next 12 months, the group will launch a series of pilot projects across the country which will try out different approaches to demonstrate what can be done and how best it can be done. I shall, with parliamentary approval, increase the grant made by my Department to the group to £1·254 million in 1988-89 to include a contribution to finance the necessary managerial and co-ordinating effort.

The projects, which will be selected by the group, will aim to enlist the support of all sectors of the community — commerce and industry at both national and local levels, local authorities, public utilities and voluntary groups. Each project will incorporate "before" and "after" studies so that their success can be evaluated. Lessons drawn from the pilot projects will be reviewed at the end of the year, to form the basis for the group to develop a major national effort in subsequent years. Litter and public untidiness are neither necessary, nor inevitable. This new experimental initiative by the Tidy Britain Group offers the prospect of a cleaner, tidier Britain in the nineties. To be successful, it will require practical support and commitment from everyone. I am sure that all sections of the House wish to give theirs.

TRANSPORT

Harrogate and Knaresborough Bypass

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has of the completion date of the inquiry into the Harrogate and Knaresborough southern bypass.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The reopened inquiry closed on 19 February. We await the inspector's report.

M1 (Fourth Lane)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to construct a fourth lane on the M1 to act as a feeder into the M25.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We have no such proposals.

M5 (Repairs)

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on how many occasions since 1981 individual lanes of the Bridgwater-Exeter section of the M5 motorway have been closed for repair; whether he will estimate how long each such lane closure lasted, excluding temporary lane closures resulting from road accidents; and what representations he has received since January 1987 regarding any inconvenience caused by such lane closures;

(2) what representations he has received since 1 January 1987 about the condition of the fabric of the M5 motorway between Bridgwater and Exeter; whether it is now in a satisfactory state of repair; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what was the cost of repair works to the M5 motorway between Bridgwater and Exeter in each financial year since 1976; and what was the cost of the original construction of that section of the motorway, in cash prices and in 1987 prices.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Since 1981 contraflow systems have been in operation on seven occasions with a total duration of about 420 days. Records of other lane closures for routine maintenance operations are not kept.

Three representations have been received since 1 January 1987 about the Bridgwater-Exeter length of the M5. These related to the inconvenience caused by the works currently in progress on the Taunton bypass section.

Construction costs of the M5 motorway between Bridgwater (junction 23) and Exeter (junction 30) amounted to £41 million in cash terms. This represents expenditure of the order of £153 million in 1987 prices.

Maintenance costs since 1976 are as follows:

	£ Cash prices 1976	£ Cash prices 1987
1976-77	2,000	5,000
1977-78	3,000	6,000
1978-79	66,000	106,000
1979-80	508,000	574,000
1980-81	1,946,000	2,315,000
1981-82	248,000	315,000
1982-83	1,216,000	1,388,000
1983-84	1,319,000	1,553,000
1984-85	226,000	258,000
1985-86	1,010,000	1,130,000
1986-87	1,370,000	1,460,000
1987-88	2,467,000	2,467,000
Total	10,381,000	11,577,000

Further major maintenance works will be carried out between Huntworth (junction 24) and Taunton (junction 25) starting after Easter and finishing before the spring bank holiday at a cost of about a further £1 million. Additional major maintenance works will be necessary over the next five years as various sections of this length of motorway which will have been in use for between 15 and 20 years will require strengthening or reconstruction.

Channel Tunnel (Contaminated Soil)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why Royal Army Ordnance Corps, Moreton-under-Lugg, Herefordshire, was used to store approximately 3,000 drums of contaminated soil from Channel tunnel workings.

Mr. David Mitchell: It provided a suitable site for the necessary secure temporary storage.

Roads (East Anglia)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has had from Suffolk and Norfolk on roads; what responses he has given; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: My right hon. Friend receives a wide variety of representations both in the context of the statutory procedures for trunk road proposals and otherwise.

There have been continuing representations from various sources seeking improvements to the trunk road network in East Anglia and in particular that the A11-A47 route between M11 and Great Yarmouth should be dualled throughout. Our positive response to this is demonstrated by the 30 schemes in various stages of preparation valued at £177 million for the three East Anglian counties (including Cambridgeshire). Fifteen schemes currently in the planning process or recently completed, and valued at £130 million for the A11-A47 mean some three quarters of that route will be dual carriageway by the early 1990s. Further improvements will be considered as candidates for the programme when they can be justified, subject to the availability of resources.

Road Safety Law

Mr. Simon Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to publish the findings of Dr. North's review of road safety law.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Dr. North has submitted his report on the work of his review over the past three years. Arrangements are being made to get this printed and published so that all concerned and interested can have an opportunity to read it and comment on it.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Enterprise Initiative

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many applications under the enterprise initiative have been received by his Department's regional office in Newcastle.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: DTI/NE Newcastle had received 138 applications for consultancy assistance under the enterprise initiative up to and including 17 March 1988.

Staff (Redeployment)

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many officials of his Department presently employed at the Billingham office in Stockton-on-Tees will be redeployed *(a)* within Cleveland and *(b)* in the northern region.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: We are still considering the DTI's continued presence in Teesside although the bulk of the work at present carried out at the Billingham office will come to an end over the next few years. We will make every effort to redeploy officials presently employed in Billingham to other work or to other offices in the north-east, but I cannot at this stage guarantee redeployment for every official involved.

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many officials will be employed at the new satellite office of his Department to be established in Middlesbrough under the enterprise initiative.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: One official will inaugurate this satellite office but the final staffing level remains to be decided in the light of its emerging role.

Departmental Satellite Office

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster where the new satellite office of his Department in Middlesbrough will be situated.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The satellite office will begin operation in Rede house, Corporation road, Middlesbrough. Its longer-term location will be reviewed in line with its emerging role. It will work closely with others concerned with enterprise in Cleveland.

Departmental Office, Billingham

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next intends to visit his Department's office in Billingham.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I keep in close touch with the work of my regional offices, but I cannot say when it will be possible for me to visit Billingham.

Consumer Protection Act 1987

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list all the relevant goods made the subject of prohibition notices under section 13 of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 and the similar provisions under previous acts.

Mr. Butcher: No prohibition notices have been made under the Consumer Protection Act 1987. Three were made under the Consumer Safety Act 1978:

Automatic Rice Cooker (1983)
Sprint 0·6 TA Scissor Jack (1984)
Expanding Novelties, New Grobots, New Grobugs and New Grobeasts (1985)

Normally suppliers agree to remove hazardous products from the market voluntarily.

Pensions and Benefits

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will call for a report from the chairman of the Post Office on action taken by the Post Office following a letter dated 22 January from the area manager, counters, to sub-postmasters, in response to advice from the Department of Health and Social Security that recipients of pensions and benefits might receive those benefits through a bank or building society; and what expenditure the Post Office plans to incur in this respect.

Mr. Butcher: No; these are commercial matters for the Post Office.

Tin Mining (Cornwall)

Mr. Harris: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the current position of the Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation plc tin mining operations in Cornwall.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: In 1986 the Government agreed to provide to the RTZ Corporation's subsidiary Carnon Consolidated Ltd. an interest-free loan of up to £15 million and guarantees of commercial loans of up to £10 million. This finance was to assist RTZ to undertake a £31 million capital development programme covering the next five years. It was clear at the outset that the prospects for the tin mines in the longer term were heavily dependent on the course of the price of tin.

Because of severely depressed tin prices in the last year — particularly over the last few months — Carnon Consolidated Ltd. is again facing serious difficulties. I understand that today the company is announcing the redundancy of some 200 of the present 720 staff employed in their two mines.

Over the past few weeks, I have had several discussions with RTZ and my officials have been holding detailed talks with RTZ and the management of Carnon Consolidated Ltd. I am pleased to announce that heads of agreement have today been signed between the parties.

Under the heads of agreement, subject to the parties obtaining various consents, RTZ will sell its interest to a new company to be owned 80 per cent. by present management and 20 per cent. on behalf of employees. RTZ has agreed to provide £10 million in interest-free loans to the new company. The Government have agreed to convert our £10 million guarantees to an interest-free loan in addition to our original £15 million loan which will remain in place.

I am satisfied that, although the inherent risks of tin mining remain, this help is justified to secure the continuation of mining and employment in Cornwall. It will enable the main elements of the modernisation programme begun in 1986 to be completed and will save at least 500 jobs in the two mines.

Airbus

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what is his policy towards the proposal made by the European Commission, on behalf of the continental partners of Airbus, that there should be a clause in the civil aviation agreement to permit support to compensate Airbus Industrie for exchange rate movements of the United States dollar, as revealed in the statement before the European Parliament by M de Clercq on 9 March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: The European position described by Commissioner de Clercq is jointly agreed by the Commission and the four Airbus partner Governments. The Airbus partners and the Commission consider that Government supports to the aircraft industry are consistent with our obligations under the GATT agreement on trade in civil aircraft. How and in what circumstances support is given is a matter for individual Governments; in the United Kingdom, exchange rate movements were one of the risk factors taken into account by the Government in agreeing to provide launch aid.

Heating and Cleaning Firms (Accounts)

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on what dates the latest annual return and accounts for IHV Industrial Investments Ltd., Industrial Heating and Ventilation Ltd., MPCS Ltd., and Midland Professional Cleaning Ltd., were received.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: The information requested is as follows:

(a) IHV Industrial Investments Ltd.
Annual return for 1986 received on 5 February 1988.
Accounts for year ending 28 February 1986 received on 5 March 1987.
The Registrar of companies is taking action to secure delivery of the 1987 annual return and accounts for the year ending 28 February 1987.

(b) Industrial Heating and Ventilating Ltd.
Annual return for 1985 received on 9 May 1986.
Accounts for year ending 28 February 1985 received on 13 May 1986.
This company is in the process of being wound up following an order of the High Court dated 28 July 1986.

(c) MPCS Ltd.
Annual return for 1987 received on 12 January 1988.
Accounts for year ending 31 October 1987 received on 11 February 1988.

(d) Midland Professional Cleaning Services Ltd.
No annual returns for accounts have been received from the company since its incorporation on 6 November 1985. The Registrar of Companies is currently considering whether to strike this company from the register of companies using his powers under Section 652 of the Companies Act 1985.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Fishing Regulations (Contravention)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, for each year since 1979, how many

prosecutions have been brought against (a) EEC nationals and (b) non EEC nationals for contraventions of fishing regulations.

Mr. Gummer: The number of prosecutions which have been brought by United Kingdom authorities against (a) EEC nationals and (b) non-EEC nationals for offences connected with fishing, for each year since 1979, is shown in the table.

	(a) EEC nationals	(b) non EEC nationals	Total
1979	37	6	43
1980	75	3	78
1981	79	10	89
1982	48	7	55
1983	65	4	69
1984	63	13	76
1985	68	16	84
1986	61	—	61
1987	87	—	87
Total	583	59	642

Departmental Staff (Location)

Mr. Cran: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside of London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The information requested is as follows:

Deployment of permanent staff

Grade level non-industrial staff	Total staff in grade	Number outside Greater London	Percentage of grade out of London
Grade 1	1	0	—
Grade 2	5	0	—
Grade 3	24	0	—
Grade 4	18	7	39
Grade 5	110	28	25
Grade 6	100	36	36
Grade 7	678	399	59
SEO and equivalent	1,219	981	80
HEO and equivalent	1,674	1,204	72
EO and equivalent	1,809	1,264	70
AO and equivalent	2,070	1,326	64
AA and equivalent	2,201	1,562	71
Non-industrials	9,909	6,807	69
Industrial staff	586	502	86
MAFF totals	10,495	7,309	70

HOME DEPARTMENT

British Visitors' Passports

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restrictions exist on the issuing of British visitors' passports by post offices on Saturdays.

Mr. Renton: British visitor's passports, which are obtainable from main post offices in Great Britain, are not at present issued on Saturdays, but we hope to introduce procedural changes which will enable this restriction to be removed.

Remand Prisoners

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many remand prisoners were being held in London prisons at the latest available date who are (a) over and (b) under 21 years of age;

(2) how many remand prisoners were being held in London prisons at the latest available date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The most recent readily available information is given in the table.

Untried and convicted unsentenced prisoners in Greater London[1] prisons on 31 January 1988: by age and type of prisoner
Number of prisoners[2]

Type of prisoner	Under 21	21 and over	All ages
Untried	161	1,779	1,940
Convicted unsentenced	42	295	337
Total	203	2,074	2,277

[1] Brixton, Feltham, Holloway, Latchmere House, Pentonville, Wandsworth and Wormwood Scrubs.
[2] In addition 734 prisoners from the whole of the South East Prison Department Region, most of whom were on remand, were held in police cells.

Prisons

Mr. Temple-Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether for the longer term planning purposes of prison building, any consideration has been given to, or plans exist for, the sale of sites of Her Majesty's prisons at Cardiff, Reading and Swansea;

(2) what steps would have to be taken to make the proceeds of the sale of existing sites of Her Majesty's prisons for redevelopment purposes available for prison building;

(3) where, under present rules, the proceeds of the sale of prison sites go.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Under long-standing Treasury rules, proceeds from the sale of prison sites would be surrendered to the Consolidated Fund. Changes to these rules would require detailed discussions with my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Whether any such changes to the rules should be proposed is a question to be considered in the first instance by the Prison Building Board; as is the question whether in the longer-term consideration should be given to selling prisons on city centre sites. The seven-member board includes three from the private sector, and its task is to ensure that the prison building programme is delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Prisoners (Crime Statistics)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his Department's policy guidance to police authorities regarding the provision of names of people who admit to crimes and who are serving terms of imprisonment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have issued no guidance to police authorities about the provision of names of people who admit to crimes and who are serving terms of imprisonment. The disclosure of police information is a matter for individual chief officers.

Metropolitan Police

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to authorise increases in Metropolitan police manpower for 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Hurd: Under the four-year programme of police manpower increases announced in May 1986, I said that I would be prepared to authorise annual increases in Metropolitan police manpower of up to 300 in the police establishment and 150 in the civil staff ceiling, subject to my being satisfied that earlier increases had been properly used. In 1986-87, I authorised the first of these increases; and for 1987-88, I authorised the second, with the addition of 100 civil staff brought forward from 1988-89 to help with civilianisation.

I have reviewed manpower in the Metropolitan police. In 1987 officers serving at headquarters were reduced by 344 and the number of officers in areas with direct local responsibility for operations has increased by 752. I have decided to authorise the increase of 300 police officers as envisaged in the programme, and the 50 additional civil staff for 1988-89 not already authorised. These increases will bring the police establishment and civil staff ceiling for 1988-89 to 28,115 and 13,701 respectively.

Magistrates Courts

Mr. Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement concerning openness in the proceedings of magistrates courts and the possible scope for improved access to the records of such proceedings.

Mr. Hurd: My noble and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor and I are concerned about the allegations of insufficient openness in the magistrates courts which have been published recently in the press and the survey by the Association of British Editors on which they are based.

It is a well-established principle that, subject to certain exceptions, the administration of justice in this country should take place in open court, to which the public and the press have access, and that any attempt by anyone to circumvent this principle is to be condemned. My noble and learned Friend and I have arranged for officials of our two Departments to meet representatives of the press, the Magistrates Association and the Justices Clerks Society to discuss relations between magistrates courts and the press relevant to the reporting of proceedings, including access to the records.

I should add that, though I am in no position to comment on them, I understand that the details of the cases mentioned in recent allegations in the press are not accepted as accurate by the clerks of the courts concerned, and that a complaint has been made to the Press Council.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science pursuant to the answer of 4 March, *Official Report*, column *718*, if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department in each grade.

Mrs. Rumbold: The details requested are as follows:

Officials outside London, by grade	*Percentage of total in the grade*
1 Assistant Secretary	2
1 Senior Principal	6
368 HMI	77
8 Principal	7
17 SEO	26
59 HEO	27
127 EO	36
180 AO	43
136 AA	61
55 Personal Secretaries	37
15 Senior data processors	88
39 Data Processors	100
3 Typing managers	25
137 Typists	71
3 Senior messengers	17
15 Messengers	29
2 Porter Messengers	50
1 Senior Paperkeeper	20
11 Paperkeepers	28
1 Office Keeper	25
2 Photoprinters	10
3 Telephonists	50
2 Cleaners	40

ENERGY

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this be not done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Parkinson: Consultative documents vary widely in form and purpose and accordingly each such case needs to be considered on its merits. However, I will bear in mind the hon. Member's suggestion.

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) who will be liable to bear the costs and responsibility for the safe disposal of nuclear waste after privatisation of the electricity supply industry;

(2) whether the decommissioning of nuclear power stations will be the responsibility of the private company which takes them over; and by whom the cost will be borne.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The operators of nuclear power stations will continue to be responsible for decommissioning and management of radioactive wastes, within the guidelines on safety and environmental protection set by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution, and for their costs.

Uranium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if uranium imported to the United Kingdom from Namibia for processing by British Nuclear Fuels Limited and re-export for Chubu Electric Company of Japan, is covered by *(a)* the International Atomic Energy Authority, *(b)* Euratom and *(c)* bilateral safeguards agreements;

(2) if uranium imported from Namibia to the United Kingdom for processing by British Nuclear Fuels Limited and re-export for Tokyo Electric is covered by safeguards;

(3) if uranium imported from South Africa to be processed by British Nuclear Fuels Limited for re-export for Tokyo Electric Company is covered by safeguards;

(4) if uranium imported from South Africa for processing and re-export by British Nuclear Fuels Limited for Taiwan Power Company is covered by *(a)* International Atomic Energy Authority, *(b)* Euratom or *(c)* bilateral safeguards;

(5) if uranium imported from South Africa to the United Kingdom for processing by British Nuclear Fuels Limited and re-export for Kansai Electric Company is under *(a)* International Atomic Energy Authority, *(b)* Euratom or *(c)* bilateral safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer: All civil nuclear material in the United Kingdom is subject to Euratom safeguards and to the terms of the United Kingdom/Euratom/IAEA agreement.

EMPLOYMENT

Youth Training

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps the Government have taken to find young people the YTS scheme of their choice within the time recommended.

Mr. Cope: Since 1983 the Government have guaranteed that all unemployed school leavers would be offered a YTS place by Christmas and each year this guarantee has been effectively met. This achievement reflects great credit on the Manpower Services Commission which is responsible for providing an appropriate range of places in each locality and the careers service which is responsible for placing young people on YTS within the guarantee period.

Labour Statistics

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish what information he has about unemployment by ethnic group at regional and metropolitan county level.

Mr. Lee: Information about unemployment by ethnic group is available from the labour force survey, but the amount of detail that can be provided is limited by small sample numbers. Estimated unemployment rates by ethnic origin for regions and metropolitan counties, averaged over spring 1984, 1985 and 1986, were published in the March 1988 issue of *Employment Gazette* (Table 12 on page 177), a copy of which is in the Library. Later estimates will be published when the final results of the 1987 labour force survey become available later this year.

Unemployed People (Study)

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what new provision he is intending to make to encourage young unemployed people to study whilst unemployed.

Mr. Cope: From September all young people aged 16 and 17 will be guaranteed a place on the youth training scheme if they want one, up to their 18th birthday. All trainees on the scheme take part in off-the-job training and have the opportunity to study for a recognised vocational qualification or a credit towards one.

Hotels (Classification)

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, pursuant to his reply of 19 November, *Official Report*, column *621*, what is the latest information on the numbers of establishments accepted for crown classification in each category including five gold crowns; how many hotels have failed to meet the specification; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: According to figures for England produced by the English tourist board, the information as at 23 February 1988 is as follows:

Category	*Number*
Listed	2,147
1 crown	573
2 crowns	3,009
3 crowns	1,801
4 crowns	1,215
5 crowns	251
Total	8,996

Six of the 5-crown graded hotels have also been given the five gold crown award. Of those establishments which have applied, 125 have failed to meet the criteria for classification.

European Social Fund

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) if he will itemise, by applicant organisation or body, the source of public authority matching funds, including local authority spending powers where relevant, for European social fund schemes based in Greater London which have been submitted to the European Commission to operate in 1988;

(2) if he will itemise by recipient organisation or body, the source of public authority matching funds, including local authority spending powers where relevant, for European social fund supported projects based in Greater London in 1987.

Mr. Cope: I regret that I cannot provide the information that the hon. Member requests. In submitting applications for European social fund assistance to the European Commission through my Department, organisations are required to provide details some of which they may understandably regard as confidential. It would be wrong of me to publish these without their prior approval.

SCOTLAND

Education and Culture (European Integration)

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what action he has taken to implement the a la carte co-operation proposed in the document entitled "European Integration in Education and Culture," which appears in bulletin EC 3-1987, page 111; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The document to which the hon. Member refers was circulated by the French Prime Minister to his European counterparts last March, but no conclusion has yet been reached on its implementation.

We shall continue to participate in the Government's overall consideration of the proposals for a la carte co-operation contained in the document.

Nursing Staff

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on funding for schemes to allow nursing staff to update their skills to enable them to return to work.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Former nursing staff can update their skills to enable them to return to clinical practice in the NHS through attending "Back to Nursing" courses, or through participation in nurse banks which offer them temporary postings. These schemes are the responsibility of, and are funded by, individual health boards.

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the shortfall in nursing staff in each health board in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Management information of this kind is not held centrally.

Rating Reform

Mr. Doran: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest estimate of the level of community charge for each *(a)* regional, *(b)* islands and *(c)* district council in Scotland taking account of proposed rates levels for the financial year 1988-89.

Mr. Lang: The table shows the estimated levels of community charge which would be necessary to replace domestic rate income in 1988-89. The figures may need to be adjusted if in due course my right hon. and learned Friend proposes a rate reduction in relation to any authority and this is approved by Parliament. They are provisional figures calculated on the same basis as those produced by the Scottish Office in respect of earlier years and reflect the latest available information on rate poundages for 1988-89. They do not represent forecasts of the level of community charge when the new system is introduced in 1989-90 and take no account of the proposals for grant safety nets which are under discussion at present between the Scottish Office and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

Authority	*District*	*Region (including community water charge)*	*Total*
Borders Region	36	172	208
Berwickshire	33	172	205
Ettrick and Lauderdale	35	172	207
Roxburgh	39	172	211
Tweeddale	33	172	205
Central Region	61	185	246
Clackmannan	59	185	245
Falkirk	48	185	233
Stirling	84	185	270
Dumfries and Galloway Region	37	172	209
Annandale and Eskdale	38	172	210
Nithsdale	38	172	210
Stewartry	38	172	210
Wigtown	31	172	203
Fife Region	50	205	255
Dunfermline	42	205	247
Kirkcaldy	53	205	258
North East Fife	55	205	261
Grampian Region	41	170	211
Aberdeen City	50	170	220
Banff and Buchan	38	170	208
Gordon	36	170	206
Kincardine and Deeside	31	170	201
Moray	31	170	201
Highland Region	33	172	205
Badenoch and Strathspey	29	172	201
Caithness	30	172	202

Authority	District	Region (including community water charge)	Total
Inverness	32	172	204
Lochaber	42	172	214
Nairn	28	172	200
Ross and Cromarty	37	172	209
Skye and Lochalsh	28	172	200
Sutherland	23	172	195
Lothian Region	64	265	329
East Lothian	67	265	331
Edinburgh City	69	265	334
Midlothian	58	265	323
West Lothian	52	265	316
Strathclyde Region	67	209	276
Argyll and Bute	65	209	274
Bearsden and Milngavie	74	209	283
Clydebank	58	209	267
Clydesdale	55	209	263
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	57	209	266
Cumnock and Doon Valley	48	209	256
Cunninghame	71	209	279
Dumbarton	73	209	281
East Kilbride	52	209	261
Eastwood	55	209	264
Glasgow City	82	209	291
Hamilton	63	209	272
Inverclyde	54	209	263
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	59	209	268
Kyle and Carrick	65	209	274
Monklands	58	209	266
Motherwell	52	209	261
Renfrew	64	209	273
Strathkelvin	58	209	266
Tayside Region	60	200	260
Angus	45	200	245
Dundee City	75	200	275
Perth and Kinross	49	200	249
Orkney Islands Area	—	107	107
Shetland Islands Area	—	201	201
Western Isles Islands Area	—	125	125
SCOTLAND	58	208	266

Notes:
1. Figures for regions are averages of their component districts; the figures for Scotland as a whole are an average of all regions and islands.
2. The total charge may not be the sum of the constituent parts, as a result of rounding.
3. The figures are based on rate poundages for 1988-89, the Registrar-General's estimate of persons 18 plus at June 1986, and domestic rateable values at April 1987.

Education

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many children received primary school education in *(a)* Fife and *(b)* north-east Fife in the last five years for which information is available;

(2) how many children have received nursery school education in *(a)* Fife and *(b)* north-east Fife in the last five years for which information is available;

(3) how many children received secondary school education in *(a)* Fife and *(b)* north-east Fife in the last five years for which information is available;

(4) how many school teachers have been employed in *(a)* Fife and *(b)* north-east Fife in (i) primary schools, (ii) secondary schools and (iii) nursery schools in the last five years for which information is available.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested in respect of education authority schools in Fife is set out in the table. Information for Fife, North-East can be obtained from Fife regional council.

The figures for 1987 are provisional. Teacher numbers have been provided in full-time equivalent terms.

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Primary					
Pupils	31,388	31,005	31,105	30,602	30,554
Teachers	1,579·3	1545·0	1,541·4	1,516·0	1,516·1
Secondary					
Pupils	26,194	25,208	24,371	23,606	22,469
Teachers	1,814·3	1,784·5	1,736·9	1,742·0	1,686·6

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1987
Nursery					
Pupils	3,171	3,499	3,850	4,056	4,279
Teachers	58·4	60·6	77·2	79·0	100·3

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the rates of grant will be under the new forestry grant arrangements announced in the Budget statement; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The rates of grant will be announced later this week.

Training Programmes

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is satisfied with the adequacy of the training programmes available in Greenock and Port Glasgow, with particular reference to whether the unemployed persons will be able to respond to new job opportunities, especially with regard to the Inverclyde initiative.

Mr. Lang: Yes. The full range of Manpower Services Commission training and employment measures is available in Greenock and Port Glasgow and, together with other training initiatives supported by the Scottish Development Agency and the Inverclyde Enterprise Trust, should greatly enhance the job prospects of local unemployed people in the more buoyant labour market now prevailing.

Labour Statistics

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the latest unemployment figures for Greenock and Port Glasgow; and if he will break these figures down by district council ward.

Mr. Lang: On 11 February 1988 (the latest date for which information is available) the number of unemployed claimants in each electoral ward of the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency was as shown in the table.

Ward name	*Unemployed claimants*
Port Glasgow East	760
Port Glasgow South	664
Clune Brae	583
Port Glasgow West	381
Gibshill	735
Blairmore	434
Bellville	521
Greenock East Central	665
Broomhill	329
Gateside	367
Bow	537
Larkfield	517
Upper Larkfield	566
Greenock South	484
Greenock West Central	315
Greenock West End	191
Costituency total	8,049

This informaton is available in the Library.

Hotels (Classification)

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his reply of 17 November, *Official Report*, column *540*, what is the latest information or the numbers of establishments accepted for crown hotel classification; how many hotels have failed to meet the specifications; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The figures given in my answer of 17 November, at columns *539-40*, represented the final results of the classification and grading inspections carried out in 1987. The Scottish tourist board has commenced this year's round of inspections, and results for 1988 will be available in the autumn.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Scotland) area of land referred to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Scotland) by the Forestry Commission, in total and for each regional conservancy in Scotland, under forestry grant consultation procedures during the period 1 April 1987 to 31 January 1988; and if he will list in each case the area of land for which the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (Scotland) advised it was *(a)* acceptable to award planting grant approval and *(b)* inappropriate to award grant on agricultural grounds.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: During the period 1 April 1987 to 31 January 1988, a total of 25,616 hectares of land was referred to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland by the Forestry Commission under the procedures for consultation on forestry grant scheme applications. The Department advised that it had no objections on agricultural grounds to applications affecting 23,179 hectares and notified the Forestry Commission of agricultural objections to 2,437 hectares.

Within Scotland, this information is collected for each DAFS area office rather than by regional conservancy. The statistics for the period 1 April 1987 to 31 January 1988 are as set out:

Area Office	*Area referred (in hectares)*	*Area cleared (in hectares)*	*Area not cleared (in hectares)*
Aberdeen	211	211	—
Ayr	1,432	1,377	55
Dumfries	2,794	1,890	904
Dundee	325	325	—
Edinburgh	207	207	—
Galashiels	3,755	2,876	879
Glasgow	537	537	—
Keith	2,483	2,309	174
Kirkwall	—	—	—
Inverness	2,529	2,476	53
Oban	3,266	2,970	296
Perth	2,014	2,008	6
Portree	162	162	—
Stirling	584	514	70
Thurso	5,317	5,317	—
Total	25,616	23,179	2,437

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what environmental guidance he will be giving to the Forestry Commission concerning grant approval for new planting in the uplands and highlands of Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 17 March at columns *670-71*.

Training Programmes

Mr. Tom Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is satisfied with the adequacy of the training programmes available in Monklands, with particular reference to whether unemployed persons will be able to respond to new job opportunities, especially in respect of the Coatbridge project.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* Yes. The full range of Manpower Services Commission training and employment measures is available in the Monklands area and, together with other training initiatives supported by the Scottish Development Agency and the Monklands enterprise trust, should greatly enhance the job prospects of local unemployed people in the more buoyant labour market now prevailing.

Drink-Driving Accidents

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are, for each year since 1975, the figures for death caused by drink and driving accidents in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 1 February 1988]:* Information is not available for the years 1975-78. For the years for which it is available, the figures can be expressed only as a range because the information is incomplete. From 1979 to 1985, the latest year for which figures are available, the estimated numbers of death in accidents in which at least one driver was, or was reckoned to have been, over the legal limit are set out in the table:

	Deaths associated with drunk driving			
	Minimum	*Maximum*	*All road deaths aged 16 and over*	*All road deaths*
1979	199	222	725	810
1980	195	218	635	700
1981	190	204	616	677
1982	165	178	635	701
1983	129	141	551	624
1984	126	139	519	599
1985	111	116	535	602

It is encouraging that the estimated numbers of such deaths have diminished over the period, both absolutely and as a proportion both of road deaths aged 16 and over and of all road deaths. I hope, however, that we shall all play our part in reducing the numbers much further.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Arms Finds

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what evidence he has of arms found in Ireland having come via Libya;

(2) what evidence he has of the countries of origin of the arms recently found in Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I understand that weapons and explosives recently recovered in Ireland were manufactured in a number of countries including the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the United States of America, Belgium, France, Great Britain, the Irish Republic, Norway and Portugal. There is evidence that some of the arms were shipped to Ireland from Libya and investigations are continuing.

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this not be done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Tom King: I do not believe that such a policy would be appropriate for the Northern Ireland Office or Northern Ireland departments, but respondents to consultative documents may of course make their views public, if they wish to do so.

RUC (Chief Constable)

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what subjects he expects to discuss at his next meeting with the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Stanley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 25 February at columns *335-36*.

Terrorism

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received

concerning the implications for security in Northern Ireland of the joint co-ordinated enactment by different countries of similar laws on terrorism; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: I have received no such representations, but the Government are strongly committed to the development of international co-operation in the fight against terrorism and recognise the importance of such co-operation in defeating the terrorist in Northern Ireland.

Cross-border Security

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on cross-border security arrangements.

Mr. Tom King: Both this Government and the Irish Government are committed to the development of security co-operation and are at one in their determination to root out terrorism and the evil that it brings.

Practical security co-operation is primarily a matter for the two police forces involved, the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Garda Siochana, supported as necessary by members of the armed forces. We shall continue to look for ways of developing further the co-operation that already exists.

Police Complaints Commission

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he had consultations with representatives of the Government of the Irish Republic before he announced the names of members of the Independent Commission for Police Complaints for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 4 March 1988]*: The Irish Government put forward proposals on the composition of the Independent Commission for Police Complaints for Northern Ireland, in accordance with article 6 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Murder Convictions

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners were convicted of murder as a scheduled offence in Northern Ireland aged (i) 16 years, (ii) 17 years, (iii) 18 years, (iv) 19 years, (v) 20 years and (vi) 21 years of age since 1971; to which community they belonged; and what has been their average sentence served.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 17 March 1988]*: The information requested is set out in the table:

Persons convicted of scheduled murder and sentenced to life/pleasure between the ages of 16 and 21 years

Year/Age	Loyalist					Republican					Others					Total
	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	
1971	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
1972	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	5
1973	—	1	2	—	—	2	2	4	1	2	—	1	—	—	—	15
1974	1	2	3	5	3	4	1	2	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	25
1975	2	6	7	6	2	2	7	5	2	1	—	—	3	1	—	44
1976	3	2	2	—	2	5	6	4	6	6	—	—	—	2	1	39
1977	1	1	2	3	3	3	2	6	7	2	—	—	—	—	—	30
1978	—	—	3	1	—	2	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	12
1979	—	1	—	1	2	—	2	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	9
1980	—	—	2	2	3	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	10
1981	—	2	—	1	—	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
1982	—	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	9
1983	—	—	1	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	5
1984	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	2	—	—	1	—	—	—	7
1985	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	4
1986	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	3
1987	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
1988	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	7	15	22	21	27	18	21	30	25	25	—	2	5	5	2	225
Average years served	10·11	10·67	11·26	11·04	8·07	11·65	11·20	11·34	9·88	9·37	—	7·08	8·73	9·7	9·91	—

Notes:

1. This table does not include 7 prisoners who were under 16 years at date of crime.
2. The classifications in the table are based on the believed paramilitary affiliations of the prisoners at the time of their arrest.
3. The average years served takes account of the periods served *(a)* by those who have been released on licence and *(b)* those still in custody.

Prisoners (Sentences)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners sentenced to be held at the Secretary of State's pleasure *(a)* have been released and *(b)* have been released and were subsequently convicted of scheduled offences committed after their release, since 1970, showing, in each case, whether they were Republican or Loyalist prisoners and their average length of time served.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 17 March 1988]*: The information is set out in the table. No prisoner released on licence from detention during the pleasure of the Secretary of State has been subsequently convicted of a scheduled offence.

Persons serving pleasure released on licence since 1970

Year	Loyalist	Republican	Others	Totals
1981	—	1	—	1
1982	—	—	1	1

Year	Loyalist	Republican	Others	Totals
1983	2	—	—	2
1984		—	—	—
1985	5	2	—	7
1986	5	5	—	10
1987	4	7	—	11
1988 (to date)	2		—	2
Totals	18	15	1	34
Average years served	10·56	10·47	10·33	—

Note: The classifications in the table are based on the believed paramilitary affiliation of the prisoners at the time of their arrest.
[1] Released on medical grounds.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many requests he has received since 22 February for the reconsidering of their sentences from *(a)* prisoners held in Northern Ireland at the Secretary of State's pleasure; and *(b)* other prisoners indicating (i) whether they were Loyalist or Republican prisoners, (ii) the age at which the offenders were committed, (iii) the nature of the offences for which they were sentenced and (iv) the number of cases he has re-examined.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 17 March 1988]*: Since 22 February one Republican prisoner serving life for murder committed when he was 18 has petitioned asking for the date fixed for the review of his sentence by the life sentence review board to be brought forward. The request has been refused. There have been nine other cases during the period in which representations have been made on behalf of life or pleasure prisoners.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of the persons recommended to him by the Government of the Irish Republic under article 6 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, indicating how many so recommended were resident in *(a)* the Irish Republic, and *(b)* Northern Ireland; how many and whom he has appointed; and to which positions.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 10 March 1988]*: I gave part of the information sought in my reply of 9 March to the hon. Member for Upper Bann (Mr. McCusker) at column *230*.

The names of persons willing to serve on public bodies, including persons suggested through the Anglo-Irish Secretariat, are held in a central register. Persons are selected from this register because of their suitability for the proposed appointment and the contribution which they are likely to make to the work of the public body concerned. It is not my practice to publish details of individuals so appointed.

All the persons suggested through the Anglo-Irish Secretariat are resident in Northern Ireland. I do, of course, welcome recommendations from all organisations and individuals, including elected members, in Northern Ireland for people of ability who could serve on public bodies.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Nursing Care (Support)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the total level of public financial support for *(a)* private residential and *(b)* private nursing care for each year since 1979.

Mrs. Currie: Information in the form requested is not held centrally. Following is the available expenditure information derived from annual accounts and financial returns submitted to the Department by health authorities and local authorities in England, respectively.

In addition, people in homes may be able to get help with fees through supplementary benefit. Information on the amount of total expenditure on supplementary benefit payments to people in residential care and nursing homes was given in my reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 17 December 1987 at column *704*.

	Health authorities[1] expenditure with contractual hospitals and homes £ million	Local authorities[2] expenditure on private residential care £ million
1979-80	22·3	47·3
1980-81	27·5	58·9
1981-82	30·9	70·0
1982-83	33·5	79·6
1983-84	36·4	86·8
1984-85	39·9	89·8
1985-86	43·2	65·8
1986-87	45·2	not yet available

[1] Total hospital and community health services expenditure with contractual hospitals and homes (including contracts with voluntary organisations, etc.).
[2] Net expenditure on all private residential care incurred under personal social services programmes.

Trent Regional Health Authority (Administrators)

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the wage and salary bill for the people employed by Trent regional health authority on administrative duties in each year since 1982.

Mr. Newton: Following is information for the total salaries and wages costs of all staff within the purview of the administrative and clerical Whitley Council (for example, chief ambulance officers, computer and finance staff, legal advisers, supplies managers, storekeeper clerks, and so on) derived specifically from the annual accounts of the Trent regional health authority.

All regional health authorities provide specialist support functions for their regions as a whole and the Trent regional health authority also directly manages certain ambulance and blood transfusion services which include elements of staff exemplified above. For more detailed information my hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of the Trent regional health authority who may be able to assist.

	£000
1982-83	4,910
1983-84	7,141
1984-85	7,868
1985-86	7,598
1986-87	8,896

Notes:

1. The figures include the cost of employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions and the costs of non-National Health Service (agency, etc.) staff. The costs of general managers are also included from 1985-86.
2. The figures exclude all expenditure by district health authorities within the Trent region.

Eye Treatment

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons are presently on waiting lists for eye treatment in *(a)* the Northern regional health authority and *(b)* Sunderland district health authority.

Mr. Newton: At 31 March 1987, the latest date for which information is available centrally, there were 3,735 cases on Northern region in-patient waiting list for the ophthalmology specialty. The corresponding figure for Sunderland district health authority was 918.

Fuel Costs

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has, in the light of the mild winter and savings in the cost of special cold weather payments, to reduce domestic fuel costs for those persons aged over 80 years on income support.

Mr. Scott: This winter exceptionally cold weather payments have been made available at 78 DHSS local offices in England, Scotland and Wales. Like all previous severe weather schemes, the current arrangements are intended to provide extra help with heating costs only during periods of exceptionally cold weather. The long-term cost of such schemes has always been estimated on this basis.

The levels of fuel prices are a matter for the fuel industries concerned. However, income support claimants will get a weekly benefit out of which to meet all their day-to-day expenses, including fuel costs. Premiums will be available to certain groups with particular needs. All pensioners will be entitled to a premium, but those aged 80 or over will receive a higher rate.

Dystonia

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what evidence he has on the extent to which dystonia is transmitted *(a)* by inheritance and *(b)* by other identifiable causes;

(2) what is the incidence of dystonia in the United Kingdom; and if he will list the hospitals which offer treatment for this disability;

(3) whether he will assist with funding for the Dystonia Society.

Mrs. Currie: Dystonia is the medical name given to prolonged spasms of muscle contraction affecting various parts of the body. Often it has no known cause. It can be a symptom of various underlying neurological disorders. We do not collect statistics on the incidence or causes of this condition and have no plans to do so. It is, however, known to be relatively uncommon. Appropriate treatment is available in many hospitals; where neurosurgical treatment is necessary, this is provided in specialist centres.

We are not currently assisting with the funding of the Dystonia Society, but the organisation could be among those considered for a grant next year under section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968.

White Hart Training Centre, Harrogate

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many students have been taken through courses at the White Hart training centre in Harrogate; at what cost per student-course type; and if he has any comparable figures for private college training.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information is not available in the form requested. However, information supplied by the NHS training authority based on figures available for the past two and a half years shows an annual average of 378 separate courses at the White Hart training centre consisting of 13,188 trainee days or 35 trainees per course. The average cost is £1,423 per course or £41 per trainee day. Private institutions used by the authority to provide similar management education and development courses to those provided at the training centre charge the authority around £200 per trainee day.

Children's Work

Mr. Archer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in milk rounds, *(b)* the extent to which such work begins before 7 am and *(c)* the proportion of such children in possession of a permit along the lines recommended in departmental guidance in 1976;

(2) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in the regular delivery of newspapers or other similar material, *(b)* the extent to which such work begins before 7 am and *(c)* the proportion of such children in possession of a permit along the lines recommended in departmental guidance in 1976;

(3) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in commercial kitchens, *(b)* the extent to which such work ends after 7 pm and *(c)* the proportion of such children in possession of a permit along the lines recommended in departmental guidance in 1976;

(4) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in the picking or preparation of fruit or vegetables, *(b)* the extent to which such work exceeds 25 hours per week, and *(c)* the proportion of such children in possession of a work permit along the lines recommended in departmental guidance in 1976;

(5) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in outwork, and *(b)* the proportion of such children in possession of a permit along the lines recommended in departmental guidance in 1976;

(6) what information is available to his Department on *(a)* the number of children engaged in the retail sector, *(b)* the extent to which such work ends after 7 pm, *(c)* the extent to which the total hours worked per day exceeds that recommended in departmental guidance in 1976 and *(d)* the proportion of such children in possession of a permit along the lines in that guidance;

(7) if he has any plans to introduce legislation to provide for the right of entry of education welfare officers to premises where they have reason to believe that children are working illegally;

(8) if he has any plans to seek to amend section 18 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 with respect to

(a) the minimum permitted age of employment, *(b)* the earliest or latest hours of the day or *(c)* the total number of hours on school days or Sundays on which such employment is permitted.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information is not available on the number of children engaged in specific occupations, nor on the number who hold permits (usually known as employment cards). Nearly all local authority byelaws provide for the issue of permits as recommended in departmental guidance of 1976.

The Children and Young Persons Act 1933 prohibits the employment of children over 13 before 7 am or after 7 pm and for more than two hours on any school day or Sunday. The 1933 Act and the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920 restrict the occupations in which children may be engaged. The Department's guidance issued in 1976 recommends that further restrictions on hours and occupations be provided for in local authority byelaws made under the 1933 Act including, for example, the prohibition of work in commercial kitchens and the restriction of employment of children under 15 to no more than 25 hours during school holidays.

The overriding aim of the legislation and byelaws is that children may only be employed to the extent that their health, education and general welfare do not suffer. Local authorities have powers, exercised through the education welfare service, to enforce the byelaws; and under section 59 of the Education Act 1944 to prohibit and restrict the employment of any child.

Education welfare officers (EWOs) can warn and bring charges against employers if the Education Act and bye-laws are infringed; section 59 of the 1944 Act empowers local education authorities to require information from parents and employers. If an EWO suspects that a child is employed in premises to which the EWO has no right of entry, in an occupation which is prohibited under the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920, he can alert the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). The HSE has powers to take immediate action if a child is found to be working illegally in any industrial undertaking. EWOs also liaise where appropriate with social services departments which have statutory duties and powers to investigate circumstances in which children may be at risk.

We consider that the safeguards which exist in legislation and byelaws to protect children from exploitation at work are generally adequate; we have no plans to amend the legislation.

Nurses (Grading)

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has for the funding of a new clinical grading structure for nursing staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The nurses' pay review body has been asked to recommend rates of pay for the new clinical grading structure as part of its recommendations on nurses' pay from 1 April 1988. The Government will await the report of this body before taking a decision on funding.

Invalid Care Allowance

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the number of carers of elderly, sick or disabled people currently in receipt of the invalid care allowance.

Mr. Scott: About 95,000 at 14 March 1988.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to increase the value of the invalid care allowance.

Mr. Scott: We are pledged to maintain the value of invalid care allowance in line with the movement of prices and, since coming to office in 1979, we have more than done so.

Oral Tobaccos

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether long cut oral tobacco is exempt from the proposed ban on certain oral tobaccos under section 11(5) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987;

(2) which British tobacco manufacturers will be affected by the proposed ban on certain oral tobaccos under section 11(5) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987.

Mrs. Currie: Long cut oral tobaccos vary in composition. A particular brand would be exempt only if subject to duty under the Tobacco Products Duty Act 1979. The Department wrote to British tobacco manufacturers, amongst others, on 26 February to inform them of the Government's proposals to ban the supply of certain oral tobacco products and to seek their representations on the matter. We shall not be in a position to say precisely which companies would be affected until those representations have been received.

Dental Charges

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many free dental examinations were provided under the National Health Service in the most recent year for which figures are available; what percentage of these will, under the new arrangements for charging, continue to be free; and what estimate has been made of the likely percentage reduction in examinations among those who will now be required to pay.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986-87, the latest year for which figures are available, the number of free examinations provided under the general dental service in England was 29·043 million. If the examinations had been chargeable, we estimate that 47 per cent. would have been provided free of charge to exempt patients and to patients for whom the charge would have been remitted on grounds of low income. We see no reason to expect any reduction in the number of examinations provided as a result of the proposed charge.

Optical, Prescription and Dental Charges

Mr. Millan: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the optical charges, prescription charges and dental charges operative from 1 April with the comparable figures in each case for May 1979.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is as follows:

OPTICAL CHARGES

There have been no charges under the general ophthalmic service since NHS spectacles were replaced by the optical voucher scheme from 1 July 1986. Details of increased voucher values with effect from 1 April 1988 were circulated in the *Official Report*, 29 February at column *661*. Lens charges as at May 1979, in the general ophthalmic and hospital eye service, were as follows:

	£ per lens
Single vision lens	2·90
Bifocal lens	5·50
Lens of any other description	6·15

The only fixed charges in the hospital eye service at present are maximum charges for lenses, and a charge for contact lenses. The rates from 1 April 1988 are as follows:

	£ per pair
Maximum charge for single vision lenses	32·00
Maximum charge for other spectacle lenses	52·00
Contact lens charge	25·00

Item	*May 1979* £	*April 1988* £
Prescription charges		
item charge	00·20	2·60
season ticket:		
4 monthly	—	13·50
6 monthly	2·00	—
annual	3·50	37·50
Dental charges		
metal based denture with		
1-3 teeth	15·00	64·00
4-8 teeth	16·00	69·00
more than 8 teeth	17·00	71·00
more than one metal based denture	30·00	—
synthetic resin based denture having		
1-3 teeth	10·00	26·00
4-8 teeth	11·00	34·00
more than 8 teeth	12·00	40·00
synthetic resin based full upper and lower dentures	20·00	59·00
maximum charge for other combination of synthetic resin based dentures	20·00	62·00
bridges	as for metal dentures	65·00 (acid etch retained) 150·00 (other)
crowns, inlays, pinlays	10·00	75 per cent. of cost
other treatment	full cost up to five pounds	75 per cent. of cost
maximum charge for course of treatment	30·00	150·00

Social Security Regulations

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to amend social security regulations to prevent future abuse on the lines of that among shift workers at the Pirelli plant in Carlisle who were in receipt of full unemployment benefit while doing shift work at weekends.

Mr. Portillo: We are actively looking at how to amend the rules.

Mr. J. Ashley French (Pension)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why Mr. John Ashley French, of 6, Brecon Flats, Salisbury avenue, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, has not received his retirement pension in respect of his national insurance No. HA/31/96/36/D, despite having returned the appropriate forms to the Newcastle office in September 1987.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* Payment of retirement pension to Mr. French commenced on 7 March and arrears have been paid back to the date of his retirement on 10 January 1988. I regret that difficulties in determining Mr. French's correct entitlement led to delay in the award of retirement pension.

NHS (Growth)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) following the announcement of additional money to the National Health Service on 16 December 1987, what he now expects the real growth in National Health Service resources to be during the current year;

(2) if he will detail the calculations supporting his statement, *Official Report*, 16 December 1987, column 1102, that National Health Service expenditure will grow by 3 per cent. in 1988-89.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 11 January 1988]:* Including the additional resources I announced on 16 December 1987, gross expenditure on the NHS in England in 1987-88 is now expected to be some 5·5 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1986-87. The figure, of course, also includes other substantial additional resources made available during the course of the year, including those to assist in meeting the costs of review body awards and of extra pressures arising from HIV infection and AIDS. For 1988-89, the planning total in the recent White Paper represents a further increase of over 1 per cent. in real terms, after allowing for forecast general inflation of 4·25 per cent. during the year.

Expenditure on the hospital and community health services, to which my statement on 16 December 1987 was directed, was at that time expected to rise in England (on the figures given in the Autumn Statement) from £11,382 million in 1987-88 to £12,091 million—an increase in real terms of 1·7 per cent., after allowing for general inflation. While the extra £75 million for 1987-88 announced on 16 December together with the funds provided to reflect a change in health authorities carry forward arrangements, has the effect of reducing this percentage increase to about 1 per cent., in either case, account must be taken of the benefit of cash-releasing cost improvements and income generation, expected to be equivalent to a further real terms increase in available resources approaching 1·5 per cent., and of other improvements in efficiency contributing to the effective availability of resources for patient care.

Abortion

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by regional health authority of the numbers and percentages of abortions performed by each commonly used technique on pregnancies of 18 weeks or more gestation in the latest year for which figures are available.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 to resident women: Regional Health Authority of usual residence, gestation 18 completed weeks and over, procedure. Numbers and percentages 1986

Procedure	Regional Health Authority of usual residence									
	Northern		Yorkshire		Trent		East Anglian		North West Thames	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Hysterotomy (only)	4	3·1	—	—	—	—	5	5·4	—	—
Hysterectomy (only)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vacuum aspiration (only)	2	1·5	2	0·7	4	1·3	1	1·1	6	1·4
Vacuum aspiration with D and C or D and E	1	0·8	8	2·6	—	—	10	10·8	64	15·0
D and C or D and E	11	8·4	17	5·6	8	2·5	9	9·7	174	40·9
Other surgical	—	—	2	0·7	—	—	—	—	1	0·2
Prostaglandins (only)	44	33·6	80	26·1	144	45·3	28	30·1	35	8·2
Prostaglandins with other agents	45	34·4	86	28·1	151	47·5	28	30·1	133	31·2
Other medical	1	0·8	1	0·3	2	0·6	4	4·3	—	—
Other and combined methods	23	17·6	110	36·0	9	2·8	8	8·6	13	3·1
Total	131	100·0	306	100·0	318	100·0	93	100·0	426	100·0

Note:
Includes six notifications of unknown gestation.
D and C = Dilitation and Curettage.
D and E = Dilitation and Evacuation.

Procedure	Regional Health Authority of usual residence									
	North East Thames		South East Thames		South West Thames		Wessex		Oxford	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Hysterotomy (only)	—	—	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	2	0·8
Hysterectomy (only)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vacuum aspiration (only)	18	3·3	3	0·6	5	1·9	3	1·2	4	1·6
Vacuum aspiration with D and C or D and E	142	25·9	100	21·4	51	19·4	7	2·8	36	14·1
D and C or D and E	217	39·5	134	28·6	75	28·5	14	5·5	69	19·1
Other surgical	2	0·4	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Prostaglandins (only)	34	6·2	26	5·6	18	6·8	33	12·9	18	7·0
Prostaglandins with other agents	109	19·9	183	39·1	93	35·4	159	62·4	138	53·9
Other medical	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	1	0·4	2	0·8
Other and combined methods	26	4·7	20	4·3	21	8·0	38	14·9	7	2·7
Total	549	100·0	468	100·0	263	100·0	255	100·0	256	100·0

Note:
Includes six notifications of unknown gestation.
D and C = Dilitation and Curettage.
D and E = Dilitation and Evacuation.

	Regional Health Authority of usual residence									
	South Western		West Midlands		Mersey		North Western		Wales	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Hysterotomy (only)	1	0·5	5	0·8	7	3·9	3	1·0	1	0·5
Hysterectomy (only)	—	—	1	0·2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Vacuum aspiration (only)	3	1·5	7	1·1	1	0·6	3	1·0	1	0·5
Vacuum aspiration with D and C or D and E	5	2·6	—	—	1	0·6	2	0·7	9	4·0
D and C or D and E	12	6·2	13	2·0	15	8·2	76	25·9	9	4·0
Other surgical	2	1·0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Prostaglandins (only)	72	36·9	304	47·8	24	13·2	61	20·8	56	25·1

	Regional Health Authority of usual residence									
	South Western		West Midlands		Mersey		North Western		Wales	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Prostaglandins with other agents	89	45·6	301	47·3	113	62·1	113	38·6	142	63·7
Other medical	1	0·5					6	2·1		
Other and combined methods	10	5·1	5	0·8	21	11·5	29	9·9	5	2·2
Total	195	100·0	636	100·0	182	100·0	293	100·0	223	100·0

Note:
Includes six notifications of unknown gestation.
D and C = Dilitation and Curettage.
D and E = Dilitation and Evacuation.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Mortgages

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will clarify which mortgages held by unmarried home sharers will be affected by the new tax rules which he proposed in his Budget.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The residence basis of mortgage interest relief announced in my right hon. Friend's Budget Statement will apply to all loans for house purchase made on or after 1 August. A loan will be treated as having been made before 1 August provided it was applied in pursuance of a binding contract to purchase the property made before that date and provided the offer of the loan was made by the lender before that date and was evidenced in writing by the lender before that date. Full details will be included in the Finance Bill.

Petrol Duty

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the duty on petrol will require to be harmonised by 1992.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* The Commission has proposed harmonisation of the excise duty on petrol by 1992. The proposal would cause difficulties for a number of member states, including the United Kingdom, and has important implications for a wide range of Community and national policies including transport, energy and environment. As decisions on the proposals require unanimity, the United Kingdom's position is fully safeguarded.

Arms Cargo (Prestwick)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information is available to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise regarding a cargo of arms which stopped over at Prestwick airport on a Great Southern Airways flight from France to the United States of America on 24 November 1987; whether all the necessary procedures for such a cargo were carried out; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Great Southern Airways flight from France to the United States of America on 14 November 1987. (There was no such flight on 24 November).

The aircraft in question landed at Prestwick airport to refuel and stayed under Customs control while it was on the ground. The aircraft's cargo remained on board during the brief stopover and was therefore not subject to specific Customs formalities.

Newry Customs Post

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the closure of Newry Customs post on Saturday 5 March; what efforts were made to warn the public about its closure; and what disciplinary action is being taken against those who did not turn up for work.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* The Newry Customs post did not open for normal business on 5 March following a telephone threat on the previous evening. Customs agents were given prior warning and arrangements made to ensure that information on imports and exports was obtained. The question of disciplinary measures does not arise as this was a management decision.

Mr. McCusker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the normal Saturday opening hours of the Newry Customs post; how many people are normally employed at the post on a Saturday; whether they are scheduled in as part of their normal working week; and what is the total estimated cost of keeping the post open on a Saturday.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* The normal Saturday opening hours of Newry Customs station are 7.30 am to 9 pm. Staff on the station are on shift working five out of six days Monday to Saturday. Thirty-five officers are scheduled to attend at the station on Saturday as part of their normal working week. The estimated cost of keeping the station open on a Saturday is £3,000.

Customs and Excise (Cargoes)

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will define what Her Majesty's Customs and Excise treat as a genuine trade need, in relation to an approval to extend the list of cargoes which can operate through a port.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* Customs' approval of wharves and transit sheds for the importation and exportation of goods is dependent on several factors, including the physical security of the port and transit

sheds; the provision of adequate facilities for the safe handling and practical examination of goods; and firm evidence of a genuine trade need.

Evidence of a genuine trade need means that intending users should be able to demonstrate a firm commitment to use the facility, indicate the volume and nature of traffic envisaged and, in cases where facilities are available at other ports nearby, show why these cannot conveniently be used.

VAT

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list *(a)* all the goods and services which are currently zero rated for value added tax purposes, and *(b)* all goods and services which have been granted temporary exemption from value added tax by the European Community.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 8 March 1988]:* In respect of goods and services currently zero-rated for value added tax purposes, I refer the hon. Member to my answer to his question on 4 December 1987 at columns *721-24*.

The sixth Council directive of 17 May 1977 allowed temporary exemption from value added tax to be afforded to certain goods and services, provided that such exemption existed in the member state concerned on 1 January 1978. These goods and services are listed in annex F of that directive.

Garnishee Orders and Bankruptcy

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state *(a)* the number of garnishee orders and *(b)* the number of bankruptcy proceedings instituted in (i) 1984, (ii) 1985, (iii) 1986 and (iv) 1987 by the Inland Revenue; how many proceedings for bankruptcy were instituted where the bankruptcy notice was below £900; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The number of bankruptcy notices (or, from 1987 onwards, statutory demands under the Insolvency Act 1986) issued by the Inland Revenue were:

	Number
1984	1,879
1985	1,832
1986	2,069
1987	2,956

The number of garnishee orders and the number of bankruptcy notices below £900 cannot be ascertained without disproportionate cost.

Income Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what reduction in projected tax receipts for 1988-89 would result from reducing the income tax rate to 35 per cent. for those at present paying tax at a highest marginal rate of 40 per cent., assuming the 35 per cent. tax rate applied on all taxable income between £18,701 and £21,300.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Taxpayers whose marginal rate would be 40 per cent. under a 1987-88 tax regime indexed to 1988-89 by the statutory formula would gain around £30 million in a full year from the reduction of the 40 per cent. rate to 35 per cent. The cost assumes that the reduction does not apply to taxpayers with marginal rates above 40 per cent.

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what would be the net change in tax paid by an average taxpayer at present paying tax at a marginal rate of *(a)* 60 per cent., *(b)* 55 per cent., *(c)* 50 per cent., *(d)* 45 per cent., *(e)* 40 per cent. and *(f)* 27 per cent. of the introduction of tax rates of 25 per cent., 35 per cent. and 45 per cent. with the allowances for 1988-89 as set out in the Autumn Statement and with the 25 per cent. rate of tax applied on taxable income up to £18,700, the 35 per cent. rate applied on taxable income in the band of £18,701 to £21,300 and the 45 per. cent. rate on taxable income over £21,300;

(2) what would be the net change in tax paid by an average taxpayer at present paying tax at a marginal rate of *(a)* 60 per cent., *(b)* 55 per cent., *(c)* 50 per cent., *(d)* 45 per cent., *(e)* 40 per cent. and *(f)* 27 per cent. of the introduction of tax rates of 25 per cent. and 40 per cent. with the allowances as set out for 1988-89 in the Autumn Statement and with the 25 per cent. rate of tax applied on taxable income up to £18,700, the 40 per cent. rate on taxable income in excess of £18,701.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table shows the average gain to a taxpayer at the mid-point of each marginal rate band and at a taxable income of £50,000 from introducing a 25 per cent. basic rate and *(a)* a single higher rate of 40 per cent. and *(b)* two higher rates of 35 per. cent. and 45 per cent. It has been assumed that the first and second higher rate thresholds are £18,700 and £21,300 respectively and that personal allowances under indexation in 1988-89 are as given in table 4.1 of the Autumn Statement 1987. Gains are calculated by comparing tax liabilities under each regime *(a)* and *(b)* with those under the 1987-88 regime indexed to 1988-89 levels.

Marginal rate[1] *per cent.*	*Taxable income*[2] *£*	[3]*£ per year*	[4]*£ per year*
27	9,350	187·00	187·00
40	20,000	374·00	439·00
45	23,900	504·00	504·00
50	30,650	1,049·00	711·50
55	38,950	2,086·50	1,334·00
60	50,000	4,089·00	2,784·00

[1] Marginal rate under the indexed 1987-88 regime.
[2] Income after reliefs and allowances.
[3] Gain from 25 per cent. basic rate, 40 per cent. higher rate.
[4] Gain from 25 per cent. basic rate, 35 and 45 per cent. higher rates.

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list for each year since 1979 *(a)* the basic rate of income tax, *(b)* each of the higher rates of income tax and *(c)* Government revenue from income tax (i) at the basic rate and (ii) at each of the higher rates, adjusted for inflation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The available information is in the tables. I regret that further information can be provided only at disproportionate cost. Estimates are based on liability to income tax and not on income tax receipts which cannot be broken down into the different rates of tax. Estimates for the years to 1985-86 are based on the survey of personal incomes for that year; estimates for later years are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey and are therefore provisional.

Rates of tax 1978-79 to 1987-88

	Per cent.
Reduced rate	
1978-79 to 1979-80	25
Basic rate	
1978-79	33
1979-80 to 1985-86	30
1986-87	27
1987-88	27
Higher rate	
1978-79	40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 83
1979-70 to 1987-88	40, 45, 50, 55, 60
Investment income surcharge	
1978-79	10, 15
1979-80 to 1983-84	15

Income tax liabilities at each rate of income tax at 1987-88 prices[1]

£ billion

	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	[2]1986-87	[2]1987-88
Reduced rate	9·0	7·8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Basic rate	28·0	28·2	35·4	35·8	35·7	37·3	35·4	36·0	36·7	36·2
Higher rate: total of	3·8	3·5	3·7	4·6	4·5	4·2	4·8	6·2	6·8	7·7
which at rate of										
40	0·51	—	0·72	—	—	—	0·95	—	—	1·01
45	0·41	—	0·79	—	—	—	1·01	—	—	1·39
50	0·33	—	0·70	—	—	—	0·92	—	—	1·37
55	0·38	—	0·40	—	—	—	0·54	—	—	0·86
60	0·31	—	1·06	—	—	—	1·39	—	—	3·08
65	0·33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
70	0·31	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
75	0·41	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
83	0·81	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Investment Income Surcharge	0·47	0·41	0·36	0·39	0·36	0·30	—	—	—	—
Total Tax Liability	41·2	39·9	39·4	40·8	40·6	41·7	40·2	42·3	43·5	43·9

[1] Using the GDP deflator.
[2] Provisional. Based on a projection of the 1985-86 Survey of Personal Incomes.

Income tax liabilities[1] *at 1987-88 prices*

£ billion

	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	[2]1985-86	[2]1986-87	[2]1987-88
Reduced rate	9·0	7·8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Basic rate	28·0	28·2	35·4	35·8	35·7	37·3	35·4	36·0	36·8	36·3
Higher rate of which	3·8	3·5	3·7	4·6	4·5	4·2	4·8	5·6	6·0	6·8
40	0·51	—	0·72	—	—	—	0·95	—	—	0·97
45	0·41	—	0·79	—	—	—	1·01	—	—	1·36
50	0·33	—	0·70	—	—	—	0·92	—	—	1·32
55	0·38	—	0·40	—	—	—	0·54	—	—	0·82
60	0·31	—	1·06	—	—	—	1·39	—	—	2·28
65	0·33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
70	0·31	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
75	0·41	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
83	0·81	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Investment Income Surcharge	0·47	0·41	0·36	0·39	0·36	0·30	—	—	—	—
Total tax liability	41·2	39·9	39·4	40·8	40·6	41·7	40·2	41·6	42·0	43·1

Source: Survey of Personal Incomes.
Note: Provisional figures given to Mr. Martin on 15 March for us in Budget Debate, but not used on 15, 16, 17 March.
[1] Estimates are based on income tax payable, not on the amount paid.
[2] Provisional. Based on a projection of the 1984-85 Survey of Personal Incomes.

Nationalised Corporations

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the financial costs to the Exchequer of *(a)* British Leyland/Austin Rover Group, *(b)* British Coal and *(c)* all other deficit-producing nationalised corporations for each of the years from 1970 to 1987; and what is the forecast for 1988.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The information requested is as follows:

(£ million at outturn prices)

	Rover	BCC	Other deficit NIs
1970-71	—	(36)	89
1971-72	—	118	212
1972-73	—	175	391
1973-74	—	681	150
1974-75	—	78	202
1975-76	246	128	1,142
1976-77	100	(1)	159
1977-78	295	159	991

	Rover	BCC	Other deficit NIs
1978-79	67	432	1,203
1979-80	150	336	1,446
1980-81	300	711	1,961
1981-82	520	1,991	4,380
1982-83	370	663	2,702
1983-84	90	1,033	1,635
1984-85	—	1,912	1,774
1985-86	—	104	1,668
1986-87	680	672	1,109

Daily Mail and General Trust

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the application of the Daily Mail and General Trust to change its residence from the United Kingdom to Holland.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The application is at present the subject of judicial review proceedings in the High Court in which a reference has been made to the European Court of Justice under article 177 of the treaty of Rome. The oral hearing of the reference is due to be heard in Luxembourg on 22 March. In these circumstances I can make no further comment.

Couples (Tax Advantages)

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a full list of the relative tax advantages enjoyed to date by *(a)* couples cohabiting outside marriage and *(b)* married partners.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 16 March 1988]:* A list of the tax penalties on marriage and the measures proposed in the Budget to remove them is contained in an Inland Revenue press release "Removing Tax Penalties on Marriage" published on Budget day.

Taxation

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the estimated yield from all sources of taxation including excise and other duties for 1988-89; what was the comparable yield for 1978-79 revalued at 1988-89 prices; and if he will publish a breakdown by categories of the real increase in taxes between 1978-79 and 1988-89 in the form of his answer of 1 May 1987, *Official Report*, column *295*.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* The estimated total yield from all sources of taxation including local authority rates and national insurance contributions is £173 billion in 1988-89; the yield in 1978-79 revalued at 1988-89 prices using the GDP deflator is £125 billion. The other information requested is in the table.

£ billion 1988-89 prices

	change on 1978-79
Income tax	+1·1
Non-North Sea corporation tax[1]	+9·2
Capital Taxes	+2·9
Employee's NICs	+6·1
Employers' NICs	+3·6
NIS	−4·5
LA rates	+6·6
Stamp duties	+1·0
Taxes on expenditure, excluding LA rates, NIS and stamp duties	+20·0
North Sea revenues[2]	+2·4
Other[3]	−1·1
Total change in taxes, royalties and national insurance contributions	+47·5

[1] Including mainstream and advance corporation tax.
[2] Before advance corporation tax (ACT) set-off.
[3] Adjustments for ACT set-off against North Sea corporation tax plus accruals adjustment.

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing *(a)* the yield in real terms in the years 1978-79 and *(b)* the estimated yield for 1988-89 in the light of his Budget proposals from (i) direct taxes including national insurance and (ii) indirect taxes.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* Following is the information:

£ billion

	1988-89 prices[1]		
	1978-79	1988-89	Change
(a.) Direct taxes	60·9	81·6	+20·7
of which income tax	(40·9)	(42·1)	(+1·1)
(b.) Indirect taxes	64·4	91·2	+26·8
(c.) Total taxes, royalties and national insurance and other contributions[2]	125·3	172·8	+47·5

[1] Revalued using the GDP deflator.
[2] Components do not add to total because of rounding.

Ministry of Defence (Budget)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the average amount a taxpayer in the United Kingdom contributed through direct and indirect taxes to the budget of the Ministry of Defence for each year since 1978-79; and what estimate he has of the level of such contribution in 1987-88.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* Tax revenues are not hypothecated to particular programmes. The following table shows defence expenditure per income taxpayer and per head of population.

Income Tax

	Defence[1] expenditure	Number of[2] taxpayers	Expenditure per taxpayer	United Kingdom[4] population	Expenditure per head of population
	£ million	million	£	000s	£
1978-79	7,486	25·9	289	56,178	133
1979-80	9,216	25·9	356	56,240	164
1980-81	11,190	25·2	444	56,330	199

	Defence[1] expenditure	Number of[2] taxpayers	Expenditure per taxpayer	United Kingdom[4] population	Expenditure per head of population
	£ million	million	£	000s	£
1981-82	12,553	24·8	506	56,352	223
1982-83	14,364	24·6	584	56,306	255
1983-84	15,474	24·3	637	56,347	275
1984-85	17,187	23·8	722	56,460	304
1985-86	17,954	23·9	751	56,618	317
1986-87	18,149	24·1	753	56,763	320
1987-88	18,642[2]	24·7	755	n.a	n/a

Notes:
[1] As in public expenditure White Paper.
[2] Forecast outturn on defence votes as given in Supply Estimates 1988-89 (Cm. 328).
[3] From Inland Revenue Statistics 1987. Figures for 1984-85 onwards are provisional.
[4] From Annual Abstract of Statistics 1988. Estimates for mid-calendar years.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of elderly homeowners who received tax relief on loans for home improvements in each of the last five years.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I regret that this information is not available.

DEFENCE

Chemical Warfare

5. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research his Department is conducting into improved methods of combating chemical warfare; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: My Department carries out research at the chemical defence establishment, Porton Down, into defensive measures to protect our armed forces against attack by chemical weapons. The work falls into three main areas: the detection of chemical agents; the protection of personnel and equipment; and therapy, including both pre-treatment to increase the body's natural resistance and treatment after exposure.

Trident

17. **Mr. Robert Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current progress of the Trident programme.

104. **Mr. Stevens:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current progress of the Trident programme.

124. **Mr. Franks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current progress of the Trident programme.

131. **Mr. Gwilym Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the current progress of the Trident programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: As reaffirmed in the Navy debate earlier this month, the Trident programme is proceeding satisfactorily and on schedule. I am glad to be able to announce that the invitation to tender for the third submarine was issued to VSEL last week.

Conventional Defence

18. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the conventional defence improvement initiative; and if he will make a statement.

46. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the conventional defence improvement initiative; and if he will make a statement.

69. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the conventional defence improvement initiative; and if he will make a statement.

122. **Mr. Gardiner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made in the conventional defence improvement initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The conventional defence improvements exercise to remedy key deficiencies was reviewed by NATO Defence Ministers at their December meeting who welcomed the progress being made.

Submarine Nuclear Reactors

19. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an inquiry into faults in submarine nuclear reactors.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No.

Dual-capable Aircraft

20. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable Royal Air Force aircraft are based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

90. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable Royal Air Force aircraft are based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

144. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable Royal Air Force aircraft are based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

145. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable Royal Air Force aircraft are based in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Mr. Ian Stewart: One.

Greenham Common (Byelaws)

21. **Mr. McCartney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to have completed his consideration of the implications of the recent judgment relating to Greenham Common byelaws.

96. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to have completed his consideration of the implications of the recent judgment relating to Greenham Common byelaws.

105. **Mr. Sedgemore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to have completed his consideration of the implications of the recent judgment relating to Greenham Common byelaws.

140. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to have completed his consideration of the implications of the recent judgment relating to Greenham Common byelaws.

Mr. Freeman: The Crown Prosecution Service has decided to appeal against the decision given in Reading Crown court.

Soviet Weaponry

22. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their conventional weapons; and if he will make a statement.

34. **Mr. Thorne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their conventional weapons; and if he will make a statement.

115. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their conventional weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Coombs) on 17 March at columns *626-27*.

26. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

80. **Mr. Tracey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

94. **Mr. Cyril D. Townsend:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their nuclear weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Soviet Union is continuing to modernise its very substantial range of nuclear capable forces. New missiles are either being deployed or at an advanced stage of development. A new road-mobile ICBM, the SS-25, has been deployed and the world's first rail-mobile ICBM, the SS-X-24, will be deployed shortly. The Typhoon and Delta IV SSBNs, which have recently entered service, both carry new multiple warhead missiles. A number of other systems are also being introduced, including sea and air-launched cruise missiles, with the AS-15 air-launched cruise missile and SS-N-21 submarine-launched cruise missile already in service. The longer range SS-NX-24 is also at an advanced stage of development. Additionally, deployment of a new strategic aircraft, the Blackjack, which is also capable of carrying cruise missiles, could begin before the end of the decade. Finally, improved nuclear artillery is also being deployed in large numbers, while all short-range nuclear surface-to-surface missiles are being, or are about to be, replaced with, for example, FROG battalions being converted to the longer range SS-21.

Nuclear Forces (Modernisation)

23. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about modernising Britain's nuclear forces so as to maintain effective deterrence; and if he will make a statement.

45. **Mr. Hawkins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about modernising Britain's nuclear forces so as to maintain effective deterrence; and if he will make a statement.

139. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about modernising Britain's nuclear forces so as to maintain effective deterrence; and if he will make a statement.

142. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about modernising Britain's nuclear forces so as to maintain effective deterrence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Britain's independent nuclear forces continue to make a very significant contribution to NATO's ability to deter aggression; the value of this contribution is fully recognised by our allies who have welcomed the Government's determination to keep our forces fully effective and up to date.

Lance Missile

24. **Mr. McTaggart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to update the Lance missile.

43. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to update the Lance missile.

113. **Mr. Loyden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to update the Lance missile.

116. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to update the Lance missile.

Mr. Ian Stewart: In the first instance the development of a successor to the Lance missile system is a matter for the United States Government. No decisions on the modernisation of the Lance missiles in service with British forces have yet been taken.

Nuclear Disarmament

25. **Mr. John Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for nuclear disarmament he will take to the NATO nuclear planning group meeting at Kolding in April.

129. **Mr. Corbyn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for nuclear disarmament he will take to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting at Kolding in April.

138. **Mr. Heffer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals for nuclear disarmament he will take to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting at Kolding in April.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Sunderland, South (Mr. Mullin).

Defence Contractors

27. **Mr. Burt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of those companies on the register of defence contractors applied to join the register for the first time within the last year.

72. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of those companies on the register of defence contractors applied to join the register for the first time within the last year.

120. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of those companies on the register of defence contractors applied to join the register for the first time within the last year.

Mr. Sainsbury: The number of contractors on the defence contractors' list in 1987 increased by about 7 per cent. over the previous year. I welcome this increase and hope to see a continuing growth.

32. **Mr. Bendall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many companies are now on the register of defence contractors, and what steps he is taking to increase this number.

62. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many companies are now on the register of defence contractors; and what steps he is taking to increase this number.

111. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many companies are now on the register of defence contractors; and what steps he is taking to increase this number and, in particular, to encourage this smaller business.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns).

Military Ambulances

28. **Dr. Reid:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline the timetable for tendering for the Ministry of Defence's next military ambulance order.

Mr. Sainsbury: Our next tendering exercise for ambulances will be for 41 crash rescue ambulances required for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. The requirement will be advertised in the contracts bulletin later this month with tenders due for issue in mid-May. A further requirement for two-stretcher ambulances to replace the current Bedford vehicle will form part of a larger van order which will be advertised in the contracts bulletin in April for tender issues in May or June 1988.

INF Treaty

29. **Mr. Amos:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his United States counterpart to discuss ratification of the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

44. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his United States counterpart to discuss ratification of the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

77. **Sir Antony Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his United States counterpart to discuss ratification of the intermediate nuclear forces treaty and associated matters.

101. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his United States counterpart to discuss ratification of the intermediate nuclear forces treaty.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My right hon. Friend maintains regular contact with the United States Secretary for Defence, as with his counterparts in other NATO countries. He last met Mr. Carlucci before the INF treaty was signed, and it would therefore have been premature to discuss ratification of the treaty on that occasion.

Frigates

30. **Mr. Galloway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many frigates over the age of 20 years he expects to be in service with the Royal Navy in 1990.

42. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many frigates over the age of 20 years he expects to be in service with the Royal Navy in 1990.

55. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many frigates over the age of 20 years he expects to be in service with the Royal Navy in 1990.

84. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many frigates over the age of 20 years he expects to be in service with the Royal Navy in 1990.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Of the frigates currently in the fleet, 16 would be over the age of 20 years on 1 January 1990. It is not possible to forecast exactly how many of the 16 will be in service in 1990, as plans for the withdrawal of ships from the active fleet are kept under review. However, on current plans four are due to be withdrawn before 1990.

41. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the up-to-date position with regard to frigate orders which his Department expects to place in 1988.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave on 26 January 1988 at columns *181-82*.

82. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many type-23 frigates he expects to order in the next five years.

Mr. Sainsbury: Decisions have yet to be taken on the size and timing of future orders.

European Fighter Aircraft

31. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of the European fighter aircraft project.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) on 5 November 1987 at column *888*.

149. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if stealth technology will be included in the specification for the European fighter aircraft; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: It would not be in the public interest to give details of the specification for the European fighter aircraft.

Soviet Submarines

33. **Mr. Wilkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their submarine forces; and if he will make a statement.

53. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their submarine forces; and if he will make a statement.

107. **Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their submarine forces; and if he will make a statement.

117. **Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their submarine forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer my hon. Friends to my statement during the Navy debate on 3 March at column 1174. During the 1980s five major new classes of Soviet submarines have been introduced into service — the Typhoon and Delta IV nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, the Sierra and Akula nuclear-powered attack submarines, and the Oscar nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine. This new generation of submarines poses an increased threat to NATO in terms of offensive capability, difficulty of detection and survivability. In addition, older classes of boats continue to be modernised, and their capabilities significantly improved.

Territorial Army

35. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the size of the Territorial Army; and what it was in 1979.

64. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the size of the Territorial Army today; and what it was in 1979.

70. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the size of the Territorial Army today; and what it was in 1979.

106. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the size of the Territorial Army today; and what it was in 1979.

Mr. Freeman: The strength of the Territorial Army at 31 January 1988 was 75,019. The corresponding figure at 31 January 1979 was 59,103.

Mine-laying Vessels

36. **Mr. David Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mine-laying vessels are currently in service with the Royal Navy.

63. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mine-laying vessels are currently in service with the Royal Navy.

81. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many mine-laying vessels are currently in service with the Royal Navy.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mr. Graham).

NATO Strategy

37. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met his West German counterpart to discuss the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation strategy.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Members for Manchester, Central (Mr. Litherland), for Redcar (Ms. Mowlam) and for Gateshead (Ms. Quin) on 26 January at column *185*.

Trucks

38. **Mr. Allan Roberts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received concerning the delay in the announcement of the contract to construct 1,500 4-tonne trucks for the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. Sainsbury: We are still considering the services' needs for further 4-tonne vehicles pending the entry into service of the new 4-tonne range in 1990. We have had a number of representations from interested parties expressing a hope for an order to be placed with All Wheel Drive Ltd. who took over the former Bedford factory late last year.

Defence Procurement

39. **Mr. David Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what benefits have accrued as a result of the more commercial approach by his Department to defence procurement.

47. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what benefits have accrued as a result of the more commercial approach by his Department to defence procurement.

50. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what benefits have accrued as a result of the more commercial approach by his Department to defence procurement.

87. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what benefits have accrued as a result of the more commercial approach by his Department to defence procurement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The commercial approach, involving greater emphasis on competition, tauter contractual conditions and clearer incentives has already achieved substantial cost savings, some examples of which were included in the "Statement on Defence Estimates 1987" (CM101-1). The approach also provides the opportunity for the MOD to benefit from new technological developments and has helped exports by stimulating more efficient use of industrial resources, thereby making British industry more competitive.

66. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on changes in departmental procurement procedures since the appointment of Mr. Peter Levene as chief of defence procurement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Government continue to pursue value for money in defence procurement through the use of competition wherever practicable. Vigorous efforts are being made to appoint prime contractors for each project, with clearly defined responsibilities under incentive contracts. Procedures have been revised to ensure that interim payments are made only against demonstrated achievement. Greater emphasis is now placed on the potential export sales of equipment developed for our armed forces and on civil applications of the technology, as well as the possibility of adopting existing commercial products and technologies. Procedures call also for a full examination of means of meeting our needs through collaboration with allies, whether by joint development, reciprocal purchases or other means.

Following the recent scrutiny report, "Learning From Experience", which made some recommendations on how to improve further the management of projects, the Department has in hand further improvements building on those already mentioned above.

97. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has considered any revisions to procurement contract arrangements following receipt of the report from Messrs. Jordan, Lee and Cawsey.

Mr. Sainsbury: The report "Learning From Experience" acknowledged the many improvements that have already been made in procurement procedures in recent years, particularly in contractual arrangements. The report's own recommendations are more concerned with technical and management issues. Most recommendations have been accepted and are being implemented.

Defence Technology (Research)

40. **Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he is taking to ensure that the benefits of research into defence technology are transferred where appropriate to the civil sector.

135. **Mr. Whitney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he is taking to ensure that the benefits of research into defence technology are transferred, where appropriate, to the civil sector.

141. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures he is taking to ensure that the benefits of research into defence technology are transferred, where appropriate, to the civil sector.

Mr. Sainsbury: A wide range of measures has been taken to facilitate the exploitation of defence research for the benefit of the wider economy. These include the development of collaborative research initiatives with the civil sector on work of mutual interest, the establishment of Defence Technology Enterprises Ltd., and the recently launched civil industrial access scheme which is designed to give firms improved access to the facilities and expertise of the defence research establishments.

Hydrogen Bombs

48. **Mr. Stott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to replace any of the Royal Air Force's hydrogen bombs with air-launched cruise missiles.

58. **Mrs. Wise:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to replace any of the Royal Air Force's hydrogen bombs with air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Bristol, South (Ms. Primarolo) and for Deptford. (Ms. Ruddock).

Anti-submarine Capability

49. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the Navy's operations in the Gulf have on its anti-submarine capability in the north Atlantic.

76. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what effect the Navy's operations in the Gulf have on its anti-submarine capability in the north Atlantic.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Members for Barnsley, East (Mr. Patchett) and for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn).

Binary Munitions

51. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of binary munitions in western Europe.

54. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of chemical weapons in western Europe.

93. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of chemical weapons in Western Europe.

110. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of binary munitions in Western Europe.

112. **Mr. Cox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of chemical weapons in Western Europe.

134. **Mr. Meale:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his North Atlantic Treaty Organisation counterparts regarding the deployment of binary munitions in Western Europe.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to my reply to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) on 16 March at column *578*.

F111 Aircraft

52. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his United States counterpart on the possible siting of additional F111 aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford, Greenham Common, Lakenheath or elsewhere.

79. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his United States

counterpart on the possible siting of additional F111 aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford, Greenham Common, Lakenheath or elsewhere.

83. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his United States counterpart on the possible siting of additional F111 aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford, Greenham Common, Lakenheath or elsewhere.

92. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his United States counterpart on the possible siting of additional F111 aircraft at RAF Upper Heyford, Greenham Common, Lakenheath or elsewhere.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Details of discussions between my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the United States Secretary of Defence are confidential.

74. **Mr. Strang:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the number of United States F111 aircraft based in the United Kingdom was last reviewed.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The composition and deployment of all United States nuclear-capable forces based in the United Kingdom are the subject of regular exchanges between the British and United States Governments at both ministerial and official level.

NATO Nuclear Planning Group

56. **Mr. Bradley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what matters he expects to discuss at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting in Denmark in April.

114. **Mr. Alan W. Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what matters he expects to discuss at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation nuclear planning group meeting in Denmark in April.

121. **Mr. Jack Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what matters he expects to discuss at the NATO nuclear planning group meeting in Denmark in April.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 22 January at column *899*.

Submarine Nuclear Reactors

57. **Mr. Ron Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an inquiry into faults in submarine nuclear reactors.

100. **Mrs. Mahon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an inquiry into faults in submarine nuclear reactors.

136. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set up an inquiry into faults in submarine nuclear reactors.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Members to the reply I gave earlier to day to the hon. Member for Dumbarton (Mr. McFall).

Small Firms Initiative

59. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with his Department's small firms initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave today to my hon. Friend the Member for Welwyn, Hatfield (Mr. Evans) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Chertsey and Walton (Sir G. Pattie).

British Army of the Rhine

60. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action is being taken to implement the recommendations of the National Audit Office report on the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Freeman: The NAO study of the costs of British Forces Germany is under consideration by the Public Accounts Committee. The Government's response to any recommendations of the PAC will be made by Treasury Minute in the usual way.

Departmental Offices

61. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many buildings his Department occupies as office space in central London; and what is the annual cost to his Department.

98. **Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many buildings his Department occupies as office space in central London; and what is the annual cost to his Department.

103. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many buildings his Department occupies as office space in central London; and what is the annual cost to his Department.

119. **Mr. Maxton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many buildings his Department occupies as office space in central London; and what is the annual cost to his Department.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence occupies 28 buildings in central London at an assessed annual cost of £41·6 million.

Exercise Fire Focus

65. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome and cost of Exercise Fire Focus.

89. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome and cost of Exercise Fire Focus.

132. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome of the United Kingdom military manoeuvres around the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Exercise Fire Focus, designated to practise the reinforcement of the Falkland Islands, is still in progress, and it would be premature to comment on its outcome. The costs of the exercise (excluding those which would have been incurred had the exercise not been taking place) are estimated to be about £3 million, most of which is attributable to airlift costs.

Departmental Land

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the nature and purposes of his Department's land holdings; and how much of them he plans to sell over the next five years as surplus to requirements.

Mr. Freeman: The defence estate exists to meet the needs of the services and the Procurement Executive for operational bases, support facilities, accommodation and training areas. Regular reviews ensure that Ministry of Defence land holdings are used efficiently and are no larger than necessary. Our policy is not to acquire additional land without careful scrutiny and confirmation that the requirement cannot be met from within existing resources. During the next five years it is planned to dispose of some 7,000 acres although some acquisitions will also be required over the same period, particularly to meet our shortage of training land.

Dual-capable Artillery Pieces

68. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable artillery pieces are deployed with the British Army of the Rhine.

71. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable artillery pieces are deployed with the British Army of the Rhine.

86. **Mr. Wareing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable artillery pieces are deployed with the British Army of the Rhine.

102. **Mr. Bidwell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many types of dual-capable artillery pieces are deployed with the British Army of the Rhine.

Mr. Ian Stewart: One.

Widows' Pensions

73. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received concerning service widows' pensions.

Mr. Freeman: Numerous representations have been received, both in the course of meetings with representative organisations and through correspondence. The majority of these have been concerned with the position of war widows.

Contracts

75. **Mr. Evennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of contracts placed competitively by his Department in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

137. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of contracts placed competitively by his Department in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

143. **Mr. French:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total value of contracts placed competitively by his Department in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: In financial year 1986-87, the latest period for which figures are available, the total value of work placed in a competitive environment was the highest ever at £4·9 billion. We continue to seek competition wherever reasonable and practicable to achieve the best value for money in defence procurement. Where competition is not possible, we seek to maximise value for money through the use of taut terms and conditions and incentive arrangements.

Firefighting (Military Establishments)

78. **Mr. Terry Fields:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to improve or increase the firefighting resources at military establishments.

Mr. Freeman: The criteria, on the basis of which the fire defence resources at military sites are established, are at present under review. Whilst it is not possible at this stage to assess the outcome of this review, it may lead in due course to changes in the current provision at establishments, with the aim of providing satisfactory fire cover in the most efficient way.

Northern Ireland (Troop Levels)

85. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many troops are currently serving in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Ian Stewart: As at 31 December 1987 (the most recent available figure) 17,251 service men and women were serving in the security forces in Northern Ireland.

Multiple Launch Rocket System

88. **Mr. Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans for the introduction into service of the multiple launch rocket system.

146. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans for the introduction into service of the multiple launch rocket system.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans for the introduction into service of the multiple launch rocket system.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) earlier today.

Self-propelled Howitzer

91. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make a further announcement about a new self-propelled howitzer for the Army.

99. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make a further announcement about a new self-propelled howitzer for the Army.

128. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make a further announcement about a new self-propelled howitzer for the Army.

130. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he intends to make a further announcement about a new self-propelled howitzer for the Army.

Mr. Sainsbury: It is hoped a decision on the 155 mm self-propelled howitzer can be reached later this year.

Conventional Forces

95. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what work is being conducted in his Department

to estimate accurately the balance of conventional forces *(a)* in Europe and *(b)* worldwide between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact countries.

123. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what work is being conducted in his Department to estimate accurately the balance of conventional forces *(a)* in Europe and *(b)* worldwide between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact countries.

126. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what work is being conducted in his Department to estimate accurately the balance of conventional forces *(a)* in Europe and *(b)* worldwide between North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact countries.

127. **Mr. O'Brien:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what work is being conducted in his Department to estimate accurately the balance of conventional forces *(a)* in Europe and *(b)* worldwide between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact countries.

Mr. Ian Stewart: My Department continually updates its estimates of conventional forces in Europe and unclassified figures indicating the broad numerical balance are published annually in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates."

My Department, in consultation with our NATO allies, also looks at the broad balance of NATO and Warsaw pact forces worldwide.

Chemical Weapons

108. **Mr Sayeed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their chemical weapons; and if he will make a statement.

109. **Mr. Simon Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their chemical weapons; and if he will make a statement.

133. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of Soviet modernisation of their chemical weapons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) on 18 March at column *717*.

MBFR Talks

118. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna; and what is the current imbalance between the Warsaw pact countries and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation forces in tanks and armoured vehicles in the European theatre.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Progress in the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna has been disappointing, due to the East's refusal to provide the necessary information concerning force levels and the lack of a positive response to Western proposals tabled in December 1985.

Figures indicating the broad numerical balance between NATO and Warsaw pact forces from the Atlantic to the Urals (including the number of tanks) are contained in the annual "Statement on the Defence Estimates." Last year's figures reflected an overwhelming Warsaw pact superiority in armoured forces, including a 3:1 tank superiority.

Nuclear Weapons

125. **Mr. McAllion:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the European countries which either possess their own nuclear weapons or allow other countries to site nuclear weapons on their soil or territorial waters.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Soviet Union aside, the United Kingdom and France are the only European nations to possess their own nuclear forces. It is not our practice to comment on the location of nuclear weapons.

Anglo-French Defence Cooperation

147. **Mr. Cartwright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of Anglo-French defence co-operation.

Mr. Ian Stewart: We enjoy a close relationship with France in the defence field and over the coming months will be discussing bilaterally the scope for greater military co-operation with the aim of strengthening the European pillar of NATO.

Soldiers (Hunting)

148. **Mrs. Fyfe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many hours per annum soldiers of all ranks spend in hunting.

Mr. Freeman: Hunting during duty hours may be undertaken only in mounted units at the commanding officer's discretion as part of training in equestrian skills. It is not recorded as a separate activity from the other varied duties of officers and soldiers.

Nuclear Weapons (Montebello Agreement)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the precise classes of nuclear weapons covered by the Montebello agreement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 26 February 1988 at column *378*, and to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Dorset, North (Mr. Baker) on 21 March at columns *7-8*.

RAF Regiments (Weapons)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the weapons with which RAF regiment units assigned to the cruise missile deployments at RAF Greenham Common and RAF Molesworth are equipped; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is not our normal practice to give details of the equipment available to operational units.

Journalists (Hospitality Costs)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost of fares and hospitality in arranging for journalists to visit his Department's facilities in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The cost of arranging for journalists to visit MOD facilities during 1987-88 is expected to be in the region of £28,000.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the cost to his Department of the visit by reporter Ian Bevitt and photographer Rod Sibbald, including fares and hospitality, to Belize; how many briefings were given to them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Travel costs of about £175 were met by my Department and the journalists concerned were hosted at the expense of the unit they visited in Belize, which recruits from the readership area of their newspaper. They received briefing at HQ British forces and at three Army and RAF units in Belize.

Carrasco International Airport (Emergency Landing)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answers to the hon. Members for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) and Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) on 15 March, *Official Report*, column *526*, what was the direction of the flight path of the Hercules aircraft which took off from Carrasco airport on 10 March immediately after its take off; and what was the outcome of contact between it and aircraft of the Argentine air force.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The Hercules C-130 which made an emergency diversion to Carrasco in Uruguay on 9 March, proceeded directly on leaving Carrasco, to Ascension Island. At no time did the aircraft come into contact with aircraft of the Argentine Air Force.

RAF Lossiemouth

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce the results of the review of the use of RAF Lossiemouth as a master diversion airfield.

Mr. Ian Stewart: We expect consideration of the review to be completed and an announcement made very shortly.

Nimrod (Offset Benefits)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what offset benefits have been realised by British industry as a result of the cancellation of the Nimrod programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: As previously stated in reply to the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) on 1 December 1987 at column *568*, the Boeing company has submitted its first six-monthly report under the AWACS offset programme. Evaluation of the report, which claims credit for a wide range of contracts placed with United Kingdom companies since November 1986, is still under consideration. It is not therefore possible to state how much credit will be granted on the first report and hence the benefit realised to British industry.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will outline the criteria employed by his Department for setting the approved standards contractors are required to meet when they tender for Ministry of Defence contracts.

Mr. Sainsbury: Given that there is a need for a company's product or service, it would be included on the defence contractors list after a satisfactory assessment of quality assurance and financial viability. Any tenders received are judged on the basis of overall value for money.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 23 March 1988

HOME DEPARTMENT

Forensic Analysis Department

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much below its full staffing complement is the forensic analysis department in London.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that there are at present 203 scientific staff in post at the Metropolitan police forensic science laboratory, eight less than the approved establishment of 211.

Drugs (Forensic Analysis)

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what is the average length of time for forensic analysis of drugs when a defendant on a drugs charge has been remanded in custody:

(2) what is the longest time period on record for which a defendant has been kept on remand awaiting forensic analysis of drugs.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not available in the form requested. The Home Office forensic science service and the Metropolitan police forensic science laboratory do, however, give the highest priority to the analysis of drug samples where a defendant is remanded in custody because of drug-related offences. Information is usually available to assist the investigation within two to three days and frequently within a very much shorter time.

Missile Attack (Warning)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the procedures to warn the civilian population of the United Kingdom of an impending missile attack would be initiated if a ballistic missile attack against the United States of America or any other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation members was detected.

Mr. John Patten: The procedure would be initiated if the United Kingdom population was thought to be at risk.

Wrongful Convictions (Petitions)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many petitions he received alleging wrongful conviction in the years 1986 and 1987; how many of these were sent *(a)* by prisoners and *(b)* on behalf of prisoners; and how many related to (i) summary trials and (ii) trials on indictment.

Mr. John Patten: The number of representations received alleging wrongful conviction was 785 in the year ended 30 September 1986 and 722 in the year ended 30 September 1987. Fuller details are not readily available, but I will write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Body Armour

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to prohibit sales of body armour or flak jackets which might be used by a person resisting arrest or committing an offence; and whether he has received any representations to this effect.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are considering representations from the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Radio Stations

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his intention that licences for national commercial radio stations, once acquired, will be freely transferable.

Mr. Renton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to a similar question from him on 27 January at columns *251-52*.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his intention to auction licences for national commercial radio stations by means of *(a)* a lump sum, *(b)* a percentage of future pretax profits, *(c)* a percentage of future revenue or *(d)* a combination of the above.

Mr. Renton: We envisage that the radio authority will invite tenders in the form of a single cash figure, though it may be payable in instalments over the period of the licence.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether radio stations granted licences by the new radio authority will be able to promote *(a)* lotteries, *(b)* bingo and *(c)* other gaming activities during their programmes.

Mr. Renton: We envisage no need for restrictions in broadcasting legislation additional to those in current gaming legislation.

Rates Default

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many arrest warrants were issued for rates default in 1987 in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Stoke on Trent;

(2) how many people imprisoned for rates default in 1987 in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* Stoke on Trent were in receipt of social security benefits immediately prior to imprisonment;

(3) how many people were imprisoned for rates default *(a)* in England and Wales and *(b)* in Stoke on Trent in 1987.

Mr. John Patten: According to the latest information held centrally, which is approximate, about 370 persons were received into prison department establishments in England and Wales from all courts in 1986 for non-payment of rates. Of these, six were known to have been sentenced by courts in Stoke on Trent. Information on the receipt of social security benefits immediately prior to imprisonment and on arrest warrants issued for rate default is not available centrally.

Foreign Visitors

Mr. Marlow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of visitors from each country in the Indian sub-continent in each of the last three years broken down by length of permitted visitors.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* The information available is given in the table.

Number of visitor and business visitor admissions in 1985, 1986 and 1987, by nationality and period of leave granted

Estimated numbers[1]

Period of leave granted on entry[2]	*Bangladesh*			*India*			*Pakistan*		
	1985	*1986*	*1987 Jan-Sept*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987 Jan-Sept*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987 Jan-Sept*
Up to 1 month	2,000	2,000	1,000	13,400	13,900	7,500	10,300	10,200	5,100
Over 1 and up to 3 months	1,000	1,200	700	10,200	10,900	5,000	8,000	9,200	3,800
Over 3 and up to 6 months[3]	8,000	8,300	5,800	145,000	142,000	108,000	62,600	63,000	45,600
Over 6 months and up 1 year	100	100	100	400	400	300	200	200	200
Total admissions	11,200	11,600	7,600	169,000	167,000	121,000	81,100	82,600	54,700

[1] Individual figures may not add to totals due to rounding.
[2] Initial period of leave granted by the immigration officer at the port of entry and therefore before taking account of any subsequent extension of stay.
[3] Almost all admissions relate to a period of leave of exactly six months.

Prisoners (Transfers)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners who were convicted for offences in courts in Northern Ireland have subsequently been transferred to prisons in England and Wales during 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Stanley: I have been asked to reply.

No such permanent transfers were made in 1986 or 1987.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

New Companies (Scotland)

49. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many new companies were established in Scotland during 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: 5,926 new companies were registered in Scotland during 1987.

Economic League (Accounts)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects the Registrar of Companies to have secured the accounts of the Economic League for the year ended 31 December 1986; and if he will now consider prosecution.

Mr. Maude: The Registrar of Companies expects to receive the outstanding accounts without further delay. If, however, they are not received within the next few days, the Registrar will follow his normal practice and write individually to the directors of the company, reminding them of their obligations under the Companies Act 1985. He will also point out that they would render themselves liable to prosecution if acceptable accounts continue not be be delivered.

EC Internal Market

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what will be the total cost of the Government's publicity campaign on the EEC internal market; and, in particular, what is the cost of the 19 breakfasts in cities around the United Kingdom.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* We are planning a sustained five-year campaign. The initial phase of the campaign will cost about £5 million. The campaign will also include 20 regional conferences, each for up to 250 to 300 business people, at a cost of around £300,000. The cost of breakfast provided before each conference will be about £5 per head.

PRIME MINISTER

Member's Correspondence

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Prime Minister if she will cause an inquiry to be held into the handling of correspondence by the office of the Secretary of State for Social Services in view of its loss of correspondence from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, forwarded by the Secretary of State for the Home Department in October 1987, and its failure to notify the Department of Employment that on 21 January it was forwarding to it correspondence from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton.

The Prime Minister: I understand that extensive inquiries have already been carried out by the Department of Health and Social Security and I see no need for a further inquiry. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has already undertaken (on 14 March at column *470* and on 17 March at column *664*) to look into the matter raised in the October 1987 letter on receipt of a copy of the correspondence. A further copy of the 21 January 1988 letter and the relevant correspondence is being sent to the Department of Employment.

Housing Standards and Health

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on co-ordination between the Secretary of State for Social Services and the Secretary of State for

the Environment in relation to Government policy towards the correlation between housing standards and health.

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friends consult and co-operate as necessary on matters of concern to their Departments.

ENVIRONMENT

Asbestos (Lanfranc Estate, Bow)

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide additional funds for the London borough of Tower Hamlets to permit the removal of asbestos on the Lanfranc estate in Bow, London.

Mrs. Roe: The council has been allocated over £15 million of capital resources for 1988-89 and is free to supplement this with part of its capital receipts. It is for the council to decide on priorities for repairs and improvement within its housing stock.

Charles Buxton Memorial, Victoria Gardens

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department plans to instruct the Property Services Agency to repair the fountain of the Charles Buxton memorial in the Victoria gardens.

Mr. Chope: The water supply to the drinking fountain in the memorial to Sir Thomas Powell Buxton has been turned off since 1980 because the design of the memorial makes it expensive and difficult to maintain the necessary standard of hygiene in the water supply to satisfy standards of public health.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) of 10 February, *Official Report*, column 289, his Department has received any request from the European Parliament special committee of inquiry on nuclear waste and transport in the EEC to present written or oral evidence on matters concerning the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: No.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many cases of long-term damage to sites of special scientific interest were reported over the past three-years; and how many of them were due to works initiated or approved by a public department.

Mr. Moynihan: Details of damage to SSSIs, have, since 1983-84, been published in the Nature Conservancy Council's annual report. However, the information is not available in the precise form requested. It is currently being compiled by the NCC, and I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as it is available.

Housing Stock (Repairs)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what evidence his Department has as to the effect of Government cutbacks on local authority finance on the ability of councils to carry out essential repairs to their housing stock; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: Local authorities' expenditure on the renovation of their housing stock, which includes all major repairs, has increased every year since 1981-82. We have provided for a further increase in 1988-89 of more than 11 per cent. over the estimated outturn for the current year.

Property Services Agency

Mr. David Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he proposes to widen the range of outside advice available to the Property Services Agency.

Mr. Chope: Under present arrangements my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I are advised by the chief executive of the Property Services Agency who chairs the PSA board comprising his senior colleagues and three non-executive members drawn from the private sector. We have now appointed to the PSA board Mr. Jack Rodin, a senior partner and chief executive in Building Design Partnership. The appointment will run for a period of three years from March 1988. Mr. Rodin is a chartered engineer and fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers. His appointment will add to the valuable input provided by Mr. Brian Hill (Higgs and Hill Building Ltd), Mr. Leslie Cousins (Price Waterhouse) and Mr. John Brown (Peachy Property Corporation plc) in the fields of building, finance and estates respectively. In line with the other non-executive members Mr. Rodin will be paid £4,000 per annum during the tenure of his appointment.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Standing Committees (Membership)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will list in the *Official Report* the names of all right hon. and hon. Members, other than those who were at the time members of Her Majesty's Government, who in the 1983 to 1987 Parliament *(a)* were not appointed to serve on any Standing Committees and *(b)* were so appointed but did not attend any meetings thereof.

Mr. Wakeham: The information requested can be derived from the Standing Committee Return, published each Session, which lists the names of all Members appointed to serve on Standing Committees during the 1983 to 1987 Parliament, and includes the number of sittings they attended. The information could be provided in the form requested only at disproportionate cost.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Shareholders (Scotland)

51. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what figures he has on the numbers of shareholders in Scotland in *(a)* January of the current year and *(b)* May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The Treasury-Stock Exchange survey carried out by NOP Market Research Ltd. between 20 January and 15 February 1988 found that approximately ¼ million individuals in Scotland were shareholders. The Target Group index survey, carried out

by the British Market Research Bureau between April 1978 and March 1979 found that approximately ¼ million individuals in Scotland were shareholders. Both sets of figures are produced by statistical surveys of Great Britain as a whole — the figures are therefore subject to sampling error, which may be substantial for component categories.

£1 Coin

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there will be a new design for the £1 coin.

Mr. Lawson: Yes. Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve my recommendation for a new design for the £1 coin. The obverse will continue to show the Raphael Maklouf portrait of Her Majesty. The new reverse design will feature a shield of the royal arms ensigned by a representation of the royal crown. Coins bearing the new design will be available for general circulation on 21 April 1988.

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this not be done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Brooke: Each case is considered on its merits.

War Stock

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will now consider the repayment of 3½ per cent. war stock.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has no plans to redeem 3½ per cent. war loan.

Zeebrugge Disaster Fund

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, to assist the work of the Zeebrugge disaster fund, the Government will donate to the fund sums equal to those levied on it in taxation.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 7 March 1988]:* The Government have donated £1 million to the Zeebrugge disaster fund.

Africa (Financial Flows)

Miss Lestor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on the report and recommendations of the United Nations Secretary General's advisory group on financial flows for Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* Her Majesty's Government welcome this report which is a useful analysis of the African debt problem. We were among the first to draw attention to the emerging problem and our aid programme is substantially directed towards Africa. Last year my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer put forward a three-point debt relief plan for low-income debt-distressed countries which has been well received. Last December the United Kingdom doubled its planned contribution to the newly established IMF enhanced structural adjustment facility which will provide extra finance and support structural adjustment programmes in low-income countries. We have also committed £250 million to the World Bank's special programme of assistance 1988-90 for sub-Saharan Africa. Over the next few months we will be studying the report further and discussing it with our partners.

Excise Duty

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* those commodities subject to proposals for harmonisation of excise duty set out in the draft regulations of the Commission of the European Economic Community and tabulated in the eighth report of the Select Committee on European Legislation, HC 43 viii, stating for each category of goods *(a)* the basis of excise duty levied in the financial year 1987-88 and that proposed by the Commission, *(b)* the approximate respective revenue for each assessment that has accrued or would accrue to Her Majesty's Government, in 1987-88 prices, *(c)* the percentage increase or decrease in excise duty levied and *(d)* the approximate increase or decrease in retail sale price, together with indications of where the proposed increases in the rate of value added tax would further increase or decrease final price to the purchaser, adding totals for each broad category of commodity and totals of cumulative increase or decrease, together with net grand change in expected revenue.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* The information requested is given in the tables.

Tables (a) and (c):

The European Commission's proposals for harmonisation of rates of excise duty would require changes to the 1987-88 United Kingdom duty rates[1] as follows:—

Product	*Commission proposal*	*1987-88 United Kingdom duty rate*	*Approximate per cent. rate changes*
Alcoholic drinks			
Spirits	12·71 ECU (£8·54) per litre of alcohol	£15·77 per litre of alcohol	−46
Beer[1]	1·36 ECU (0·91) per hectolitre/degree Plato of finished product at 15°c (£8·77 for average beer)	£25·80 per hectolitre plus 86p for every degree of original gravity over 1030 (£31·82 for average beer)	−72
Table wine	17 ECU (£11·43) per hectolitre	£98·00 per hectolitre	−88
Fortified wine			
(15-18%)	85 ECU (£57·13) per hectolitre	£169·00 per hectolitre	−66
(18-22%)	85 ECU (£57·13)	£194·90 per hectolitre	−71
Tobacco products			

Product	Commission proposal	1987-88 United Kingdom duty rate	Approximate per cent. rate changes
Cigarettes	19·5 ECU (£13·11) per 1,000 plus 52·54 per cent. of retail selling price	£30·61 per 1,000, 21 per cent. of retail selling price	−11
Pipe tobacco[1]	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 54·56 per cent. of retail selling price	£24·95 per kilogram	−17
Cigars[1]	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 54·56 per cent. of retail selling price	£24·95 per kilogram	−49
Hand rolling[1] tobacco	Excise duty + VAT to comprise 54·56 per cent. of retail selling price	£24·95 per kilogram	−53
Road fuel			
Leaded petrol	34 ECU (£22·85) per hectolitre	£19·38 per hectolitre	+18
Unleaded petrol	31 ECU (£20·84) per hectolitre	£18·42 per hectolitre	+13
Derv	17·7 ECU (£11·90) per hectolitre	£16·39 per hectolitre	−27
Minor oil products			
Gas oil	5 ECU (£3·36) per hectolitre	£1·10 per hectolitre	+205
Fuel oil	1·7 ECu (£1·14) per hectolitre	£0·77 per hectolitre	+46

(1 ECU = £0·672099 at 14 March 1988).

[1] It will be noted that in some cases the proposals would modify the basis upon which the duty is calculated, as well as the duty rates.

TABLE (B)

Based on the main duty rates given above the approximate respective revenue for each assessment at 1987-88 prices is as follows:

£ million 1987-88 prices

Product	Commission proposal	1987-88 United Kingdom duty rates estimated net yield
Alcoholic drinks	2,000	4,400
Tobacco products	4,350	4,800
Hydrocarbon oils	8,450	7,800

Because of the very large changes in duty levels involved, estimates of the revenue effects are subject to wide margins of error.

TABLE (D)

The duty rate changes implied by the approximation proposals would have the following effects on retail sale prices:

Approximate price changes (including consequential VAT at 15 per cent.)

Product	£ p
Alcoholic drinks	
Spirits (per 70cl bottle)	−2·50
Beer (per pint)	−0·16
Table wine (per 75cl bottle)	−0·74
Fortified wine	
15 to 18 per cent. (per 70cl bottle)	−0·90
18 to 22 per cent. (per 70cl bottle)	−1·10
Tobacco products	
Cigarettes (per 20 King size)	−0·12
Pipe tobacco (per 25 grams)	−0·12
Cigars (5 whiffs)	−0·26
Hand rolling tobacco (per 25 grams)	−0·76
Road fuel	
Leaded petrol (per gallon)	+0·18
Unleaded petrol (per gallon)	+0·13
Derv (per gallon)	−0·23
Minor oil products	
Gas oil (per gallon)	+0·10
Fuel oil (per gallon)	+0·2

Cruises (VAT)

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how he will implement value added tax on United Kingdom registered passenger cruise liner operations when their passage is partially, or wholly, outside EEC territorial waters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* It is necessary to distinguish between supplies by the cruise lines themselves and supplies by tour operators of places on cruise ships. The former are only liable to United Kingdom VAT to the extent that the cruise is in United Kingdom waters. As regards supplies by tour operators, tour operators based in the United Kingdom are liable to United Kingdom VAT on their gross margin attributable to the part of the cruise undertaken in the territorial waters of EC member states, including the United Kingdom. The apportionment of the margin between EC and non-EC elements will have to be done on the basis of the number of days per cruise spent in EC waters or travelling between EC ports. Similar apportionments will have to be done for coach tours taking in both EC and non-EC countries.

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which EEC nations have implemented value added tax charges on passenger cruise line operations; and what information he has as to the reasons for delay by certain countries in implementing such charges.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* There is no detailed information readily available on the practices of other member states in this respect, but there is no special VAT relief for passenger cruises under the EC sixth VAT directive. As regards tour operators, only Ireland and Denmark have not imposed tax on tours operators' margins. I understand that they claim not to do so under a transitional derogation in article 28 of that directive.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Education Welfare Officers

Mr. Archer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what concern has been expressed by local authorities about the number of education welfare officers; and if he has any plans to seek to increase their number, to alter their role or to seek to improve their performance.

Mr. Dunn: Education welfare officers are employed by local education authorities, and it is for them to determine

the number needed in their area in the light of local circumstances. Our recommendations on the role and working methods of education welfare officers were set out in DES circular 2/86 "School Attendance and Education Welfare Services". We are considering issuing a further circular on good practice later this year.

CERN (Subscriptions)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he has any plans to seek to pay United Kingdom subscriptions into CERN on a basis of a basket of currencies rather than on the basis of the Swiss franc.

Mr. Jackson: The method of calculating the contribution of CERN member states is currently being examined by a working group set up by the CERN finance committee. The United Kingdom is actively participating in the work of this group.

Peripatetic and Advisory Teachers

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will introduce legislation to seek to amend section 27(1) of the Education Act 1980 to cover peripatetic and advisory teachers both at school and when undertaking pre-school teaching; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Both peripatetic and advisory teachers already come within the scope of section 27(1) of the 1980 Act in so far as they are teachers at schools. Teaching of children of pre-school age is similarly covered in so far as it takes place at a school. We have no plans to extend the scope of the section to further categories of staff.

Free School Meals

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children currently receive free school meals in *(a)* the Inner London education authority area and *(b)* the London borough of Lewisham.

Mr. Dunn: In October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, 90,237 pupils in ILEA received a free school meal. I regret that information in respect of Lewisham is not separately available.

WALES

Labour Statistics

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what figures he has to show the number and percentage of people employed in each official category of employment in Mid-Glamorgan and the Rhymney Valley, respectively, at the latest available date.

Mr. Peter Walker: The available information is as follows:

Employees in employment (thousands)

SIC 80[1]		*Per cent.*
Mid Glamorgan		
0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1·1	0·7
1 Energy and Water Supply	17·7	11·7
2 Extraction of minerals and ores other than fuels; manufacture of metals, mineral products and chemicals	6·1	4·0
3 Metal goods, engineering and vehicles industries	19·2	12·7
4 Other manufacturing industries	19·4	12·8
5 Construction	8·6	5·7
6 Distribution, hotels and catering; repairs	21·2	14·0
7 Transport and communication	6·0	3·9
8 Banking, finance, insurance, business services and leasing	7·5	4·9
9 Other services	44·9	29·6
All industries and services	151·7	100·0
Rhymney Valley district		
0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0·4	1·6
1 Energy and Water Supply	3·2	13·1
2-4 Manufacturing industries	7·6	31·0
5 Construction	1·2	5·0
6 Distribution, hotels and catering; repairs	3·2	13·2
7-8 Transport and communication, banking, finance, insurance, business services and leasing	2·2	8·8
9 Other services	6·7	27·3
All industries and services	24·7	100·0

[1] Standard Industrial Classification (1980) Divisions.
Source: Census of Employment 1984.

Gwynedd (EC Grants)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the amount of identifiable grants and loans received in Gwynedd by the European Economic Community for each of the years of United Kingdom membership.

Mr. Peter Walker: Total identifiable European Community grants and loans to Gwynedd are as follows:

Source of Aid

£ million

Year	*European Regional Development Fund (Quota)—Net*	*European Investment Bank*[1]	*European Social Fund*[2]
1975	0·382	—	0·115
1976	0·343	26·000	0·269
1977	0·370	—	—
1978	3·314	22·900	0·142
1979	2·133	120·600	—
1980	1·121	—	—
1981	1·944	—	0·047
1982	1·499	—	0·001

Year	European Regional Development Fund (Quota)—Net	European Investment Bank[1]	European Social Fund[1]
1983	1·664	—	0·012
1984	1·306	—	—
1985	3·774	4·000	0·052
1986	4·102	2·200	0·220
1987	1·248	—	—
Total to date	23·200	175·700	0·858

[1] Figures for 1987 not readily available.

TRANSPORT

A2 (Traffic Levels)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, further to his reply of 16 March, he will list by year the predicted average and peak traffic numbers by total and broken down by freight and passenger cars for the A2 between the Lydden to Whitfield road (A256) and Whitfield to Deal road (A258) for each year from 1979 until 2005; and what are the methodology and assumptions used in calculating the net present values shown in his reply.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The actual and predicted annual average daily traffic flows available are as follows:

	1984	1986	Per cent. HGV	1987	Per cent. HGV	1993	Per cent. HGV	2008	Per cent. HGV
Lydden-Whitfield road (A256)	14,000	15,000	13	16,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Whitfield-Deal road (A258)	13,000	14,000	28	17,000	23	7,000	7	9,000	9
						8,000	8	12,000	8
Deal road-Dover Eastern docks	15,000	16,000	25	17,000	21	12,000	6	14,000	7
						14,000	6	19,000	6

The net present values were assessed using the Department's standard cost-benefit analysis. It was assumed that dualling would be undertaken at the same time as major maintenance, that the programmed M20/A20 improvement schemes would be completed, and that the accident rate on the A2 would improve as a result of street lighting installation.

Cyclists (Helmets)

Mr. Colvin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will introduce legislation to make the wearing of helmets for cyclists compulsory.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There are no plans to make the wearing of pedal cycle safety helmets compulsory. It is sensible for cyclists to wear helmets. Almost half of cycle casualties suffered some sort of head injury. Three quarters of all cycle deaths involve head injuries.

Cherished Registration Numbers

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether those persons whose vehicles have been allocated cherished registration numbers as a result of criminal action will be permitted to retain them.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Cherished registration numbers found by the Department to have been obtained through criminal action are normally withdrawn from circulation. Requests to reinstate such numbers are granted where the Department is satisfied that the keeper of the vehicle bearing a particular number acquired that number in good faith and that there is no risk of other claims to it arising.

Speed Limits

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received about the 30 mph speed limit; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received concerning the 70 mph speed limit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Speed limits are the subject of much correspondence, reflecting a wide range of views. We believe that the 30 mph national speed limit in built-up areas and the 70 mph national speed limit on motorways and dual carriageways—unless signs show otherwise—strike the right balance between mobility and safety. Departmental circulars set out the general criteria for assessment of the most appropriate speed limit under different circumstances.

Vehicle Registration Numbers

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicle registration numbers have been wrongly allocated by the driver and vehicle licensing centre as a result of criminal action.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: About 1,200 registration numbers have been withdrawn in the last six years because of doubts over their validity arising from criminal trials. The majority have been reinstated after the completion of the relevant court cases and detailed investigation by the Department, either because criminal action had not been proved, or because the numbers were in the possession of innocent parties and there was no risk of duplication. Exact figures could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled Travellers (London)

Mr. Hannam: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action is being taken to provide a co-ordinated transport system for disabled travellers in London; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: Considerable co-ordination between British Rail and London Regional Transport—the main transport providers in the capital—has already been achieved, with benefits to all public transport users. Of special interest to disabled travellers is the introduction this weekof LRT's "Carelink" bus, serving all London's main line railway stations with an hourly service connecting with the wheelchair-accessible "Airbus" for Heathrow. This now completes the link between BR's already accessible InterCity routes and the capital's major airport. Dial-a-Ride users in London can also be linked up with these services. In addition, there is a steadily growing pool of wheelchair — accessible taxis available in London, the majority of which are on radio circuits and able to provide a door-to-door service or connect with other accessible forms of transport.

Manchester Airport

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the outcome of the negotiations held on 17-18 March between the British and United States Government about United States carrier access to Manchester international airport; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Regrettably, agreement was not reached with the United States Government at the discussions held on 17-18 March that would permit the immediate commencement of additional services to Manchester by United States carriers.

Both sides agreed to pursue matters emerging from the discussions that might lead to early progress being made. At the very latest, a second round of talks will be held after the volume of air traffic during the summer season is known.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints he has received since 1 April 1987 about the reduced level of service on the Woolwich ferry caused by the industrial dispute; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department has received 10 letters and some 10 telephone calls.

We are concerned about both the poor level of service and the disproportionate cost to the taxpayer. I am meeting the leader of Greenwich borough council in the next few days to assess the likelihood of a successful outcome to the negotiations with its workforce to end the work-to-rule and start a cost-effective and efficient service.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bophuthatswana

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance is being given by Her Majesty's Government to the Tumelong project in Bophuthatswana.

Mr. Eggar: A cooking stove and school equipment to the value of £771·60 have been donated for the use of a creche run under the auspices of the Tumelong mission, a non-government institution.

Gibraltar (Shootings)

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what communication he has had with the authorities in Gibraltar following his statement to the House on 7 March about the killing of three unarmed United Kingdom citizens by members of Her Majesty's forces.

Mr. Mellor: Such communications are confidential.

Third World Debt

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet the other EEC Foreign Ministers to discuss Third world debt; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 3 February 1988, at column *639*.

NATO Summit (Brussels)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about the NATO summit meeting he attended in Brussels in March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: A number of individuals and groups have written about the NATO summit. The vast majority of these have rightly welcomed what was a most successful reaffirmation of NATO's principles and objectives.

Mr. Ghulam Farid

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs why, in the case of Mr. Ghulam Farid, he is not able to offer an interview for an entry clearance application until spring 1989; and if he will give the reason for this delay.

Mr. Eggar: Priority is given to first-time applicants. Mr. Farid has previously been refused entry clearance on the grounds that the entry clearance officer was not satisfied that he was related to his sponsor in the United Kingdom, as claimed. His subsequent appeal was dismissed by an independent adjudicator. In fairness to the many other applicants awaiting first interview, Mr. Farid must continue to wait his turn in the re-applicants queue.

USSR-UK (Educational Exchanges)

Mr. Nicholas Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to promote exchanges and educational visits by young people from the Soviet Union and Britain.

Mr. Mellor: Such exchanges are explicitly provided for in the memorandum of understanding signed during my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's visit to the Soviet Union last year. We are actively supporting them through assistance to organisations such as the British Council and the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges.

Antarctic Minerals Convention

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the current draft negotiating text of the Antarctic minerals convention.

Mr. Eggar: Yes. I am placing copies in the Library today.

Sharpeville Six

Mr. Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to inform the House of Commons when he receives a response from the South African Government to Her Majesty's Government's representations on behalf of the Sharpeville Six.

Mrs. Chalker: On 17 March the South African Supreme Court ordered a stay of execution until 18 April on the Sharpeville Six. We await the outcome of the court proceedings.

Foreign Affairs Council

Mr. Sackville: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 March.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend attended the Foreign Affairs Council and a subsequent meeting of European Community Foreign Ministers in Brussels on 22 March. Most of the meeting was devoted to political co-operation issues. In particular, there was a full discussion of the current Vienna negotiations of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). There was agreement on the importance of securing a balanced outcome to the Vienna meeting, ensuring progress in all aspects of the CSCE process. The NATO summit having established a sound framework for negotiation on conventional arms control, discussions concentrated on the issue of human rights, and it was agreed to instruct our delegations in Vienna to maintain firm pressure for substantial improvement in the performance of the Soviet Union and the countries of eastern Europe in this field. We shall be seeking significant new commitments, together with machinery to ensure the implementation of both new and old undertakings in the sphere of human rights. My right hon. and learned Friend emphasised that, for us, this was an indispensable part of the CSCE process.

A number of other current international issues, including South Africa, were also discussed.

The Council reviewed follow-up to the European Council in Brussels last month and considered the development of the Community's relations with Israel and Hungary.

Torture

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when Her Majesty's Government will be in a position to ratify the United Nations convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Mr. Eggar: Further to my reply of 7 March at column 8, we intend to introduce amendments to the Criminal Justice Bill which will enable us to ratify the United Nations convention against torture later this year.

ENERGY

Nuclear Accidents

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy who will be liable to bear the cost of compensation in the event of an accident involving a nuclear power station after the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Existing arrangements under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 will continue after privatisation.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to the answer of 7 March, *Official Report*, column *20*, if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department in each grade.

Mr. Parkinson: The table gives the information:

Grade	*Number*	*Percentage*
Unified Grading 5	4	10
Unified Grading 6	8	36
Unified Grading 7	22	18
Senior Executive Officer	3	8
Higher Executive Officer	10	11
Executive Officer	11	9
Administrative Officer	21	18
Administrative Assistant	7	13
Senior Personal Secretary	1	10
Personal Secretary	7	14
Typist	21	56
Typing Manager	2	50
Messenger	4	22
Storekeeper	1	100
Senior Professional Technology Officer	5	23
Professional Technology Officer	1	100
Assistant Librarian	1	33
Petroleum Specialist IV	4	19
Petroleum Specialist V	1	100
Reservoir Evaluation Specialist IV	3	22
Area Meter Examiner	6	67
Meter Examiner	7	70
Area Gas Examiner	3	100
Gas Examiner	5	100
Gas Meter Examiner II	6	60
Gas Meter Examiner III	6	60
Chief Gas Meter Examiner	1	100
Assistant Chief Gas Meter Examiner	1	100
Senior Scientific Officer	3	43
Higher Scientific Officer	3	60
Scientific Officer	4	100
Assistant Scientific Officer	1	100
Experimental Worker V	3	100
R & D Craftsman	1	100

DEFENCE

US Pilots

Sir Eldon Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from local authorities and others in the county of Suffolk about the impact on United States air crews stationed in the United Kingdom and on the Anglo-American liaison committees in Mildenhall and Lakenheath of allegations that United States pilots in charge of FIII strike aircraft fly them under the influence of heroin, alcohol and sexual delusions.

Mr. Freeman: I have so far received two letters from hon. Members about the image of the USAF portrayed in the play "Airbase" recently screened by the BBC and an associated article in the *Radio Times*. In addition I am informed that representations have been made direct to the BBC by local authorities, who have expressed their strong support for the role of the USAF in this country. I should add that the Government retain the highest confidence in the professional standards of the US forces stationed here.

Early Warning System

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is the present field of view, in all dimensions, of the Fylingdales ballistic missile early warning system station; and if there is any other early warning system that would detect a ballistic missile attack on the United Kingdom which did not pass through the field of view of the Fylingdales station;

(2) if Her Majesty's Government or Her Majesty's forces have access to information gathered at BMEWS sites in Greenland and Alaska.

Mr. Ian Stewart: I have nothing to add to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Kettering (Mr. Freeman) to the hon. Member for Monklands, West (Mr. Clarke) on 24 March 1987 at column *136*. I am not prepared to reveal the detailed operational characteristics of the Fylingdales system.

Vanguard Submarines and Trident Missiles

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance or position locating systems are to be used by the Vanguard class submarines or their Trident missiles.

Mr. Sainsbury: Vanguard class SSBNs will be equipped with an electrostatically supported gyro navigator (ESGN), a gravity sensing system (GSS) and a range of radio and sonar navigational aids. The Trident D5 missile has a stellar aided inertial reference navigational system.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Dickens: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to recall a number of those units of the British Army currently serving in Northern Ireland to a mainland location from where they could readily reinforce the troops remaining in Northern Ireland in the event of an emergency.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No. Force levels in Northern Ireland are kept constantly under review, and no reductions are currently planned.

Private Ian Richard Thain

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what terms Private Ian Richard Thain was retained by the Army during his imprisonment, detailing his status and arrangements made regarding his wages.

Mr. Freeman: While in prison Private Thain continued to be a serving soldier, but was not paid his military salary. Nor did his period of imprisonment count as reckonable service towards his term of engagement or his pension.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the solicitor acting on Private Thain's parole was *(a)* contracted, *(b)* paid or *(c)* advised by his Department.

Mr. Freeman: No public money was used to meet the cost of Private Thain's solicitor. It is normal practice to give such assistance as necessary to service men in custody; they are entitled to seek legal advice, and their advisors are given such assistance by the services as is deemed necessary. In Private Thain's case, his solicitors were provided with factual and background information concerning his service in the Army.

SCOTLAND

Electricity Privatisation

3. **Mr. Maclennan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received on his proposals for the privatisation of the electricity generating and supply industry in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Ten representations have been received since my right hon. and learned Friend's statement to the House on 2 March. These will be taken into account in formulating our detailed plans.

19. **Mr. Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on his plans to safeguard the economic well-being of remoter mainland and island communities under his electricity privatisation proposals.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I have given today to the hon. Member for Gordon (Mr. Bruce).

Forestry

16. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received about the increasing afforestation of the border hills.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My noble Friend the Minister of State has received representations from the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel). In addition, a number of representations have been made to Scottish Office Ministers about individual planting applications.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations he has had with the Forestry Commission concerning the new forestry grant arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Advice given to Ministers by their departments is confidential.

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is in a position to announce details of the new forestry grant scheme referred to in his answer of 16 March, *Official Report*, columns *585-87*.

Mr. Rifkind: In the answer I gave on 16 March to a question put by my hon. Friend, I stated that the changes to the tax and grant arrangements announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer were designed to provide a simpler and more widely acceptable system of support for private forestry.

The Forestry Commission's forestry grant scheme and broadleaved woodland grant scheme were closed to new applications from 15 March 1988, and will be replaced on 5 April 1988 by a single grant scheme, to be known as the woodland grant scheme. The European Commission is being informed under the provisions of article 93 of the treaty of Rome. Applications may be made under this scheme from 5 April 1988, but cannot be approved until clearance of the scheme by the European Commission.

The scheme will apply to the establishment and restocking of broadleaved, conifer and mixed woodlands, whether by planting or by natural regeneration, and to the rehabilitation of neglected woodland under 20 years of age. It will also cover planting done under the farm woodland scheme.

The objectives of the scheme are:

to encourage timber production;
to provide jobs in and increase the economic potential of rural areas with declining agricultural employment and few alternative sources of economic activity;
to provide an alternative to agricultural production and thereby assist in the reduction of agricultural surpluses;
to enhance the landscape, to create new wildlife habitats and to provide for recreation and sporting uses in the longer term;
to encourage the conservation and regeneration of existing forests and woodlands.

The rates of grant will be increased to the levels set out in the following table:

Area approved for planting or regeneration (hectares)	*Rates of grant*	
	Conifers £ per hectare	*Broadleaves £ per hectare*
Area band 0·25-0·9	1,005	1,575
1·0-2·9	880	1,375
3·0-9·9	795	1,175
10 and over	615	975

These rates of grant are generally £375 per hectare higher than those under the forestry grant scheme and the broadleaved woodland grant scheme, but the increase for broadleaved trees planted or regenerated in mixed woodlands will be substantially larger.

The rates of grant for conifer planting done under the farm woodland scheme will remain unchanged; broadleaved planting under that scheme will, however, be eligible for the new broadleaved grants.

For new planting on existing arable or improved grassland of less than 10 years of age which is undertaken outside the farm woodland scheme, there will be a supplement of £200 per hectare.

Apart from the increased rates of grant and the special supplement for planting on better land, the scheme will have a number of important features:

the simplicity of a scheme which replaces two schemes with different conditions, and which covers all forms of planting, regeneration and rehabilitation of woodlands;
a substantial differential in favour of broadleaves;
all broadleaved planting, whether it be on its own or in mixture, will attract the same rates of grant;
the broadleaved rate of grant will also apply to the planting and natural regeneration of native pinewoods in specified areas of Scotland;
environmental objectives and provisions that will apply to all types of woodland;
all types of natural regeneration will now be eligible for the first instalment of grant-aid at the time the preparatory work is carried out;

grants for the rehabilitation of derelict woodlands under 20 years of age will now include conifer and mixed woodlands;

grants will be paid in three instalments over 10 years. For conifers as well as for broadleaves, the second and third instalments will attract the rates of grant applicable when they fall due;

grant bands will be determined by the total area approved for planting regeneration under the application and not, as was the case under the Forestry Grant Scheme, by the size of the woodland of which such planting or regeneration might form a part.

The scheme will encompass a wide range of management objectives designed not only to provide timber but to encourage the development of multi-purpose woodland management, to achieve a proper balance between broadleaves and conifers, to enable forestry to play its full part as an alternative use of agricultural land no longer needed for food production, and to ensure that the expansion of forestry takes place in harmony with other land uses and the environment.

In this connection, applications relating to the establishment and restocking of broadleaved woodland will be subject to the provisions of the guidelines for the management of broadleaved woodland published by the Forestry Commission, and the new scheme will incorporate similar guidelines for the management of all types of woodland. These will be subject to the review of our broadleaves policy which is due to take place later this year.

Full details of the new woodland grant scheme are set out in a Forestry Commission leaflet, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

I am sure the announcement of this new scheme, with its greatly improved rates of grant and wide-ranging objectives, will serve to underline the Government's commitment to the sensitive yet vigorous expansion of forestry.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to be in a position to give details of the new forestry grant arrangements; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today to my right hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro).

Postal Charges

18. **Mrs. Ray Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on the implications for the economy of the Highlands and Islands of the level of charges for postal and related services.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has received no such representations. Specific arrangements exist for consumers to make detailed representations about tariffs to the Post Office Users' Council for Scotland. The Post Office's corporate plan forms part of a framework of monitoring and control of the business set by my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Medical Operations (Cancellations)

20. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of operations cancelled in Scottish hospitals since the industrial action by the trades unions began; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Health boards report that, as at 18 March, 2,609 operations had not taken place because of industrial action. In addition, almost 30,000 man-days have been lost, over 40,000 disposable sheets have been used and nearly 80,000 meals have been affected. On 24 February there was inadequate emergency cover for one or more services in more than 20 hospitals, and there have been similar instances on other days. I deplore the adverse effects upon patients and waiting lists.

Iceland (Energy Supply)

21. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Government of Iceland on the question of energy supply.

Mr. Lang: I met the Icelandic Minister of Industry on 22 January when, in the course of a brief discussion, he drew attention to various ideas which have been aired regarding a possible power link between Iceland and the United Kingdom.

Project 2,000

22. **Mr. Doran** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he proposes to implement Project 2,000.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We want to receive an education and training which not only equips them for their future roles, but is sufficiently attractive to recruit and retain those who might otherwise be tempted into other fields. We fully recognise the importance of the proposals that the UKCC has put forward which are designed to meet these ends, and hope to be in a position to make a response very soon.

Public Opinion (Assessment)

23. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what facilities exist within his Department for the assessment of Scottish public opinion on matters relating to Government policy.

Mr. Rifkind: My Departments consult extensively on all appropriate issues with those most concerned; my colleagues and I take careful account of representations made to us, and public inquiries and official meetings are arranged as required.

Inward Investment

24. **Mr. Gerald Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many inward investment announcements have been made in Scotland since 1981; how many jobs and what level of investment is involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Since 1981 Locate in Scotland is aware of 386 decisions involving planned investment in Scotland by inward investors of £2·6 billion leading to the creation and safeguarding of 50,000 jobs.

Hospital Patients (Statistics)

25. **Mr. Oppenheim:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many in-patients and out-patients were treated in Scottish hospitals *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* in 1987.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: In the year ending 31 March 1979 there were 737,816 in-patient discharges from NHS

hospitals in Scotland and 5,206,078 out-patient attendances. The corresponding figures for the year ending 31 March 1987 were 842,524 and 5,670,434. In addition, day cases treated increased over the same period from 80,271 to 158,841.

Council House Rents

26. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average council house rent in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas Hamilton: Scottish local authorities budgeted for an average council house rent of £14·65 per house per week in 1987-88. They have now set rent levels for 1988-89 and the average is £16·27 per house per week.

Ancient Monuments

27. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received regarding the care of ancient monuments in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend receives many representations covering a wide range of topics, from both organisations and individuals. We can provide more information on my hon. Friend's specific area of interest if he would let us know what that is.

Mining Industry

28. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he proposes to take to protect employment in the Scottish mining industry.

Mr. Lang: The Government are, of course, always concerned that overall employment levels within Scotland should be as high as possible, but within particular sectors this must depend on the strength and competitiveness of the industries involved.

Curriculum and Assessment (Report)

29. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on "Curriculum and Assessment in Scotland: A Policy for the 1990s".

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Some 400 responses to the consultation paper have been received to date from members of the public and from a range of bodies including education authorities, colleges of education, schools, school councils, parents organisations and churches. I expect to have further responses before the consultation period closes at Easter.

Rates Increases

30. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the average level of rates increases announced by Scottish local authorities to date for 1988-89; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The average domestic rate bill for a Scottish household will increase by 5·2 per cent. in 1988-89; 47 per cent. of the population will experience no rate increase at all. This confirms the generosity of my right hon. and learned Friend's rate support grant settlement for the year and renders all the more unacceptable the high rate increases imposed by some authorities.

Inverclyde Initiative

31. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last discussed the Inverclyde initiative with Sir Robin Duthie, chairman of the Scottish Development Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Secretary of State for Scotland regularly meets the chairman of the Scottish Development Agency to discuss the whole range of activities of the agency, including the Inverclyde initiative.

The Government remain fully committed to the regeneration of Inverclyde, in particular to its support, through the Scottish Development Agency, for the Inverclyde initiative. The initiative has already made substantial progress and I am encouraged by the further developments planned and in hand.

St. Bede's School, Balornock

32. **Mr. Michael J. Martin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received on provisions for the future educational needs of the handicapped children presently attending St. Bede's school, Balornock; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: We have received 11 representations about handicapped children attending St. Bede's primary school. It is for Strathclyde regional council to decide what provision it will make for these children.

Merksworth High School, Paisley

33. **Mr. Allen Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will meet the parents and staff of Merksworth high school, Paisley, to discuss the future of the school.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I have no plans to visit Merksworth high school at present. The future of the school is a matter for Strathclyde regional council in the first instance.

Private Health Service Contractors

34. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he last met representatives of private health service contractors; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to my replies to him of 24 and 26 February, at cols. *237*, and *367-68*.

Scottish Bus Group

35. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received about the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Some 17 representations have been received about the privatisation of the Scottish Bus Group. Most relate to the form which privatisation of the group might take and to the continuance of travel passes for retired employees of

GREAT BRITAIN HOUSE OF COMMONS
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES 1987/1988

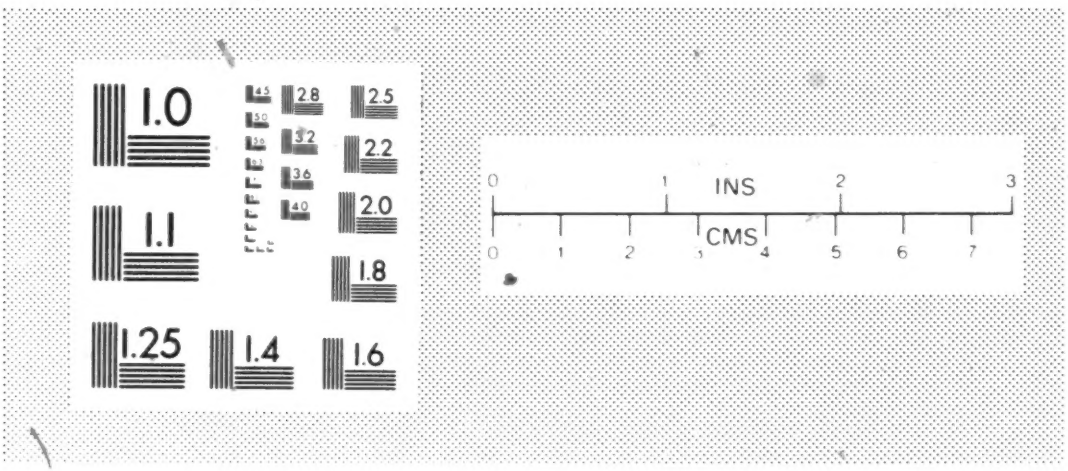
Published on microfiche by Chadwyck-Healey Ltd
Cambridge Place
Cambridge CB2 1NR
England

Distributed in the USA by Chadwyck-Healey Inc.
1101 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
USA

Date of publication: 1988

Reproduction rights: © Crown copyright 1987–88. Reproduced by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
Microfiche edition: © 1988 Chadwyck-Healey Ltd. The arrangement of these papers on microfiche is the copyright of Chadwyck-Healey Ltd.

Technical data: Film type: positive silver halide, archivally permanent microfiche processed to BSI and NMA standards.
Producing laboratory: Chadwyck-Healey Microform Publishing Services



subsidiary companies. The representations will be borne in mind when decisions are taken on the future of the bus group.

Rating Reform

36. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many Scottish local authorities have refused to co-operate with the implementation process for the community charge; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The implementation of the new system is the statutory responsibility of regional and islands councils in Scotland, all of which are taking the necessary steps to prepare for the introduction of the community charge on 1 April 1989.

46. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will delay the implementation of the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. Scotland Act 1987 until such time as all the parliamentary regulations and orders relating to it have been made and approved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: No. Satisfactory progress is being made in bringing forward the necessary regulations under the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 and my right hon. and learned Friend has no intention of delaying its implementation.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the impact on areas with high levels of need and demand for local government services of the introduction of a flat-rate community charge for the whole of Scotland.

Mr. Lang: Client group assessments of expenditure need have been developed in conjunction with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to take account of variations in both the need for services and the costs of providing services. The distribution of revenue support grant to authorities will be based on these assessments. The principle behind grant distribution will be that two authorities responsible for the same range of services should have the same community charge if they spend at assessed need.

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether registers, compiled for the purpose of levying the community charge, will be placed in public libraries; and if he will list details which will be recorded on such registers.

Mr. Lang: Section 20 of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 and regulation 17 of the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 provide that the publicly available parts of the community charges register will be available for inspection at the office of the registration officer and at the headquarters of regional, islands and district councils.

The information thus to be made available for public inspection consists of the addresses and names contained in the community charges register, and the collective community charge multiplier applying to certain premises.

National Health Service (Resources)

37. **Mr. Andrew Welsh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what consultations or representations he has had about continuing the supply of extra finance and other resources to the National Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: An additional sum of £7·6 million was made available by my right hon. and learned Friend in December in order to enable health boards in Scotland to take a number of additional measures to reduce waiting lists and make further improvements within the current financial year. No specific representations have been made about continuing this specific additional funding in future years, but expenditure on the National Health Service in Scotland in 1988-89 is planned to increase by about £120 million over this year.

A96 (Improvements)

38. **Mrs. Margaret Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent representations he has received about the time scale for improvements to the A96.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Since June 1987, 12 representations about improvements of the A96 trunk road have been received, including those from the hon. Member. The remainder have come from the commerce and industry sector, from Moray and Nairn district councils and from other local interests and individuals.

Crime Prevention Panels

39. **Mr. Bill Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to change the way crime prevention panels are selected and appointed; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Crime prevention panels are non-statutory bodies set up on the initiative of chief constables. Appointments to them are best left to local decision by the chief constable concerned.

National Health Service (Funding)

40. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many representations he has received from doctors, nurses and other National Health Service employees in favour of increased funding of the Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: A significant number of the representations I have recently received about Health Service financing appear to be from NHS personnel, but since correspondents do not always specify their employment it is not possible to identify the total number.

Scottish Council

41. **Mr. Salmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next plans to meet the Scottish Council (Development and Industry) to discuss industrial policy.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans to do so.

Hospital Beds

42. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has concerning the latest number of patients whose admission to hospital has been postponed due lack of beds.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No information on this subject is available centrally.

Free Enterprise

43. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to encourage free enterprise in Scotland.

Mr. Lang: The Government can best encourage enterprise by providing the right economic climate for businesses to set up and expand in order to create wealth and provide jobs.

Enterprise is further stimulated by the Government's policies on competition, privatisation and deregulation.

In addition, the enterprise initiative launched in January will provide fresh impetus to the continuing drive to enhance the enterprise culture in Scotland.

South of Scotland Electricity Board

44. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next proposes to meet the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board; and what matters he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend meets the chairman of the South of Scotland Electricity Board from time to time to discuss a wide range of matters affecting the electricity supply industry.

Highlands and Islands (Postal Services)

45. **Mr. Macdonald:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Scottish Post Office Board to discuss services to the Highlands and Islands.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to meet the chairman of the Scottish Post Office Board to discuss services to the Highlands and Islands. The Post Office's corporate plan forms part of a framework of monitoring and control of the business set by my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Industry.

Glasgow Garden Festival

47. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the ratio of public to private sector expenditure on the Glasgow garden festival; and what have been the sums of money involved.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested.

The development, construction and operation of the 1988 Glasgow garden festival is the responsibility of the Scottish Development Agency, which is meeting the cost within a total budget of £41·4 million. The net cost of the festival is dependent on a number of factors, notably the number of visitors, but is presently estimated to be some £18·7 million. In addition, the festival organisers have sought involvement from a wide variety of public and private sector sources and the value of such contributions is presently estimated at some £14·6 million.

Industrial Output Growth

48. **Mr. Allan Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the annual rate of growth of output of Scottish industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: Manufacturing output in Scotland in the second quarter of 1987 was 5 per cent. higher than a year earlier. Recent business surveys point to a further strong rise in manufacturing output in the second half of 1987.

Ethnic Monitoring

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the ethnic composition of staff in his Department; what is the total number of staff; and how many are *(a)* Welsh, *(b)* Scottish, *(c)* English and *(d)* members of ethnic minorities.

Mr. Rifkind: The total number of staff in the Scottish Office, excluding the Scottish Prison Service, was 6,525 on 1 March 1988. It is not known how many staff are Welsh, Scottish or English, but in a recent voluntary survey of the ethnic origins of staff, which achieved a response rate of 88 per cent., 99·6 per cent. of respondents classified themselves as "White", 0·3 per cent. as "Asian" and 0·1 per cent. as "Black".

NHS Services

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he will make it his policy to compare tenders for National Health Service domestic and catering services in the Western Isles on a like-to-like basis, in particular, as regards wages to be paid to ancillary staff.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It is the responsibility of individual health boards to evaluate tenders before awarding contracts. Boards have been told that they must ensure that all comparisons of tender costs are undertaken on a fair and equitable basis in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Scottish Home and Health Department. The particular wage rates to be paid by outside contractors to their employees are a matter for the firms concerned.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many of the commercial contractors who have so far expressed an interest in offering competitive tenders for the National Health Service catering and domestic services in the Western Isles are based in the Western Isles;

(2) if he will list those commercial contractors who have expressed an interest in offering competitive tenders for the provision of National Health Service catering and domestic services in the Western Isles;

(3) what is the estimated total cost to the Western Isles health board of preparation for competitive tendering in accordance with the instructions issued to the board on 11 December; and if he will express this as a percentage of the board's domestic and catering services budget.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available centrally.

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidelines he has issued to ensure the maintenance of current standards of service in those areas of the National Health Service domestic and catering service to be subject to commercial tender following the instructions issued by his Department to the Western Isles health board on 11 December 1987.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This subject was covered in general guidance on competitive tendering issued to

boards in 1983, 1986 and in the Scottish Home and Health Department's letter of 11 December 1987 to boards general managers.

Teachers of the Deaf

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many teachers of the deaf are being trained in Scotland in the academic year 1987-88; and how many will be trained in the academic year 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Five teachers of the deaf are being trained in Scotland in the present academic year. Decisions have not yet been reached on the intake of students for 1988-89.

"Inside Intelligence"

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the cost to date of proceedings in Scotland in relation to Anthony Cavendish's book, "Inside Intelligence".

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Proceedings in Scotland in relation to Anthony Cavendish's book "Inside Intelligence", have been brought by the Lord Advocate on behalf of the Government. The expenses of these proceedings and liability for their payment will only be known once the proceedings are concluded and when accounts have been lodged with and taxed by the Auditor of Court.

Harbours

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list by region the amount of expenditure incurred by central Government for the improvement of harbour facilities throughout Scotland in the last five years for which information is available.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and the Scottish Development Department operate financial aid schemes for all Scottish fishery harbours and ferry harbours throughout the Highlands and Islands. Assistance may be by grant and/or loan. The total expenditure for the five years up to 1987-88 is as follows:

Region	*Expenditure £*
Lothian	21,124
Grampian	1,401,191
Fife	95,137
Tayside	193,425
Highland	5,097,307
Strathclyde	2,278,487
Shetland	1,046,228
Orkney	958,946
Western Isles	1,875,284

There has been no expenditure incurred on harbours in the Borders or Dumfries and Galloway regions.

Pittenweem Harbour

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is Her Majesty's Government's policy on support for improvements to Pittenweem harbour; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Government policy remains that of supporting investment at fishery harbours where it makes both fishing and economic sense. Fife regional council is at present preparing an investment appraisal on a variety of options to develop the harbour at Pittenweem.

Until the results of that exercise are submitted to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland I am unable to indicate what level of support, if any, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared to give to the proposed development.

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what studies have been, or are being, carried out by his Department in relation to proposed improvements to Pittenweem harbour; and when the results of these are likely to be made public.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland's responsibilities are to examine the proposals put forward by the harbour authority concerned. Fife regional council carried out a site survey of the harbour at Pittenweem, assisted financially by the Department.

From the results of the survey the council has prepared a variety of development options upon which it is now carrying out an investment appraisal exercise. Until the investment appraisal exercise is completed and the results submitted to the Department I am unable to make any further comment.

Soft Fruit Growers

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the total amount of additional funds he proposes to make available to growers of soft fruit in Scotland in the light of the Government's ban on the use of Dinoseb; over what period these will be available; for what purposes they will be available; and what will the maximum amount any one grower can receive in a calendar year.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The purpose of the new scheme will be to assist commercial raspberry growers in Scotland to replace existing plantations of the variety Glen Clova. Details of the scheme will be announced as soon as possible.

Schools (Staffing Review)

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the review of staffing as recommended by the Main committee in schools Joint National Council for teaching staff in school education, circular SE40 paragraph 7, to be completed.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I hope that the Department's review of staffing standards will be completed in time to incorporate its findings in guidance to education authorities by the end of the 1987-88 session.

Rate Rebates

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was paid to Shetland Islands council under section 2(1) of the Rating (Revaluation Rebates) (Scotland) Act 1985, in respect of the years 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Lang: The information is set out in the table.

Year	Amount Paid £
1985-86	362,611
1986-87	200,842
1987-88	148,200

The grant paid for the current financial year is an advance of 95 per cent. of the estimated rebates for the year of £156,000.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Rating Reform

50. **Mr. McKelvey:** To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what will be the increase in family income supplement made to cover the 20 per cent. minimum poll tax payment; and in how many individual cases in Scotland that increase will not cover the full cost of the minimum contribution.

Mr. Scott: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Cheadle (Mr. Day) and the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 16 December 1987 at column *599-601*. The precise amounts to be included in the income-related benefit levels from April 1989 (including family credit, which replaces family income supplement from April 1988) will be decided nearer the time.

Nurses (Pay)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the maximum pay scale for *(a)* a registered nurse, *(b)* a ward sister and *(c)* a student registered nurse at constant and cash prices for each year since 1974.

Mr. Newton: The information is given in the table:

Date of Settlement	Actual Maximum of Scale			Maximum of Scale at Constant 1974 Prices[2]		
	Staff Nurse	Ward Sister	Student Nurse	Staff Nurse	Ward Sister	Student Nurse
23 July 1974	2,202	3,000	1,323	2,202	3,000	1,323
1 April 1975	2,646	3,552	1,740	2,096	2,813	1,378
1 April 1976	2,958	3,864	2,052	2,076	2,712	1,440
1 April 1977	3,106	4,057	2,182	1,854	2,421	1,302
1 April 1978	3,385	4,429	2,356	1,874	2,453	1,305
1 April 1979	3,813	4,949	2,667	1,826	2,370	1,277
1 April 1980	5,119	6,807	3,390	2,096	2,787	1,388
1 April 1981	5,426	7,215	3,593	2,003	2,664	1,327
23 August 1982	6,091	8,103	4,035	2,069	2,752	1,370
[1]	—	—	—	1,986	2,642	1,315
1 April 1984	6,582	8,751	4,277	2,054	2,731	1,335
1 April 1985	6,960	9,254	4,523	2,032	2,702	1,321
1 July 1986	7,750	10,000	4,875	2,210	2,852	1,390
1 April 1987	8,600	12,000	5,170	2,349	3,278	1,412

[1] No award in 1983 because of two year agreement in 1982.
[2] Figures deflated by Retail Price Index for July.

Bank Nurses

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of bank nurses employed by each regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) on 18 March 1988 at columns *714-16*.

Nurses (Education)

Ms. Armstrong: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the percentage increase or decrease in expenditure on nurses' education for each of the years 1979 to 1987 expressed in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* real terms.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is as follows:

Percentage increase or decrease in expenditure on nurses' education and training (England)

	(a) Cash terms	(b) Real terms
1979-80	+17·1	0
1980-81	+24·3	−5·1
1981-82	+ 7·0	−2·6
1982-83	+ 5·5	−1·6
1983-84	+ 4·2	−0·4
1984-85	− 1·4	−5·6
1985-86	+ 3·1	−2·6
1986-87	+ 2·6	−0·5

Spending on nurse training is determined largely by health authorities in the light of their local assessments of the future need for professional staff. The objective is to ensure that training provision matches the needs of the NHS, not to maintain any set level of expenditure.

Benefit Claims

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether supplementary benefit claims drafted other than on forms produced by his Department can be accepted; and what instructions have been issued to benefit officers concerning the acceptance and processing of such claims.

Mr. Portillo: Claims for supplementary benefit do not have to be made on forms produced by this Department. However, when a claim is received, a questionnaire asking for precise details of the claimant's financial circumstances must be completed. The relevant instructions to local office staff are contained in the S manual, copies of which are held in the Library.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the availability of claim forms produced by his Department for supplementary benefit claimants, and the effects on the administration of his Department's duties.

Mr. Portillo: The initial supplementary benefit claim form SB1 is available from local offices of this Department, Crown post offices, most libraries, social services departments and many voluntary organisations. Unemployment benefit offices at present stock a similar form (SB21), but from 11 April they, too, will stock the SB1.

Postal claim forms, which ask for precise details of a claimant's financial circumstances, are available from DHSS local offices only and, in the case of form B1 for unemployed claimants, from unemployment benefit offices.

Children's Work

Mr. Archer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to seek to bring child-minding within the ambit of legislation on the hours and conditions of children's employment.

Mrs. Currie: Childminders are required to be registered by local authorities under the Nurseries and Childminders Regulation Act 1948. It is not considered that a local authority would register a child aged under 16 as a childminder.

Payments (Orkney and Shetland)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many individuals were in receipt of single payments in *(a)* Orkney and *(b)* Shetland in 1986-87, and in the latest financial year for which figures are available;

(2) what the social fund allocation for 1988-89 is for Orkney;

(3) how much was spent on single payments to claimants in Orkney in 1986-87.

Mr. Portillo: The Orkney isles are served by the Wick local office. Figures for the residents of Orkney are not kept separately in the information collected at Wick. Shetland is served by the local office in Lerwick.

Information on the number of people in receipt of single payment is not kept and would be disproportionately costly to obtain. However, information broken down by local office on the number and amount of single payments made during the period April 1986 to April 1987 is available in the Library, as are social fund allocations for 1988-89.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department.

Mr. Portillo: On 1 January 1988, the total number of staff located outside the London pay area was 84,651, which represents 83·1 per cent. of all staff employed by the Department. The numbers are shown by grade as follows:

	Number
Grade 4	3
Grade 5	12
Grade 6	53
Grade 7	432
Senior Executive Officer	896
Higher Executive Officer	4,376
Local Officer I/Executive Officer	18,924
Local Officer II/Administrative Officer	37,553
Administrative Assistant	13,785
Secretarial/Typing Grades	1,991
Telephonist Grades	157
Reprographics Grades	145
Office Keeper Grades	22
Paper Keeper Grades	290
Messengers	951
Resettlement Officers	146
Medical Board Assistants	19
Radiographers	7
Handicraft Instructors	5
Security Officer Grades	391
Storekeeper Grades	73
Drivers	12
Cleaners	501
Eye Maker/Fitter Grades	41
Workshop Supervisors	24
Technologist Grades	185
Legal Grades	12
Statistician Grades	5
Medical Grades	264
Dental Grades	30
Nursing Grades	10
Hospital Grades	3,016
Social Service Inspector Grades	64
Industrials	256
Total	84,651

South Cumbria Health Authority

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what changes in revenue have been made in South Cumbria district health authority during the last five years for which figures are available, both in cash and real terms and as percentages.

Mrs. Currie: The funding of South Cumbria health authority is a matter for the Northern regional health authority. However I understand that the information requested is as given in the table.

Gross Revenue Expenditure[1] (£000s)			*Percentage Increase*	
1982-83		*1986-87*		
Cash	*at 1986-87 prices*	*Cash*	*Cash*	*Real Terms[2]*
19,301	23,070	26,348	36·5	14·2

[1] Figures are based on health authorities' summarised income and expenditure accounts.

[2] Adjusted by the Gross Domestic Product deflator.

Income Disregards

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will state the real-term value of the £35 income disregard from occupational pensions above which unemployment benefit is abated for those aged 60 years and over as a percentage of the value in April 1981;

(2) what would be the cost of restoring the 1981 real-term value of the £35 income disregard from occupational pensions above which unemployment benefit is abated *(a)* when applied to those aged 60 years and over and *(b)* when applied to those aged 55 years and over;

(3) what plans he has to increase the level of disregarded income from occupational pensions above which unemployment benefit is reduced for those aged 60 years and over.

Mr. Scott: Based on the movement in the retail prices index between April 1981 and January 1988 (the latest date for which information is available), the real-term value of the £35 threshold expressed as a percentage of the April 1981 value is 71·7 per cent. The cost of restoring the £35 threshold to its 1981 value would be about £7 million for those aged 60 or over and about £12 million for all those aged 55 or over. We have no immediate plans to increase the present threshold.

Carers

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the likely increase in the number of carers of elderly, sick and disabled people in 1993 and 1998.

Mr. Newton: We do not hold information centrally which would enable us to make such an estimate. The OPCS 1985 general household survey, the results of which will be available in the near future, will provide better basic information, but it is doubtful whether it would enable credible forward projections to be made.

Cold Weather Payment

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to increase the £500 capital limit in the criteria of eligibility for exceptionally cold weather payment.

Mr. Scott: The £500 capital limit is in line with that for other single payments of supplementary benefit. We shall be reviewing the exceptionally cold weather scheme in the light of this winter's experience.

Pensioners (Identity Cards)

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to introduce a national identity card for retirement pensioners.

Mr. Scott: I have no plans to do so. Pensioners who have chosen to be paid by order book can produce the book as proof of pensioner status. Pensioners who have chosen to be paid by other means are issued, on request, with a card confirming pensioner status.

Smokeless Tobacco Products

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will detail the scientific and research evidence which has been produced to him in support of the proposed ban of all smokeless tobacco products;

(2) on what statistical, scientific and analytical information his Department has based its proposed ban on all smokeless tobacco products.

Mrs. Currie: A large number of studies and reports have been taken into account by the Government. A detailed list of the references has been placed in the Library. Many are contained in a report of the advisory committee to the surgeon general of the United States Government on "The Health Consequences of Using Smokeless Tobacco" which was published in April 1986.

NHS (Efficiency Savings)

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services in how many cases community health councils have identified value-for-money efficiency savings in the National Health Service since 1983 which have subsequently been implemented; and what are the savings so accrued that have been redirected to patient care.

Mr. Newton: I regret that this information is not collected centrally.

Non-essential Operations

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the total number, cost and type of non-essential operations such as cosmetic surgery and sex change operations which were carried out in the National Health Service in the last year.

Mrs. Currie: It is for the clinician responsible for the care of the individual patient to decide whether treatment including surgery is necessary. The available statistics do not provide a breakdown of the reasons for which plastic surgery is performed. For information on the number and cost of sex change operations, I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Congleton (Mrs. Winterton) on 1 March 1988 at column *551*.

Tobacco (Labelling)

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he proposed to take to ensure compliance by Her Majesty's Government with the proposed European Community directive on the labelling of tobacco products, with particular regard to the harmonisation of national legislation governing the labelling of manufactured tobacco.

Mrs. Currie: If the European Community adopts a directive on the labelling of tobacco products, we will ensure that its terms are observed in the United Kingdom. We are anxious to maintain our system of controlling these matters by way of voluntary agreement between the Government and the tobacco industry. The European Commission is considering whether compliance by this means will be acceptable.

South East Thames RHA (Emergency Departments)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the total cost of each accident and emergency department in the South East Thames regional health authority area in the last year and if he will list how the total cost may be analysed under the headings of medical staff, nursing staff, medical and surgical supplies and equipment, pharmacy, radiology andother costs.

Mrs. Currie: The information for 1986-87 in respect of those hospitals in the South East Thames region which undertake treatment of accident and emergency patients is as follows:

Accident and emergency patients

Health district and hospital	*Total expenditure*	*Medical staff*	*Nursing staff*	*Analysis of total expenditure* *Medical and surgical supplies and equipment*	*Pharmacy*	*Radiology*	*Other expenditure*
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bexley							
Erith and District	77,328	12,178	20,722	3,273	14,223	4,305	22,627
Queen Mary's	1,299,768	325,089	322,871	87,811	53,733	78,557	431,707
Brighton							
Royal Sussex County	1,103,160	90,115	453,872	31,560	71,310	129,792	326,511
Bromley							
Beckenham	77,644	14,111	29,124	3,193	3,834	5,363	22,019
Bromley	982,541	133,697	291,996	61,388	66,038	160,405	269,017
Orpington	464,532	104,849	125,638	48,214	16,744	43,685	125,402
Camberwell							
King's College	1,423,389	219,067	491,450	50,309	51,855	161,726	448,982
Canterbury and Thanet							
Kent and Canterbury	881,942	118,953	244,428	76,361	48,631	86,015	307,554
Thanet District General Hospital	494,758	113,887	139,223	29,495	20,495	61,784	129,874
Dartford and Gravesham							
Gravesend and North Kent	374,048	57,779	74,713	18,995	54,146	54,145	114,270
West Hill	1,039,855	134,994	318,401	65,417	22,463	172,561	326,019
Eastbourne							
Eastbourne District General Hospital	996,343	159,302	338,176	72,613	41,086	105,124	280,042
Uckfield	41,872	3,013	15,620	6,312	5,419	—	11,508
Greenwich							
Brook General	1,204,834	129,883	513,648	65,118	58,424	113,422	324,339
Greenwich District General Hospital	923,497	86,935	420,530	59,076	16,436	47,808	292,712
Hastings							
Royal East Sussex	642,614	95,042	144,141	44,993	118,439	72,554	167,445
Lewisham and North Southwark							
Guy's	1,530,070	165,432	353,643	92,727	29,918	213,059	675,291
Lewisham	1,327,890	105,424	499,846	61,207	33,432	111,592	516,389
Sydenham	193,593	32,188	83,023	15,174	3,780	16,641	42,787
Maidstone							
Maidstone	636,521	76,892	158,608	48,024	34,628	73,710	244,659
Medway							
Medway	1,143,488	186,445	338,548	60,704	37,454	168,144	352,193
Sheppey General	80,538	15,145	11,014	4,331	6,461	7,939	35,648
South East Kent							
Buckland	275,092	47,297	82,856	33,349	10,281	23,576	77,733
Royal Victoria (Folkestone)	200,389	53,907	49,304	20,715	6,851	11,470	58,142
Victoria (Deal)	168,289	33,513	53,671	23,818	6,178	7,556	43,553
William Harvey	795,459	156,450	233,754	96,335	27,162	70,175	211,583
Tunbridge Wells							
Kent and Sussex	580,636	149,624	130,495	36,107	28,245	64,276	171,889
West Lambeth							
St. Thomas'	2,208,877	458,124	569,875	88,926	128,361	137,845	825,746

Claimants (Lewisham)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people aged 16 to 17 years were in receipt of supplementary benefit in the London borough of Lewisham at the latest available date.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that this information is not available.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently in receipt of *(a)* supplementary benefit, *(b)* family income supplement and *(c)* housing benefit in the London borough of Lewisham.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is as follows:

	Number
(a) Supplementary benefit	[1]86,667
(b) Family income supplement	n/a
(c) Housing benefit	37,241

[1] Latest available figure—17 November 1987.

The figures for *(a)* relate to the eight local offices which serve the London borough of Lewisham. The boundaries are not conterminous. The figures for *(c)* relate to the London borough of Lewisham.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any estimate of how many people will be on income support in the London borough of Lewisham from April.

Mr. Portillo: No local estimates have been made of the number of people who will be on income support from April.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any estimate of the number of people eligible for family credit in the London borough of Lewisham from April.

Mr. Portillo: No. Estimates are possible only on a national basis.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any estimate of the number of people in the London borough of Lewisham who will lose their entitlement to housing benefit from April.

Mr. Portillo: No. The analysis of the effect of the reforms; "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income-related Benefits", published in October 1987 cannot be applied with any degree of reliability to individual local authority areas.

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many young people were refused benefit after failing to take up a place on a YTS course in the London borough of Lewisham in 1987.

Mr. Portillo: No young person in the London borough of Lewisham was refused supplementary benefit in 1987 because he or she failed to take up a YTS place.

Social Security Reform

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any estimate of the number of people in the London borough of Lewisham who will receive less benefit after April 1988, after taking the transitional arrangements into account.

Mr. Portillo: The Income Support (Transitional) Regulations 1987 are designed to ensure that the level of benefit will be preserved for the majority of continuing claimants at the point of transition. No local estimates have been made of the number of people who will receive less benefit after April 1988.

Tobacco Advertising

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish the first report of the committee for monitoring agreements on tobacco advertising and sponsorship; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The committee for monitoring agreements on tobacco advertising and sponsorship has submitted its first report and copies have been placed in the Library. The Government are grateful to the committee and its chairman Sir Peter Lazarus for their excellent work in monitoring the agreements and for their first report.

The report shows that in general the system of voluntary agreements which govern tobacco advertising, health warnings and sports sponsorship are working and that the tobacco companies are honouring their commitments. The chairman has highlighted areas where he feels the agreements are inadequate and we will take note of these points in negotiating future agreements with the industry.

We note and share his concern that the tobacco advertising on retail outlets put in place before the current agreement and which would not comply with current agreements if put in place since 1 April 1986 should be replaced more quickly than currently envisaged by the tobacco companies. We note the suggestion that the committee would benefit from more secretariat support and this will be considered.

The Government remain concerned about the impact of cigarette advertising, especially where children and young women are concerned. The present agreement on advertising expires at the end of next year. We shall be seeking to open negotiations with the industry as soon as possible to achieve a new agreement which reflects current needs.

Smoking

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, when he expects to publish the Froggatt committee report on smoking and health.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 17 December 1987, c: 703.]:* The fourth report of the independent scientific committee on smoking and health is published today. Copies have been placed in the Library.

The report reviews the progress and achievements of the policy of tobacco product modification, introduced in the 1970s to encourage the development of less harmful products, and recommends action to reduce further the amount of the main carcinogenic and other health-threatening components in cigarettes. It concludes that, together with the welcome reduction in the proportion of people who smoke, the policy has contributed to the more favourable trends which are developing in certain smoking-related diseases, most notably in lung cancer. We will be opening discussions with the tobacco industry about further reductions in the harmful components of tobacco smoke.

The report recommends that the Government consider all the options available to encourage smokers to stop smoking and non-smokers not to start. The report also considers the effects of breathing other people's tobacco smoke, sometimes referred to as passive smoking or environmental tobacco smoke. The committee has reviewed the evidence on the possible health implications of passive smoking and concludes that the findings overall are consistent with there being a small inrease of 10-30 per cent. in the risk of lung cancer amongst non-smokers. The committee estimates that this might account for several hundred out of the current annual total of about 40,000 lung cancer deaths in the United Kingdom.

The report draws attention to the link between smoking and reduced birthweight and perinatal mortality. It calls for further research across a range of smoking-related subjects.

The Government accept the thrust of the report, which reflects established policies of voluntary arrangements, and we will be considering in that light how the recommendations can best be carried forward. Action on

some recommendations can be taken relatively quickly, but others will need further discussion and negotiation with interested parties, including the tobacco industry. As part of this process the Government will be glad to receive comments on the committee's recommendations and on ways in which they might be implemented with the aim of reducing health problems from smoking.

AIDS

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what his latest assessment of the numbers of cases of AIDS and of people with HIV infection and of the extent to which the AIDS virus is spreading in the population generally in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 March 1988]:* To the end of February 1988, the total number of reported cases of AIDS in the United Kingdom was 1,344. To the end of December 1987, the total of reported HIV-antibody positive persons was 8,016, but it is likely that the true number of people infected with HIV is considerably greater. Consideration of the risk behaviour groups of people reported as antibody positive shows that the great majority are male homosexuals or bisexuals or injecting drug misusers, but in about 5 per cent. of the cases, the infection is thought to have been acquired heterosexually.

Midwives

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many midwives have left the employment of *(a)* East Anglian regional health authority and *(b)* Great Yarmouth and Waveney district health authority in the last year for which figures are available and in each year from 1978-79;

(2) how many midwives are employed in *(a)* East Anglian regional health authority and *(b)* Great Yarmouth and Waveney district health authority in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what were the comparable figures for 1978-79.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 8 March 1988]:* I regret that some of the information sought by my hon. Friend is not available.

Because of the NHS reorganisation in 1982, figures for district health authorities on a consistent basis are not held centrally for earlier years.

Information on staff leaving health service employment is not held centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairmen of the respective health authorities.

Available information is shown in the table.

National health service midwifery staff in post[1] at 30 September, whole time equivalents[2]

	1978	*1982*	*1986*
East Anglian RHA	881	880	946
Great Yarmouth and Waveney DHA	n/a	58	59

Source: DHSS Annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.
[1] Includes student midwives and agency staff.
[2] Figures rounded to nearest whole time equivalent.

Mental Handicap Nurses

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what plans he has to ensure the full use of specialist trained mental handicap nurses in patterns of service training;

(2) if he will make it his policy to issue guidelines to health authorities to provide for the continuation of mental handicap nurse training to ensure the provision of competent practitioners for this client group.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 16 March 1988]:* It is for health authorities to ensure that training provision matches the needs of the NHS, in the light of their own assessments of their future requirements for professional staff. Similarly, health authorities should seek to ensure that mental handicap nurses are properly used in the training of students. We are, however, at present considerng the UKCC's "Project 2000" proposals for changes in the pattern of nurse education and training as a whole.

Mr. Ronald Davidson

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why there has been a delay in respect of a settlement of benefit entitlement for the late Mr. Ronald Davidson of 5, Enderby crescent, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, who died of asbestosis.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* There were delays at various stages, which I regret. They were largely occasioned by the need to obtain further medical evidence. The hon. Member has written to me about this and I will reply to him in more detail. I understand that the doctors at the medical boarding centre (respiratory diseases) in Sheffield have now reached a conclusion and Mrs. Davidson's claim for benefit will shortly be determined.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will arrange for responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department in future to be made publicly available by placing them in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this be not done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. MacGregor: My Department engages in a very wide range of consultation exercises in the course of its ongoing business. I do not believe that a procedure on the lines suggested by the hon. Member would represent a cost-effective use of the resources likely to be involved.

My Department will, however, respond to individual requests by providing a list of the organisations which have submitted views on consultation documents so that interested individuals can make direct approaches to individual organisations for copies of their responses.

THE ARTS

National Anthem

Mr. Holt: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will take steps to ensure that the national anthem is played, either at the commencement or end of live theatrical productions.

Mr. Luce: This is a matter for decision by individual theatre managements.

Jubilee Gardens

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts if the Jubilee gardens will be transferred to the new South Bank body; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* It is for the London residuary body to determine to whom Jubilee gardens should be transferred, and no final decision has yet been taken.

Rating Reform

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Minister for the Arts what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the community charge on local authorities' financial support for the arts.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* Local authorities take their own spending decisions. The change to a community charge system should make it easier for local charge-payers to know what is being done on their behalf.

EMPLOYMENT

National Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the number of employees employed under the national dock labour scheme made redundant in each year since its inception and the amount paid in redundancy payments in each year.

Mr. Nicholls: The national voluntary severance scheme, providing for severance payments to registered dock workers, was first introduced in 1969. Numbers severed under this scheme, and the total amount paid, as reported in the annual reports of the National Dock Labour Board, were:

	Number of dockers	*Amount (£ million)*
1969	3,006	5·1
1970	3,545	5·8
1971	2,415	3·9
1972	7,647	22·5
1973	3,874	13·8
1974	28	0·1
1975	2,245	10·4
1976	1,611	7·1
1977	1,000	6·0
1978	1,025	6·6
1979	2,112	16·2
1980	2,556	21·5
1981	4,785	68·0
1982	2,787	60·0
1983	1,494	32·0
1984	1,304	30·7
1985[1]	328	7·3

[1] January to March.

In October 1985 a new scheme for funding severances was introduced, known as the national employers release arrangement. The corresponding figures are:

	Number of dockers	*Amount (£ million)*
1985[1]	202	4·8
1986	1,353	37·4
1987	471	13·0

[1] October to December.

Docklands (Vacancies)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many vacancies in London docklands were *(a)* notified to, and *(b)* filled by jobcentres in each of the last seven years.

Mr. Lee: Following is the available information. The table shows the total numbers of placings by jobcentres and vacancies notified to jobcentres covering an area closely corresponding to the London docklands development area for each year from 1983 to 1987.

London Docklands development area[2]

Year	*Notified vacancies*	*Placings*
1983[1]	12,291	7,900
1984	17,920	11,771
1985	19,959	13,472
1986	22,108	15,791
1987	22,919	14,816

[1] The requested information is only available from April 1983. The figures therefore relate to April to December only.

[2] The jobcentres which cover the London docklands development area are Bermondsey, Plaistow, Poplar, Shoreditch and Stepney. However, vacancies notified to Bermondsey jobcentre between May 1985 and April 1986 are excluded, as they cannot be separately identified.

Women (Redundancy)

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to introduce legislation removing the discrimination against women in qualifying for redundancy in the light of the case of Cato v Queen Charlotte's special health authority.

Mr. Nicholls: On 29 October 1987 my hon. Friend the Minister of State announced his intention to increase the age limit up to which women can receive a statutory redundancy payment from 60 to 65 years as soon as legislative time was available. I am afraid that I cannot be more specific at present.

Disabled People

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects the results of the review of employment assistance to disabled people.

Mr. Lee: I hope that we will be able to complete our internal review as soon as possible this year.

Restart

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the offices where the new restart questionnaire has been piloted from 1 February.

Mr. Lee: The restart interview form was launched in the following locations on 1 February 1988:

Billingham
Dundee
Ealing
Huddersfield
Leicester
Plymouth
Port Talbot
Preston
Stoke
Watford
Wimbledon

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will provide details for each of the offices where the new restart questionnaire has been piloted of the number of people found to be unavailable for work for the period before the introduction of the new questionnaire and for the period following its introduction.

Mr. Lee: The number of people referred in the months of January and February 1988 fom the 11 launch offices to an unemployment benefit office because of a doubt about their availability for work is shown in the table.

The two sets of figures are not directly comparable in that those for the period following the launch of the restart interview form on 1 February include a number of referrals which would previously have been sent to claimant advisers.

It is not possible to provide figures for the number of those referred to unemployment benefit offices who are subsequently disallowed benefit since the number of such decisions which follows a restart interview cannot be separately identified within the total number of decisions which follow from referrals to adjudication officers from unemployment benefit offices.

Numbers referred to unemployment benefit offices because of doubts over availability

Office	*January 1988 (5-week period)*	*February 1988 (4 week period)*
Billingham	0	30
Dundee	1	54
Ealing	46	57
Huddersfield	21	37
Leicester	62	228
Plymouth	12	50
Port Talbot	2	34
Preston	20	72
Stoke	18	146
Watford	6	37
Wimbledon	19	96

Unified Training Scheme

Mr. Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what will be the position of community programme participants who decline an offer of continuing beyond September 1988 on the new unified training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: All community programme participants joining from the end of February are guaranteed six months on that programme. Most community programme participants who have not obtained a job will recognise the value of the new employment training programme, and will wish to transfer either at the end of their time on community programme or from 5 September, the start date of the new programme. Benefit sanctions will not be imposed on those participants who choose not to transfer at the end of their six months on community programme.

Job Clubs

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to expedite the development of more job clubs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: A total of 1,184 job clubs are now open, an increase of 51 in the past 13 weeks. The planning assumption in the White Paper "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1988-89 to 1990-91" (Cm. 288) is that the programme will expand to 1,500 job clubs by the end of 1988-89.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Strang: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total number of inspectors at the Health and Safety Executive in each year since 1979; what are the projected figures for each year until 1991; and whether he will list these figures broken down into factory, specialist, agricultural, mines and quarries, nuclear installations and explosives inspectorates.

Mr. Nicholls *[holding answer 22 March 1988]:* The total number of inspectors employed by the Health and Safety Executive since 1979 is as follows:

					1 April					
	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*[1]1987*	*[2]1988*
Agricultural	190	178	176	166	159	154	162	163	166·0	158
Factory (General)	742	759	735	678	654	627	652	623	621·5	598
Factory (Specialist)	209	221	215	208	198	198	193	201	210·0	204
Explosives	15	14	13	13	15	15	15	19	17·0	14
Industrial air pollution	46	48	46	46	42	40	41	40	Nil	Nil
Mines and quarries	116	113	113	111	105	102	96	84	87·5	76
Nuclear	106	102	106	101	103	106	107	101	102·5	120
Total Health and Safety Executive inspectors	1,424	1,435	1,404	1,323	1,276	1,242	1,266	1,231	1,204·5	1,170

[1] On 1 April 1987, 37 industrial air pollution inspectors were transferred from the Health and Safety Executive to the Department of the Environment.
[2] 1 March 1988 figure.

The planned figures for 1988-89 are as follows:

	Figures
HM Factory Inspectors	649
Specialist Inspectors	216
HM Agricultural Inspectors	166
HM Inspectors of Mines and Quarries	77
HM Nuclear Installations Inspectors	121
Explosives Inspectors	18
Total	1,247

Figures for the years beyond 1998-89 are not available.

Loan Guarantee Scheme

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans are being considered further to develop the loan guarantee scheme for inner city investment and development.

Mr. Cope *[pursuant to his reply, 17 March 1988, c. 642]:* I regret that there was an error in the original reply at the above reference. The increase in the guarantee available under the loan guarantee scheme to businesses based or wishing to be based in the 16 inner city task force areas has been increased from 70 per cent. to 85 per cent., and not 80 per cent. as stated in the original reply. The full text of the reply is as follows:

"One of this Government's principal aims has been to encourage the establishment and development of businesses in the inner city areas. As part of the action for cities initiative, launched on Monday 7 March 1988, we have increased the guarantee available under the loan guarantee scheme to businesses based or wishing to be based in the 16 inner city task force areas from 70 per cent. to 85 per cent. I hope that this increase in the guarantee will make it easier for businesses in inner city areas to take advantage of the scheme."

NORTHERN IRELAND

Companies

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of companies operate *(a)* in the public sector and *(b)* in the private sector in Northern Ireland; and what steps he is taking to encourage public companies to move into the private sector.

Mr. Stanley: At 31 March 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were six public corporations operating on a commercial basis in Northern Ireland. In addition, the Government had a shareholding interest in 53 companies, representing 0·4 per cent. of the total companies incorporated in Northern Ireland and set up under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. It is the Government's policy to promote efficiency, increase incentives and widen share ownership, and the Government will continue to seek opportunities to maximise private sector ownership of those undertakings in which it has an interest, as commercial circumstances permit.

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list in the *Official Report* the companies which have been privatised in Northern Ireland since May 1979.

Mr. Stanley: There have not been any.

Residential Homes (East Antrim)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many residents are presently cared for in residential homes controlled by the Department of Health and Social Services in East Antrim; and how this compares with the number of residents accommodated during 1985-86 and 1986-87.

Mr. Needham: Information is not available in the precise form requested since no residential home is controlled by the Department of Health and Social Services. Responsibility for registration and inspection of private residential homes rest with health and social services boards.

In the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey unit of management, on 31 December 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, 51 residents were cared for in voluntary and private residential accommodation registered with the Northern Health and Social Services Board. For the year ended 31 December 1985 the total number of residents in such homes was 52.

Nursing Homes (East Antrim)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for how many residents in private nursing homes in East Antrim a financial contribution is being paid from public funds.

Mr. Needham: I regret the information is not available.

Private Nursing Homes

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the estimated value of payments to be made to private nursing homes in East Antrim for this financial year in respect of residents supported by public funds;

(2) what is the estimated cost of financial assistance for residents in private nursing homes in East Antrim 1988-89.

Mr. Needham: I regret the information is not available.

Residential Places

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many residential places will be provided in homes controlled by the Department of Health and Social Services in 1988-89.

Mr. Needham: Health and social services boards are responsible for the registration and inspection of private and voluntary residential homes. It is not possible to forecast the number of places which will be provided in the independent residential sector in 1988-89. The critical factors will be the demand for places and the preparedness of independent operators (including voluntary organisations) to provide such places.

Residential Homes

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total number of registered residential homes in East Antrim; and how many *(a)* notified inspections, and *(b)* unnotified inspections have been carried out by Department of Health and Social Services officials in the last year for which records are available.

Mr. Needham: The information is not held centrally. The Department has no responsibility for carrying out

inspections of registered residential homes. However, the registering and inspecting authority, namely, the Northern board, tells me that, in the year ended 29 February 1988, a total of 25 notified and two unnotified inspections have been carried out in the six registered residential homes in the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey unit of management.

Dog Licensing

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the present position in Northern Ireland in the light of proposals regarding dog licensing in Great Britain; and what proposals he has had for parity of legislation.

Mr. Needham: The Department of Agriculture has monitored the operation of the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 since it came into force. The order was aimed at encouraging responsible dog ownership, reducing the stray dog population and ensuring the effective licensing and control of dogs and it has been well received. There are no proposals for parity of legislation.

International Fund for Ireland

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Governments of the United States of America and Canada on the future of the International Fund for Ireland.

Mr. Stanley: During my visit to the United States this month I held discussions with the United States Administration on the progress made by the International Fund for Ireland and its future funding. There have also been discussions with the Canadian Government at official level regarding the fund.

Forestry

Mr. Quentin Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proposals he has for revised planting grants following the changes in tax treatment of commercial forestry announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 15 March.

Mr. Needham: As from 5 April 1988 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is introducing in Northern Ireland a new woodland grant scheme.

The Northern Ireland forestry grant scheme and broadleaved woodland grant scheme have been closed to new applications from 15 March 1988, and will be replaced on 5 April 1988 by a single grant scheme, to be known as the woodland grant scheme.

The scheme will apply to the establishment and restocking of broadleaved, conifer and mixed woodlands, whether by planting or by natural regeneration, and to the rehabilitation of neglected woodland under 20 years of age. It will also cover planting done under the farm woodland scheme.

The objectives of the scheme are:

- to encourage timber production;
- to provide jobs in and increase the economic potential of rural areas with declining agricultural employment and few alternative sources of economic activity;
- to provide an alternative to agricultural production and thereby assist in the reduction of agricultural surpluses;
- to enhance the landscape, to create new wildlife habitats and to provide for recreation and sporting uses in the longer term;
- to encourage the conservation and regeneration of existing forests and woodlands.

The rates of grant will be increased substantially, and will be as set out in the following table:

Area approved for planting or regeneration (hectares)	*Rates of Grant* *Conifers* £ *per hectare*	*Broadleaves* £ *per hectare*
Area band		
0·25-0·90	1,005	1,575
1·00-2·90	880	1,375
3·00-9·90	795	1,175
10 and over	615	975

These rates of grant are generally £375 per hectare higher than those under the forestry grant scheme and the broadleaved woodland grant scheme, but the increase for broadleaved trees planted or regenerated in mixed woodlands will be substantially larger.

The rates of grant for conifer planting eligible under the farm woodland scheme and for short rotation coppice will be as set out in the following table:

Area approved for planting (hectares)	*Rate of grant associated with FWS Conifers £ per hectare*
Area band	
0·25-0·90	630
1·00-2·90	505
3·00-9·90	420
10 and over	240

Broadleaved planting associated with the farm woodland scheme will, however, be eligible for the new broadleaved woodland grants.

For new planting an existing arable or improved grassland of less than 10 years of age which is undertaken outside the farm woodland scheme, there will be a supplement of £200 per hectare.

Apart from the increased rates of grant and the special supplement for planting on better land, the scheme will have a number of important features:

- the simplicity of a scheme which replaces two schemes with different conditions, and which covers all forms of planting, regeneration and rehabilitation of woodlands;
- a substantial differential in favour of broadleaves;
- all broadleaved planting, whether it be on its own or in mixture, will attract the same rates of grant;
- environmental objectives and provision that will apply to all types of woodland;
- all types of natural regeneration will now be eligible for the first instalment of grant-aid at the time the preparatory work is carried out;
- grants for the rehabilitation of derelict woodlands under 20 years of age will now include conifer and mixed woodlands;
- grants for new planting and restocking will be paid in three instalments over 10 years. For conifers as well as for broadleaves, the second and third instalments will attract the rates of grant applicable when they fall due;
- grant bands will be determined by the total area approved for planting or regeneration under the application and not, as was the case under the forestry grant scheme, by the size of the woodland of which such planting or regeneration might form a part.

I am sure that the announcement of this new scheme, with its greatly improved rates of grant and wide-ranging objectives, will serve to underline the Government's commitment to the sensitive yet vigorous expansion of forestry in Northern Ireland.

Housing Executive

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many arbitrations there were between building contractors and the Housing Executive in the 1986-87 financial year; how many of these ended in awards being made against the Housing Executive; and what was the total sum paid by the Housing Executive.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. I have been advised by the chief executive that four arbitrations were concluded during the financial year 1986-87. There were no awards against the Housing Executive. All the disputes were settled by agreement at a total cost to the Housing Executive of £43,920.

Children

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is the current population of four-year-olds in Northern Ireland;

(2) what is the current population of three-year-olds in Northern Ireland;

(3) what proportion of three-year-olds are within families with *(a)* single parents, *(b)* unemployed parents and *(c)* in receipt of family income supplement;

(4) what proportion of four-year-olds are within families with *(a)* single parent, *(b)* unemployed parents and *(c)* in receipt of family income supplement;

(5) what proportion of the population of Northern Ireland is under five years of age;

(6) if there are any plans to introduce an under-fives initiative to Northern Ireland;

(7) what financial or other assistance is given to pre-school playgroups by *(a)* each area health and social services board and *(b)* each education and library board;

(8) how many mother and toddler groups operate in Northern Ireland: what assistance, financial or otherwise, is offered to them; and by whom.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the replies given to the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) on 24 and 25 February 1988 at columns *189-90* and *328-29*.

Child Care

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list for each health and social services board those projects in the child care field which involve joint statutory/voluntary co-operation and give the funds and sources of funds involved; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 7 March 1988]:* During the financial year ended 31 March 1987, the four health and social services boards provided the following bodies with the amounts of grant aid shown for programmes of activity wholly or largely in the child care field.

Eastern Board

	£
Barnardo's	281,664
Belfast Women's Aid	59,777
Craigmore	85,000
St. Joseph's	250,000
Crescent Day Nursery Group	1,000
Contact Youth Counselling Service	2,250
Children's Community Holidays	1,005
Eliza Street Family Day Centre	76,560
Extern Organisation	24,000
Family Care Centres	64,183
Good Shepherd Convent	25,320
Little Sisters of the Assumption	4,418
Mother and Baby Clubs	2,411
Moyard Hostel	2,086
Nazareth Lodge	96,000
Save the Children Fund	17,629
Sydenham House Committee	7,000
St. Vincent De Paul Society	7,462
Ulster Quaker Service	3,000
Women's Groups	3,402
	1,014,167
The Eastern board also provided organisations managing pre-school playgroups with grant aid amounting to	872,482
Eastern Board Total	1,886,649

Western Board

	£
Save the Children Fund	94,627
Extern—Intermediate Treatment	26,443
De La Salle Boys' Home	8,826
Nazareth House Londonderry	47,642
	177,538
The Western board also provided approximately 60 pre-school playgroups and mother and toddler groups with grant aid amounting to	138,604
Western Board Total	316,142

Northern Board

	£
Coleraine Women's Aid	14,169
The Northern board also provided approximately 80 pre-school playgroups and mother and toddler groups with grant aid amounting to	66,745
Northern Board Total	80,914

Southern Board

	£
Banbridge Youth Club	1,487
Brownlow Inter Agency Youth Support Group	1,000
Gingerbread Group, Craigavon	407
Gingerbread Group, Armagh	106
Gingerbread Group, Banbridge	264
NI Pre-school Playgroup Association	375
Orana Children's Home, Newry	50,000
Save the Children Fund	2,750
	56,389
The Southern board also provided approximately 40 pre-school playgroups and mother and toddler groups with grant aid amounting to	29,487
Southern Board Total	85,876

In addition, voluntary children's homes received £1,762,412 from the four health and social services boards as maintenance payments for individual children living in them. In the same period the Department of Health and Social Services provided grant aid to bodies in the child care field totalling £492,986

Voluntary organisations in the child care field may also be eligible for funding from other statutory sources, including the Department of Education, the Department of Economic Development, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, district councils and education and library boards.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 24 March 1988

PRIME MINISTER

Bradford

Q54. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Prime Minister when she next expects to pay an official visit to a spinning factory in Bradford.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Greater Berlin (Diplomatic Facilities)

Q92. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Prime Minister whether, on the initiative of Her Majesty's Government, as one of the jointly responsible governing powers for Greater Berlin and in pursuit of joint rights and responsibilities for the security of Greater Berlin, she will institute an inquiry into the alleged abuse of diplomatic facilities in the Soviet sector of Berlin, in the light of evidence at the trial of Christina Endrigkeit; and what has been the result of Her Majesty's Government's close contact with the Soviet authorities since April 1986 on this matter.

The Prime Minister: No. The allied powers with responsibility for Berlin have made clear to the Soviet Union their position on this matter. It is not our practice to reveal details of confidential exchanges.

Newton

Q154. **Mr. Pawsey:** To ask the Prime Minister if she has any plans to make an official visit to Newton near Rugby.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Newspaper Editors' Reception (Cost)

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost of the reception for the editors of regional daily newspapers at 10 Downing street in the evening of 21 March.

The Prime Minister: The estimated cost is £1,600.

Engagements

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 24 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Dental Schools

Mrs. Margaret Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* (*a*) the total number of entrants to each dental school, and (*b*) the total number of graduates from each dental school, in each of the past five years; and what is the total cost per graduate per dental school.

Mr. Jackson: (*a*) The pre-clinical intake to each dental school in Great Britain in the five years to 1987-88 is shown in the table. (Figures for 1987-88 are provisional).

School	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Birmingham	81	75	75	76	77
Bristol	55	63	42	47	49
Leeds	57	55	54	55	54
Liverpool	61	60	60	60	61
London:					
—Kings College	62	62	54	64	58
—University College	52	51	52	50	50
—United Medical and Dental School (Guys & St. Thomas's)	96	91	88	87	88
—London Hospital	56	57	57	58	56
Manchester	68	62	62	63	61
Newcastle	76	70	70	70	71
Sheffield	54	50	45	44	48
Wales	50	45	47	48	48
Dundee	50	50	44	45	51
Edinburgh	56	39	40	36	37
Glasgow	75	70	70	70	70

(*b*) First degree clinical dentistry graduates in each university in Great Britain in the five years up to 1985-86, the last year for which figures are available centrally, are shown in the table:

	1981-82	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*
Birmingham	68	63	66	76	70
Bristol	47	45	48	46	45
Leeds	[1]	[1]	55	54	51
Liverpool	50	56	49	53	49
London	255	[1]	254	238	267
Manchester	58	52	57	55	56
Newcastle	73	67	61	69	75
Sheffield	41	[1]	46	47	45
Wales	43	38	46	39	39
Dundee	58	42	46	48	[1]
Edinburgh	58	49	49	45	53
Glasgow	67	59	58	60	67

[1] Figures not available

Note

Figures are not available centrally for the cost per graduate for dental school.

"Scene"

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what guidance is available to head teachers to assist them in assessing whether the drama

entitled "Scene", produced by BBC School Television Service, conforms with the requirements of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.

Mrs. Rumbold: Department of Education and Science circular No. 11/87 "Sex Education at School" contains guidance for LEAs, governing bodies and head teachers on sections 18 and 46 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986.

International Management Centre, Buckingham

Sir John Farr: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he expects to reach a decision on the validity of degrees awarded by the International Management Centre, Buckingham, to its clients and students.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that the International Management Centre, Buckingham has begun discussions with the Council for National Academic Awards with a view to gaining academic validation of its qualifications. These negotiations are a matter for the parties involved, and not for my right hon. Friend.

Arthritis

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* expenditure by *(a)* the Medical Research Council and *(b)* any other Government funded projects into arthritis research in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years.

Mr. Jackson: I understand from the Medical Research Council that its expenditure on arthritis research was as follows:

Year	*£ millions*
1982-83	0·9
1983-84	1·0
1984-85	1·1
1985-86	1·2
1986-87	1·3

Some support for arthritis research is also provided through UGC block grants to universities. Information on support for arthritis research by other Government Departments is not held centrally.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will estimate how much expenditure there has been by charities and other voluntary bodies on arthritis research in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; and whether he takes this expenditure into account in allocating Government funding for such research.

Mr. Jackson: I understand from the handbook of the Association of Medical Research Charities that support of arthritis research by the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council currently amounts to about £6 million a year. Support from the science budget for arthritis research is provided through the Medical Research Council which is responsible for determining its own priorities for the research supported from its annual grant in aid — currently £147 million.

Expenditure

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on prescribed expenditure allocations in respect of education for 1988-89.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has announced that additional capital allocations will be made for 1988-89. Twelve million, five hundred thousand pounds of the total will be allocated in respect of education and, in particular, but not exclusively, to support projects in inner city areas. A further £5·2 million in respect of education is expected to be available later provided that returns from local authorities do not indicate a likely overspend of the revised DOE-LA1 cash limit in 1988-89. My Department will be inviting local education authorities which cover urban programme areas to submit plans for projects which they would undertake if granted a supplementary allocation.

A small number of authorities have already satisfied me that, because of special circumstances, they would be able to make particularly effective use of an additional allocation in 1988-89. Those authorities will receive appropriate notification shortly.

Council for National Academic Awards

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he will appoint a successor to Sir Ronald Dearing as chairman of the Council for National Academic Awards.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I am pleased to announce that, together with my right hon. Friends, the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, I am appointing Sir Bryan Nicholson, chairman of the Post Office, as chairman of the Council for National Academic Awards. He will shortly succeed Sir Ronald Dearing who is relinquishing the post to take the chair of the Polytechnic and Colleges Funding Council. Sir Bryan's term of office will be three years.

Schools (Discipline)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he is now in a position to announce the details of the inquiry he has decided to set up into discipline in schools.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *[pursuant to his reply, 18 March 1988, c. 687]:* I have appointed two further members to the committee of inquiry:

Mrs. Colette Thomson, a former member of the England netball team, and now a mathematics teacher at Alderbrook school, west midlands; and following consultation with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales, Mrs. Glenda Thomas, head teacher of Blaencaerau junior school, Maesteg, Mid-Glamorgan.

These appointments complete the membership. My intention is that the committee should start its work as soon as possible and aim to report by the end of the year.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Solicitors and Barristers (Legal Aid Work)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the the Attorney-General how many *(a)* solicitors and *(b)* barristers have been excluded from legal aid work either temporarily or for a specified period, for reasons connected with professional standards in the past five years.

The Attorney-General: In the last five years one solicitor has been registered as excluded from legal aid work for a specified period as a result of a decision of the Legal Aid (Complaints) Tribunal. No barrister has been so registered as excluded in that period.

EC Legislation

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Attorney-General if he will state the number of occasions since 1 January 1973 when each category of United Kingdom court has applied for, or received, guidance from the Council of the European Communities concerning interpretation or execution of legislation of that Community.

The Attorney-General: I assume that the hon. Member intends to refer to requests made by United Kingdom courts to the Court of Justice of the European Communities for preliminary rulings under article 177 of the treaty of Rome. In the period from 1 January 1973 until the end of February 1988, the House of Lords made six such requests, the Court of Appeal six, and all other courts and tribunals a total of 64. It is not possible to provide figures separately for the courts and tribunals whose references are included in the latter figure.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, pursuant to the answer of 3 March, *Official Report*, column *641*, if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department in each grade.

Mr. Butcher: The figures for 1 January 1988 for the DTI are as follows:

Grade	*1 January 1988*	*Percentage of Department of Trade and Industry total*
Grade 3	8	16·0
Grade 4	1	16·7
Grade 5	17	9·6
Grade 6	41	23·3
Grade 7	186	22·9
Senior Executive Officer	100	34·8
Higher Executive Officer	273	30·8
Executive Officer	538	35·5
Administrative Officer	977	43·0
Administrative Assistant	446	35·9
Insolvency Grade A	2	15·4
Insolvency Grade B	24	38·1
Insolvency Grade C	53	40·8
Insolvency Grade D	180	69·5
Insolvency Grade E	151	63·8
Senior Assistant Statistician	3	42·9
Assistant Statistician	3	42·9
Information Officer	1	2·3
Cleaner	1	28·5
Higher Graphics Officer	1	100·0
Investigation Officer	17	47·2
Librarian	3	18·8
Assistant Librarian	2	8·0
Senior Messenger	6	8·1
Messenger	46	19·3
Office Keeper I	1	16·7
Senior Professional and Technical Officer	12	17·1
Higher Professional and Technical Officer	11	23·4
Professional and Technical Officer	30	61·2
Technical Grade I	6	80·0
Senior Telecommunications Technical Officer	2	66·7
Higher Telecommunications Technical Officer	17	51·5
Telecommunications Technical Officer	144	91·7
Assistant Telecommunications Technical Officer	7	36·8
Supervisor of Government Telephonists	1	100·0
Government Telephonist	16	88·9
Typing Manager	27	36·7
Senior Personal Secretary	4	9·0
Personal Secretary	52	17·6
Typist	255	45·8
Chief Paperkeeper	1	14·3
Senior Paperkeeper	9	17·3
Paperkeeper	35	19·5
Chief Photographer	1	50·0
Senior Photographer	5	45·5
Reprographics Manager	1	50·0
Chief Reprographics Officer	2	22·2
Assistant Chief Reprographics Officer	10	35·7
Reprographics Officer I	27	23·8
Reprographics Officer II	71	35·3
Senior Scientific Officer	117	38·7
Higher Scientific Officer	149	40·7
Scientific Officer	97	34·9
Assistant Scientific Officer	30	24·0
Industrials	205	65·7
TOTAL	4,425	

North-West Region

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what effect the Budget proposals will have on manufacturing industries in the north-west region during the remainder of the current year.

Mr. Butcher: Manufacturing industry in the north-west and elsewhere will benefit from the priority given by the Budget to a continuation of steady economic growth and low inflation; and from the additional incentives to effort and enterprise which the reductions in personal taxation will bring.

GATT

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made in the development of the Uruguay round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade multilateral trade negotiations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: The initial phase of the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations, which was devoted to the examination of the issues identified in the Punta del Este declaration, has been completed. Some 160 proposals have been tabled by the contracting parties, covering all the main areas. Substantive negotiations are now beginning and are due to be completed in September 1990.

A mid-term meeting will take place in Montreal in the week of 5 December 1988 at which Ministers from the contracting parties will review progress.

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (Exhibition)

Mr. Knox: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Maude: Yes. Arrangements have been made for such an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall to take place from Tuesday 12 April to Friday 15 April.

Financial Services Act 1986

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a further statement concerning implementation of the Financial Services Act 1986.

Mr. Maude: The Government intend to bring into force the remaining investor protection provisions of the Act, including the central requirement to be authorised or exempted, on 29 April. A commencement order will be made shortly.

ENERGY

Domestic Gas Supplies (Disconnection)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many people have had their gas supplies disconnected in the five years prior to privatisation; and how many have been disconnected in each year subsequently in *(a)* Dundee, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the United Kingdom as a whole.

Mr. Peter Morrison: This is a matter for British Gas plc. I have asked the chairman of British Gas to write to the hon. Member with the information available.

North Sea Oil

Sir Hector Munro: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has any proposals for a further round of offshore production licensing.

Mr. Parkinson: I propose to launch an 11th round of offshore licensing as soon as the customary consultations about the detailed arrangements have been completed. As in recent rounds, I propose to invite applications for a range of mature and frontier blocks selected from various areas of the United Kingdom continental shelf. I expect to offer a larger number of blocks for companies to consider than in the last round. The aim once again will be to consolidate on recent exploration successes and to provide potential for further discoveries which can be developed to replace existing fields as they become depleted.

I hope to license blocks from the following broad areas:

Area	*Quadrants*
Northern North Sea	2, 3, 8, 9, 210 and 211
Faroes Shetland area	204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 213 and 214
Hebridean Platform	154, 165, 166
Orkney Shetland area	5, 6 and 7
Moray Firth	11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 19
Central North Sea	15, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29 and 30
Forth Approaches	25 and 26
Southern North Sea	41, 42, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 53 and 54
English Channel	97, 98, 99 and 100
Cardigan Bay Basin	107
Irish Sea Manx Basin	109, 110 and 113

The quadrants are given as a guide only. I envisage offering some blocks from the majority of these quadrants, but not necessarily from all of them and not necessarily all the unlicensed blocks in any particular quadrant. In the 10th round, all awards were made at the discretion of the Secretary of State for Energy and I expect largely the same method to be adopted for the forthcoming round.

The terms of the licences will be along the same general lines as in the 10th round, although I am proposing to introduce some changes designed to speed up the turnover of exploration acreage which remains unworked for long periods. In the coming weeks, I shall be discussing my proposals with the oil industry and with other interested bodies. The timing of the formal invitation to apply will be determined in the light of the outcome of these consultations.

DEFENCE

RAF Bases (Use by United States Forces)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will place in the Library copies of the lines of communication arrangement 1973 and the memorandum of understanding on the use of Royal Air Force bases by United States air forces operational units 1974, including all subsequent alterations and amendments.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No. The US-UK lines of communication arrangement 1973 and the memorandum of understanding on the use of RAF bases by US Air Force operational units 1974 are classified.

Falkland Islands

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the total cost since the surrender of the Argentine forces of the United Kingdom military presence on the Falkland Islands, including military infrastructure costs, expressed *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a per capita sum for the permanent population of the Falkland Islands.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The additional cost of maintaining a garrison in the Falkland Islands from April 1983 to the end of the last financial year is estimated to be £1,425 million in cash terms, or about £700,000 per Falkland Islander. Figures for 1982-83 do not distinguish between campaign and garrison costs.

Bangladesh

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if military training has been given to officers of the Bangladeshi military who have been involved in violations of human rights in the Chittagon area; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will withdraw all military training facilities from members of the Bangladeshi armed forces in the light of human rights violations perpetrated by them in the Chittagon area.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No. While I understand that some Bangladeshi officers trained with the help of the British military advisory team (BMAT) at the Bangladesh defence services command and staff college have been appointed to the division covering the Chittagong hill tracts, nothing in the United Kingdom's military training assistance to Bangladesh could encourage any abuse of human rights. On the contrary, the strong emphasis on fairness and restraint given by the BMAT can only help inculcate high ethical standards in the students and, indeed, the college training as a whole emphasises these standards in line with the British military tradition.

Belize

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if any logistical or other assistance *(a)* has been, *(b)* is being or *(c)* will be given by United Kingdom armed forces in Belize to the United States troops recently deployed in Honduras.

Mr. Ian Stewart: No such assistance has been or is being given, and we do not intend that it should be.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Court of Justice

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions when the United Kingdom has been party to cases at the European Court of Justice *(a)* as a respondent in cases initiated by the Commission of the Community, *(b)* as a respondent or plaintiff in respect of other member states and *(c)* in other cases.

Mrs. Chalker: The figures since United Kingdom accession are:

(a) 23 under Article 169 of the EEC Treaty
(b) 1 under Article 170 of the EEC Treaty
(c) 16 under Article 173 of the EEC Treaty
(a) and *(c)* include cases still in progress.

Details of these cases are given in the relevant chapter or annex of the six-monthly White Paper on "Developments in the European Community".

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will state the number of rulings of the European Court of Justice which effectively determine case law in what would otherwise be within domestic jurisdiction since the accession of the United Kingdom to the European Economic Community.

Mrs. Chalker: I assume that the hon. Member's question refers to references to the European Court of Justice under article 177 of the EEC treaty. There have been 76 such references from United Kingdom courts up to the end of February 1988.

Article 177 references are concerned with the interpretation of Community law. The interpretation of Community law given by the European Court of Justice is applied by the national court in deciding the case before it.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what indications there have been in recent years of the increased work load of the European Court of Justice.

Mrs. Chalker: The number of cases brought before the European Court of Justice in a year has risen from 79 in 1970 to 329 in 1986. The number of cases brought in a year more than doubled from 202 in 1979 to 433 in 1985.

Commonwealth Secretariat

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish any instructions and directives from Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom acting together with other Commonwealth Governments setting out the functions of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Mrs. Chalker: The functions of the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat and his staff are set out in the "Agreed Memorandum on the Commonwealth Secretariat", which was approved by Commonwealth Prime Ministers at their meeting in London from 17 to 25 June 1965 (Cmnd. 2713).

As provided for in the Memorandum, these have been added to by subsequent decisions of Commonwealth Heads of Government and Ministers, particularly in respect of the Commonwealth fund for technical co-operation, the Commonwealth Science Council and the Commonwealth youth programme, which are administratively part of the secretariat, but which are covered by separate memoranda of understanding. I am arranging for copies of these memoranda to be placed in the Library as soon as possible.

British Embassy, Vientiane

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, following the recent visit of the Laos deputy Foreign Minister, he has plans to re-open the British embassy at Vientiane.

Mr. Eggar: We have no plans at present to do so. The economic considerations which led to closure in 1985 still apply. Her Majesty's ambassador in Bangkok, who is also accredited to Laos, and other members of the embassy visit Vientiane on a regular basis.

European Court of First Instance

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the main area of operation of the new European Court of First Instance; and whether its decisions will be limited to points of law.

Mrs. Chalker: Under article 3 of the draft decision, the European Court of Justice proposes to transfer to the Court of the First Instance its jurisdiction in cases concerned with staff matters, competition and anti-dumping, steel and certain non-contractual liability claims. The Court of the First Instance will decide both facts and law; appeals to the European Court of Justice will be limited to points of law.

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what will be the

additional cost of establishing a European Court of First Instance; and how many persons are likely to be employed by it.

Mrs. Chalker: The European Court has estimated that the proposal for a court comprising seven judges would cost £210,000 in new equipment and add £3·15 million to the annual budget of the court. A final position on the total number of judges of the court has not yet been reached. It is not possible at this stage to say how many staff will be employed by the Court of First Instance alone. It seems likely that some staff now employed by the Court of Justice would be attached to the Court of First Instance.

IRA Terrorists (Gibraltar)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been received from the Spanish authorities on the surveillance and eventual killing of the three suspected Irish Republican Army terrorists in Gibraltar.

Mr. Mellor: It is not our practice to comment on such matters, though as my right hon. and learned Friend said in the House on 7 March, we are grateful for the invaluable assistance we have received from the Spanish authorities in preventing a dreadful terrorist attack.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Young Offenders

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government have any plans to increase the accountability of parents and guardians for offences caused by persons under the age of 17 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Parents are not responsible in law for criminal offences committed by their children. Where juveniles are convicted of a criminal offence the courts are required (except in certain circumstances) to order their parents or guardians to pay any fines or other financial penalties that may be imposed. The Criminal Justice Bill extends this requirement to fines imposed as a sanction for breach of supervision orders and community service orders.

Juveniles (Detention)

Mr. Irving: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* sentenced and *(b)* remanded juveniles were held in police or court cells during 1987, and how many since the beginning of 1988.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information is not available in the form requested. Records held centrally do not distinguish between juveniles and other young persons, or between sentenced and unsentenced prisoners.

Prisoners (Ethnic Minorities)

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the light of his Department's most recent statistics on the prison population and ethnic minorities, he intends *(a)* to issue any guidance to prison governers and *(b)* to make available any additional training for prison staff; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Guidance on race relations is issued to prison governors from time to time, most recently in circular instruction 32/1986, a copy of which is in the Library. Further guidance will be issued as necessary. We are planning a review of race relations training for prison staff which will look, among other matters, at the form and quantity of training presently offered.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 7 March, *Official Report*, column *3*, if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London.

Mr. Hurd: Home Office staff in the following grades serve outside London:

Grade	*Staff numbers*
Grade 5 (Unified)	13
Grade 6 (Unified)	15
Grade 7 (Unified)	126
Senior Executive Officer	67
Higher Executive Officer	244
Executive Officer	541
Administration Officer	1,817
Administration Assistant	758
Messengers and Paperkeepers	77
Inspector of Immigration	16
Chief Immigration Officer	95
Immigration Officer	718
Prison Service Unified Grades I-V	649
Prison Service Unified Grades VI	1,310
Prison Service Unified Grades VII	2,573
Prison Service Unified Grades VIII	12,864
Night Patrol (Prison Service)	698
Prison Auxiliary (Prison Service)	564
Typist	548
Personal Secretary	76
Telecommunications Technical Engineer	569
Lecturer	40
Professional and Technology Officer	210
Instructional Officer	67
Higher Scientific Officer	110
Assistant Scientific Officer	83
Senior Scientific Officer	139
Scientific Officer	134
Others	893

Metropolitan Police (Report)

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to secure the publication of the report conducted by officers of the Northamptonshire police into the conduct of the Metropolitan police at Wapping on 24 January 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: No. Such reports are always treated as confidential. The commission will consult the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Police Complaints Authority in due course on whether criminal or disciplinary proceedings should be taken against any police officer on the basis of the report.

Animals (Experiments)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the dates of visits by his Department's inspectors to Professor Ian Steele-Russell's animal laboratories in the last five years, along with the main findings of these visits.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not our practice to disclose information of this nature. However, all establishments where licensed experimentation is carried out are visited frequently by inspectors, usually unannounced.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many animals have been used by Professor Ian Steele-Russell in the last five years; if he will list the species used and the experimental procedures used; and to what extent anaesthesia was used.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: It is not our practice to disclose such information about experimentation specific to individual researchers or establishments which has been provided to us in confidence.

Ian Richard Thain

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultations took place with the trial judge regarding parole for Ian Richard Thain; what were the channels for such consultations; what were the dates on which the judge was consulted; and if he will outline the views which the judge offered.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The views of the trial judge were received in July 1986. In accordance with the normal procedure in the cases of all life sentence prisoners transferred from Northern Ireland to this country to serve their sentences, the approach to the trial judge was made through the Northern Ireland Office. The views of the judiciary in life sentence cases are given in confidence.

Fire Prevention (Kent)

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all outstanding initial, reinspection and routine fire prevention inspections for private residential homes in Kent expressed in officer man years for the last recorded year.

Mr. John Patten: This information is not available centrally. I have ascertained from the Kent fire brigade that during 1987, 65 full inspections, 568 specific, 229 follow-up and 250 routine inspections were made of the 809 homes for old persons, the disabled and mentally handicapped and nursing homes in the county. These figures do not distinguish between homes financed privately and by local authorities. Such inspections are undertaken on an advisory basis in co-operation with the responsible authorities and the brigade determines its own policy in making them. The question of outstanding inspections does not, accordingly, arise.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all outstanding initial, reinspection and routine fire prevention inspections in Kent expressed in officer man years for the last recorded year.

Mr. John Patten: Fire prevention inspections are required statutorily only when an application for a fire certificate for premises designated under the Fire Precautions Act 1971 is made to the fire authority. During 1987, 238 certificates were issued by the Kent fire brigade and at the end of the year 2,991 certificates were in force for such premises. A further 1,646 certificates issued under the Factories Act 1961 and the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963 were also in force. I have ascertained from the brigade that at the end of 1987 the issue of 492 certificates was outstanding on premises that had been inspected and 289 premises were awaiting inspection. Figures are not available centrally to express outstanding inspections in officer man years.

Conservative Party Meeting (Policing Costs)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has regarding the costs of policing the meeting of the central council of the Conservative party held in Harrogate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The last meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations Central Council was held at Buxton in Derbyshire on 18-19 March. I understand from the chief constable of Derbyshire that the estimated additional costs of policing the meeting were in the region of £200,000. Under the normal arrangements 51 per cent. of this expenditure will be met from central funds.

Firearms (Police)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of operations in which firearms were issued to police officers in England and Wales in 1987; in how many of those operations shots have been fired by police officers; how many police officers are currently qualified to carry firearms; and what were the equivalent figures for *(a)* 1986 and *(b)* 1983.

Mr. Hurd: The number of operations in England and Wales, against criminals or those known or believed to be armed, in which firearms were issued to police officers in 1987 was 2,101. This was 14·35 per cent. fewer than in 1986 and 33·93 per cent. fewer than in 1983. Police officers fired shots in seven, or 0·003 per cent. of those operations. The number of such operations in which shots were fired by police officers in the preceding four years was three in 1983; six in 1984; seven in 1985; and one in 1986. As at 31 December 1987 a total of 7,349 police officers in England and Wales were qualified to carry firearms. This was 12·46 per cent. fewer than at the end of 1986 and 43·66 per cent. fewer than at the end of 1983. The latest figures represents 5·99 per cent. of the total police strength in England and Wales.

ENVIRONMENT

Environment Council

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Environment Council on 21 March.

Mr. Moynihan: My hon. Friend the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Water represented the United Kingdom at this meeting.

The Council adopted a resolution on the close of the European Year of the Environment which emphasised the need for continued efforts on environmental information and awareness. Notwithstanding disappointment that some important proposals had not yet been adopted, there was general agreement that the year had stimulated many and varied environmental achievements.

The Council reached agreement on a directive to control discharge of chloroform to the aquatic environment, in particular those from significant industrial

sources. In connection with this agreement and at the United Kingdom's request, the Commission undertook to bring to the Council at an early date proposals for drawing up a list of the most dangerous substances for future priority consideration. A proposal for a directive to co-ordinate controls over discharges of chromium to the aquatic environment was also discussed. Due to divergences of opinion among member states the Council failed to agree draft guidelines put forward by the presidency for further work on harmonising national programmes for reducing pollution caused by waste from the titanium oxide industry.

A general welcome was given to the Commission's recently published proposals for ratification and implementation of the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. It was hoped that the proposed regulation on Communitywide measures could be adopted in June.

Discussion of the large combustion plants directive focussed on the emission standards proposed for new combustion plant and, in particular, the size threshold above which such standards would apply. It was necessary for my hon. Friend to stress that the German presidency's "compromise" proposals were unrealistic and represented a step backwards from those recently presented by the Danish presidency. Although my hon. Friend was ready to discuss the new plant standards and the requirements for reductions from existing plants, the presidency decided not to discuss anything further. Thus it was not possible to make progress at the Council, although my hon. Friend and I look forward to more constructive discussions with the presidency in the near future.

The Council had an initial discussion of the Commission's recent proposal for standards for emissions from small cars, as required by directive 88/76/EEC (the "Luxembourg Package"). My hon. Friend made a statement welcoming a proposal to establish a European standard for replacement silencers for motor cycles.

Further discussion of a proposal to establish a five-year Communitywide programme of projects illustrating how actions in the environment field might contribute to employment led to an undertaking by the Commission to consider alternative methods of financing such a programme.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many homeless people in England and Wales have previously been admitted to mental hospitals; and what this figure represents as a percentage of the total number of homeless persons.

Mrs. Roe: This specific information is not available centrally. It is estimated, however, that in 1987 English local authorities accepted responsibility for accommodating about 2,300 households who they judged to be in priority need, on the grounds of some mental illness or handicap. This amounts to some 2 per cent. of all those accepted in priority need. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has responsibility for these matters as they affect the Principality.

House Purchase (Searches)

Mr. Patchett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to abolish local authority searches for house buyers; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Roe: Apart from searches of local land charges registers, maintained by local authorities under a duty imposed by the Local Land Charges Act 1975, the system of local authority searches is not statutory. The present system has been agreed between the Law Society and the local authority associations in response to the demands of conveyancers and their clients.

Local Authority Houses

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will update the information provided in his answer to the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) on 13 July 1987, *Official Report*, columns *387-88*, concerning the sale of empty local authority dwellings to private developers.

Mrs. Roe: The most recent information available is given in the table. The earlier reservations about the comprehensiveness of the figures still apply. The table should not, therefore, be compared directly with the earlier one.

Number of disposals of vacant dwellings since 1979

Local Authority	*Number*
Birmingham	128
Bolton	50
Bradford	156
Brentwood	10
Bristol	5
Broxbourne	113
Burnley	111
Calderdale	96
Copeland	47
Coventry	76
Crewe & Nantwich	2
Halton	56
Hartlepool	117
Gedling	54
Kensington & Chelsea	50
Kettering	23
Knowsley	204
Lancaster	44
Langbaurgh	419
Leeds	91
Lichfield	128
Liverpool	392
Macclesfield	5
Manchester	46
Middlesbrough	350
Newcastle	241
North Tyneside	150
Nottingham	118
Oldham	331
Portsmouth	520
Preston	344
Reading	245
Rochdale	130
Rochester Upon Medway City	511
Rotherham	331
Rushcliffe	54
Salford	1,028
Sedgefield	196
Sefton	378
Solihull	268
South Holland	23
South Kesteven	11
South Tyneside	150
Southwark	191
Stockport	54
Stoke-on-Trent	42
Sunderland	694
Swale	14
Tamworth	41
Thurrock	90
Tower Hamlets	443
Trafford	156
Uttlesford	4
Walsall	70
Wandsworth	1,099
Warrington	52
Wear Valley	5
West Lindsey	59
Westminster	10
Wigan	188
Wirral	423
Wolverhampton	7
Wycombe	5
Total	11,561

Rating Reform

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton, *Official Report*, column *1096*, 16 March concerning the community charge, if he will place in the Library the preliminary estimates to which he referred.

Mr. Howard: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received seeking the exemption from the poll tax of overseas students and their dependents during the duration of their course of studies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: We have received a number of representations concerning overseas students. All full-time students—including those from overseas—will be liable to pay only 20 per cent. of the personal community charge.

Howbury Grange/Dartford North Marshes

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he now expects to announce the decision of the inquiry into the Howbury Grange/Dartford North Marshes development proposals.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer my hon. Friend to my answer of 25 February at column *269*.

Green Belt

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* recent correspondence between himself and others regarding planning in the green belt.

Mr. Waldegrave: I am today putting in the Library copies of my right hon. Friend's recent exchange of correspondence with my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine).

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the planning procedures necessary for the establishment of a mink farm.

Mr. Waldegrave: The use of land for agriculture, including mink farming, does not require planning permission. At present a general permission is given to many farm buildings and agricultural operations on land by the General Development Order. In national parks and some adjoining areas, this is modified to give planning authorities discretionary control over the siting, design and external appearance of farm and forestry buildings and roads. In revising the GDO later this year, we propose to require specific permission for new livestock units within 400 m of most buildings. When planning

permission is required for agricultural or any other development, applications should be made to the local planning authority, which should consider each case on its individual merits.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications are currently pending for the establishment of mink farms in England.

Mr. Waldegrave: We have no information on the number or type of planning applications awaiting determination by local planning authorities.

Homelessness

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will take further steps to tackle the problems of homelessness.

Mr. Waldegrave: Yes. I am concerned to look at further action to help homeless people to reduce their dependence, especially in London, on bed and breakfast. It is unacceptable for there to be large numbers of properties built with public funds standing empty on communities with homeless people. These properties must be brought back into use. Authorities and housing associations must seek the best use of their stock; and help people in the greatest housing need. I can now announce three important initiatives to help both objectives. I want to see authorities and associations take up this challenge urgently.

First, additional resources of £28·1 million will be made available to local authorities in the financial year 1988-89. This is part of the £58·1 million increase in DOE cash limits arising from local authority underspend announced today by my right hon. Friend. These resources will be targeted on those authorities where homelessness pressures are most acute. Our main purpose in making these extra resources available is to reduce the number of households, in particular families, temporarily accommodated in bed and breakfast.

It is indefensible that so many families are forced to live in bed and breakfast accommodation at severe, continuous cost to the public purse whilst well over 100,000 local authority properties lie empty. It is a particular scandal that 28,000 properties, almost three times the number of households in bed and breakfast, have been empty for more than a year.

These extra resources will help provide additional accommodation for the homeless by getting local authority empty properties refurbished and back into use; and by supporting housing association projects of a similar kind. Bids will shortly be invited from local authorities for these additional resources which will then be distributed through the Department's regional offices.

Second, there are housing association dwellings standing empty and uninhabitable for lack of necessary major repair work. This problem arises when the properties were originally developed with local authority money, but the authority has refused to fund the repairs. In exceptional cases of this kind, the Housing Corporation is already authorised to provide funding. I have now decided to relax the rules so that the corporation may step in wherever the authority is genuinely unable to fund the repair work, on condition that, after repairs, the dwellings are let to homeless people.

Third, we have decided to bring forward specific legislation to allow local authorities, with the consent of the Secretary of State, to make payments to help tenants to buy in the private sector, thus creating vacancies for reletting. Evaluation of the schemes operated by the London boroughs of Brent and Bromley (under general powers) have shown that incentive payments can provide a cost-effective means of securing a useful number of vacancies for letting to those in bed and breakfast accommodation or on waiting lists; and they can help more families to achieve owner-occupation, by giving modest assistance. Schemes of assistance will generally be appropriate only where there are serious problems of homelessness and other measures cannot supply the answer. Authorities proposing schemes will be expected to establish suitable limits on the amount offered to individual tenants and to target assistance on tenants who could not afford to buy unaided. This proposal will help local authorities make more effective use of the stock in housing people in need.

Cash Limits

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of outturn in the current year on the DOE-LA1 cash limit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ridley: The DOE-LA1 cash limit covers capital expenditure and receipts by local authorities in England on education, housing, transport, personal social services, and other services. On the basis of local authorities' third quarter expenditure returns, the cash limit is forecast to be underspent by about £750 million in 1987-88, similar to the forecast based on first and second quarter returns. The underspend is caused by capital receipts being substantially higher than forecast before the year.

Under the relevant end year flexibility arrangements, the DOE-LA1 cash limit for 1988-89 will be increased in due course by £141·7 million — five per cent. of the 1987-88 cash limit, provided that fourth quarter returns confirm an underspend of at least that size.

I and my colleagues responsible for services within the DOE-LA1 cash limit will therefore be making additional capital allocations for 1988-89. We propose to issue £100 million of these shortly, and a further £41·7 million when local authorities' budget returns for 1988-89 are available, provided these returns do not lead to a forecast overspend against the revised cash limit.

The sum available for my Department's services from the £100 million is £58·1 million. I propose to hold back a £5 million reserve to cover any claims for storm damage expenditure in 1988-89 on DOE services. I will be making allocations of £25 million to local authorities towards capital expenditure necessary to prepare for collection of the community charge, and my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning will be including details of £28·1 million extra capital allocations in an announcement he is making about housing matters today.

House of Commons (Works of Art)

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the reconstitution of the Committee to advise Mr. Speaker and himself on matters relating to works of art in the House.

Mr. Ridley: I am pleased to announce that Mr. Speaker and I have appointed a new advisory committee. There will continue to be nine members. They are my hon. Friends the Members for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), for Salisbury (Mr. Key), for Twickenham (Mr. Jessel) and for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) and the hon. Members for Heywood and Middleton (Mr. Callaghan), for Warley East (Mr. Faulds), for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) and for Fife, North-East (Mr. Campbell). My hon. Friend the Member for Staffordshire, South has agreed to be Chairman. The committee will hold its first meeting this month.

EMPLOYMENT

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently participating in the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: At the end of February 1988 there were 94,790 enterprise allowance scheme recipients.

ILO (Convention 131)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why the United Kingdom has not ratified convention 131 of the International Labour Organisation.

Mr. Nicholls: International Labour Organisation convention 131 concerns "Minimum Wage Fixing with particular reference to Developing Countries". The convention was not ratified when first adopted in 1970, because, as its title indicates, it is specially directed at the situation in developing countries and its provisions were considered less appropriate to industrialised countries with a long tradition of determining wages by individual or collective bargaining. The present Government consider that wage determination is primarily a matter to be settled between employers and employees, and that ratification of the convention would not in any case be appropriate for the United Kingdom.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people were out of work in the Eddisbury parliamentary constituency at the most recent count; and what were the figures in each of the last three years.

Mr. Lee: The following information is available from the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituency of Eddisbury in February of each year since 1985. The comparison is slightly affected by the change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics in March 1986.

February	*Number*
1988	3,649
1987	4,722
1986	5,226
1985	5,245

Job Vacancies

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the number of notified job vacancies in each jobcentre covering the Tottenham constituency for each month since June 1979.

Mr. Lee: Tottenham constituency is covered by Tottenham jobcentre, but the information for Tottenham jobcentre is not separately available. Prior to April 1985, job vacancies in Tottenham and Edmonton jobcentre areas were notified to Wood Green jobcentre and combined with the Wood Green job vacancies. However, figures for Tottenham and Edmonton jobcentres combined are available from April 1985 and are as follows:

Tottenham and Edmonton jobcentres

	Unfilled vacancies
1985	
April	272
May	340
June	370
July	325
August	320
September	366
October	441
November	433
December	322
1986	
January	265
February	272
March	346
April	315
May	454
June	505
July	561
August	509
September	500
October	668
November	662
December	646
1987	
January	670
February	602
March	637
April	667
May	842
June	939
July	856
August	485
September	531
October	654
November	551
December	332
1988	
January	338
February	309

NATIONAL FINANCE

Finance Bill

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Finance Bill will be published.

Mr. Major: The Finance Bill will be published on Thursday 14 April.

Value Added Tax

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will tabulate in the *Official Report* those commodities formerly, or currently, subject to zero value added tax rating, including all those in groups 1 to 17 listed in his note to the Select Committee on the Treasury and Civil Service and published by it on page 8 of its third report of Session 1987-88, (HC 248), in five separate tables to show items that *(a)* were zero-rated by Her Majesty's Government but have subsequently had their zero-rated status changed by virtue of actions taken, or requests made, by either the Court or the Commission of the European Economic Communities, *(b)* items currently the subject of infraction proceedings before the court of the European Economic Communities, *(c)* items currently zero-rated which have been the subject of specific pledges from Ministers concerning their continued zero-rated status, *(d)* other items of zero-rating subject to current proposals from the Commission of the Commission of the European Communities and *(e)* other zero-rated items not in categories *(a)* to *(d)* above, showing for each item in each table *(a)* to *(d)* the rate or band of rates applied, or proposed to be applied, together with the approximate annual revenue, or range of revenue, which has accrued or is likely to accrue to Her Majesty's Government, at 1988 prices for each category, with totals for each table and grand total, and in respect of table *(c)* footnote references to the respective principal pledge made.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* The information requested is given in the tables.

Table (a): There are no items which were zero-rated by the Government but which have subsequently had their zero-rated status changed by virtue of actions taken, or requests made by the Court or the Commission of the European Communities.

Table (b): Items subject to zero-rate infraction proceedings

(i) Item	*(ii) Proposed VAT rate band under approximation proposals Per cent.*	*(iii) Theoretical net revenue yield from (ii) (£ million at 1987-88 prices)*
Animal feedstuffs, seeds, live animals yielding food for consumption (all supplies)	14-20	neg
Sewerage services supplied to industry	14-20	neg
Water supplied to industry	4-9	neg
News services (all supplies)	14-20	5
Fuel and power (supplies other than to final consumers)	4-9	5-15
Construction of buildings etc. (supplies other than to final consumers 'within a social policy')	14-20	1,200-1,500
Protective clothing and footwear (supplies to employers)	14-20	neg

Table (c): Zero rated items subject to Government pledges[1]

(i) Item	*(ii) Proposed VAT rate band under approximation proposals Per cent.*	*(iii) Theoretical net revenue yield from (ii) (£ million at 1987-88 prices)*
Food	4-9	1,100-2,400
Electricity, gas and fuel (supplies to domestic consumers)	4-9	450-1,000
Young children's clothing and footwear	14-20	325-475

[1] The pledge concerning these items has been made on numerous occasions. It was reiterated by the Prime Minister on 7 July 1987 (*Official Report*, Vol. 119, No. 13, column 192).

Table (d): Other zero-rated items subject to proposals from the Commission of the EEC

(i) Item	*(ii) Proposed VAT rate band under approximation proposals Per cent.*	*(iii) Theoretical net revenue yield from (ii) (£ million at 1987-88 prices)*
Sewerage services other than supplies to industry	14-20	neg
Water other than supplies to industry	4-9	neg
Books, newspapers etc.	4-9	150-300
Taking books for the blind and handicapped and wireless sets for the blind	14-20	neg
Construction of buildings etc. supplied to final consumers "withing a social policy"	14-20	100-200
Protected buildings	14-20	neg
International services[1]	—	—
Internal passenger transport	4-9	150-325
Other transport[1]	—	—
Caravans and house boats	14-20	neg
Gold and bank notes[1]	—	—
Drugs and medicines	4-9	neg
Aids for the handicapped	14-20	neg
Exports to other EC member states	Rate applicable to goods in member state of export	—
Charities, etc.	14-20	neg
Protective clothing and footwear other than that supplied to employees	14-20	neg

[1] The position of these items under the proposals is not yet clear.

Table (e): Other items not in (a)-(d)

(i) Item	*(ii) Proposed VAT rate under approximation proposals*	*(iii) Estimated net revenue yield from (ii) (£ million at 1987-88 prices)*
Exports to countries outside the EC	zero	nil

WALES

P-E Inbucon Report

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has now received from the National Museum of Wales its considered comments on the P-E Inbucon report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: I received the museum's comments on 4 March. The museum's council has responded

constructively and positively to the recommendations in the report. It has broadly accepted the recommendations, though with certain reservations. In particular, the council expresses concern that there should be the shortest possible delay in proceeding with the Cathays Park building project. My response makes clear that I have no intention of delaying matters longer than is necessary. I am placing a copy of the president's letter in the Library of the House, together with a copy of my reply. Officials will now engage in detailed discussion with the museum and draw up an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations. In that context we shall consider any case advanced by the museum for additional resources.

There is still a long way to go, but the council's response gives me confidence that the problems of the museum will be tackled expeditiously and effectively. Our common purpose is that the museum should be enabled to realise its full potential and take its proper place in the cultural life of the Principality.

Ethnic Monitoring

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the ethnic composition of staff in his Department; what is the total number of staff; and how many are *(a)* Welsh, *(b)* English and *(c)* members of ethnic minorities.

Mr. Peter Walker: A survey to provide information on the ethnic composition of staff in the Welsh Office will be carried out shortly as part of a phased programme of ethnic surveys across the Civil Service; the total number of staff is 2,204½ (full-time equivalents) who are not and will not be classified according to their country of origin within the United Kingdom.

Welsh Language

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those primary schools in Gwynedd which *(a)* have classes where Welsh is the sole or main medium of instruction of first or second language pupils, *(b)* have classes of first or second language pupils where some of the teaching is through the medium of Welsh and *(c)* teach no Welsh, or, where there are classes where Welsh is taught as a second language but not used as a teaching medium.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The information, as at September 1986, is as follows:

Schools having classes where Welsh is the sole or main medium of instruction of first and second language pupils:

Ysgol Gwaun Gynfi
Ysgol Babanod Nefyn
Ysgol Iau Nefyn
Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug
Ysgol Gynradd Abererch
Ysgol Gynradd Beddgelert
Ysgol Gynradd Bethel
Ysgol Gynradd Betws-y-Coed
Ysgol Bodfeurig
Ysgol Bronyfoel
Ysgol Ardal Brynaerau
Ysgol Gynradd Capel Curig
Ysgol Gynradd Carmel
Ysgol Y Gelli
Ysgol Penybryn
Ysgol Treferthyr
Ysgol Gynradd Cwm-y-Glo
Ysgol Gynradd Chwilog
Ysgol Crud y Werin
Ysgol Dolbadarn
Ysgol Gynradd Dolwyddelan
Ysgol Gynradd Edern
Ysgol Gynradd Felinwnda
Ysgol Bro Plennydd
Ysgol Gynradd Garndolbenmaen
Ysgol Gynradd y Groeslon
Ysgol Gynradd Llanaelhaearn
Ysgol Llanbedrog
Ysgol Morfa Rhianedd
Ysgol Maelgwn
Ysgol Llangybi
Ysgol Gynradd Llanllechid
Ysgol Llanllyfni
Ysgol Llidiardau
Ysgol Morfa
Ysgol Gynradd Nantlle
Ysgol Gynradd Nebo
Ysgol Gynradd Penisarwaun
Ysgol Gynradd Penmachno
Ysgol Gynradd Penygroes
Ysgol Pentreuchaf
Ysgol Gynradd Rhiwlas
Ysgol Gynradd Rhosgadfan
Ysgol Gynradd Rhostryfan
Ysgol Gynradd Rhydyclafdy
Ysgol Sarn Bach
Ysglo Eifion Wyn
Ysgol Gynradd Tal-y-Bont
Ysgol Gynradd Talysarn
Ysgol Gynradd Trefriw
Ysgol Y Gorlan
Ysgol Yr Eifl
Ysgol GynraddTudweiliog
Ysglo Waunfawr
Ysglo Pant-y-Rhedyn
Ysgol Glancegin
Ysgol Yr Hendre
Ysgol GynraddBontnewydd
Ysgol Gymraeg y Garnedd
Ysgol Cymerau
Ysgol Abercaseg
Ysgol Gynradd y Felinheli
Ysgol Gynradd Aberffraw
Ysgol Gynradd Amlwch
Ysgol Gynradd Bodedern
Ysgol Gynradd Bodffordd
Ysgol Gymuned Bryngwran
Ysgol Gynradd Brynsiencyn
Ysgol Gynradd Caergeiliog
Ysgol GynraddDwyran
Ysgol Gynradd Gaerwen
Ysgol Gynradd Carreglefn
Ysgol Gynradd Gwalchmai
Ysgol Gymuned Moelfre
Ysgol Gynradd Llanfachraeth
Ysgol Gynradd Llanfairpwll
Ysgol y Graig
Ysgol Llangoed
Ysgol Henblas
Ysgol Gynradd Llanerch-y-Medd
Ysgol Gynradd Llanrhuddlad
Ysgol Gynradd Pencarnisiog
Ysgol Penysarn
Ysgol Gynradd Rhosybol
Ysgol Gynradd Y Talwrn
Ysgol Gymuned y Dyffryn
Ysgol Goronwy Owen
Ysgol Gynradd Llandegfan
Ysgol y Borth
Ysgol Gymraeg Morswyn
Ysgol Gynradd Abergynolwyn
Ysgol Gynradd y Bala
Ysgol Gynradd Croesor
Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy
Ysgol Bro Cynfal
Ysgol Gynradd y Ganllwyd
Ysgol Edmwnd Prys
Ysgol Glanypwll
Ysgol Gynradd Llanegryn
Ysgol Gynradd Llanelltyd
Ysgol y Garreg

Ysgol O M Edwards
Ysgol Gynradd Llawrybetws
Ysgol Manod
Ysgol Gynradd y Parc
Ysgol Gynradd Pennal
Ysgol Cefn Coch
Ysgol Gynradd Talsarnau
Ysgol Gynradd Tanygrisiau
Ysgol Penybryn
Ysgol Bro Hedd Wyn
Ysgol Gynradd Frongoch
Ysgol Gynradd Rhydymain
Ysgol Tanycastell
Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn
Ysgol Maenofferen
Ysgol Capel Garmon
Ysgol Babanod Llanrwst
Ysgol Corn Hir
Ysgol Pont y Gof
Ysgol Iau Maescincla
Ysgol Babanod Maesincla
Ysgol Foel Gron
Ysgol Llandegai
Ysgol Gynradd Lladwrog
Ysgol Llangelynnin
Ysgol Llanystumdwy
Ysgol Pencae
Ysgol Tregarth
Ysgol Ysbyty
Ysgol Parc y Bont
Llangaffo VP
Ysgol Llanfachreth
Ysgol Llanddoged Wirfoddol
Ysgol Eglwysbach
Ysgol Santes Helen

Schools having classes of first or second language pupils where some of the teaching is through the medium of Welsh:

Ysgol Gynradd Dolgarrog
Ysgol Gynradd Abersoch
Ysgol Gynradd Borthygest
Ysgol Gynradd Capelulo
Ysgol Deganwy
Ysgol Dyffryn Road
Ysgol Glanadda
Ysgol Glanwydden
Ysgol Yr Wyddfid
Ysgol Gyffin
Ysgol Tudno
Ysgol Gynradd Maenan
Ysgol Gynradd Y Rowen
Ysgol Babanod Coed Mawr
Ysgol Craig Y Don
Ysgol Gynradd Beaumaris
Ysgol Gynradd Bodorgan
Ysgol Gynradd Cemaes
Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedrgoch
Ysgol Gynradd Llandrygarn
Ysgol Gynradd Llanddeusant
Ysgol Gynradd Llanddona
Ysgol Ffrwd Win
Ysgol Gynradd Llanfechell
Ysgol Gymuned Pentraeth
Ysgol Gynradd Rhoscolyn
Ysgol Gynradd Rhosneigr
Ysgol Ty Mawr
Ysgol Llanfawr
Ysgol Llaingoch
Ysgol Gynradd Niwbwrch
Ysgol Y Traeth
Ysgol Y Clogau
Ysgol Gynradd Brithdir
Ysgol Gynradd Bryncrug
Ysgol Gynradd Corris
Ysgol Gynradd Dinas Mawddwy
Ysgol Gynradd Dolgellau
Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedr
Ysgol Gynradd Llwyngwril
Ysgol Y Friog
Ysgol Gynradd Aberdyfi
Ysgol Iau Llanrwst
Ysgol Gynradd Hiraeth
Ysgol Cadnant
Ysgol Bodlondeb
Ysgol Y Faenol
Ysgol Babanod Llanfairfechan
Ysgol Gynradd Cae Top
Ysgol Y Parch Thomas Ellis
Ysgol Babanod Dolgellau
Ysgol Bodafon
Ysgol Beuno Sant Y Bala

Schools having classes where Welsh is taught as a second language but not used as a teaching medium or schools where no Welsh is taught:

Ysgol Nant y Coed
Ysgol Gynradd Y Parc
Ysgol Babanod Y Tywyn
Ysgol Gynradd Kingsland
Ysgol Glan Conwy
Ysgol Sant Sior
Our Lady Immaculate
Ysgol Stella Maris
St. Mary's RC School

Hotels (Grading)

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what consultation is taking place on a scheme for hotel grading as a separate qualitative assessment from classification.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The Wales Tourist Board has consulted all classified establishments, tourist associations, and local authorities in Wales. The board now intends to discuss with the industry the detailed implementation of the grading system it intends to introduce. I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 22 March 1988 at column *52*.

Loans and Grants

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects information for 1987 on loans and grants received by *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales to become readily available.

Mr. Peter Walker: Information for 1987 on all identifiable EC loans and grants received by Clwyd and by Wales will be available later this year.

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many mink farms currently operate in Wales; and what was the figure 12 months ago.

Mr. Peter Walker: One; nil.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is the size and location of each mink farm currently operating in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Accommodation for 250 mink. Llanybydder, Dyfed.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many planning applications are currently pending for the establishment of mink farms in Wales.

Mr. Grist: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many licences are current for the operation of mink farms in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: None. One application is under consideration in respect of a mink farm established in February 1988.

SCOTLAND

Bield Housing Association

Mr. Ron Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received recent representations from the Bield housing association regarding the level of public funding; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Mr. Alister Green, director of Bield Housing Association Ltd., wrote to me on 16 December, enclosing a copy of his association's annual report. He made particular reference to the level of funding for the provision of housing for the elderly.

Future provision of housing for the elderly within the public sector must be considered in the context of progress already made since 1979. In many districts provision now exceeds the widely used yardstick of 50 bed spaces per 1,000 elderly.

Officials from my Department are currently conducting research aimed at reassessing the requirement for specialised housing for the elderly. The results of that research will be fully taken into account in considering the future allocation of funds.

Scottish Special Housing Association

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) when he received from the Scottish Special Housing Association the report on the results of its consultation with Scottish Special Housing Association tenants in Shetland;

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the report submitted to him by the Scottish Special Housing Association on the consultation with Scottish Special Housing Association tenants in Shetland; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Scottish Special Housing Association wrote to the Scottish Development Department on 12 February 1988 to explain its intentions in relation to the houses which they own in Shetland, in the light of the views expressed by their tenants. The letter was not primarily a report of the results of their consultation with their tenants, although it makes reference to the outcome. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to have specific information about the outcome of the consultation I suggest that it would be appropriate to direct his inquiry to the chairman of the association.

The association has decided not to withdraw from the ownership of houses in Shetland. Tenants who wish their houses to be sold to Hjaltland housing association will be free to continue discussions with that body. Houses which remain in the ownership of the Scottish Special Housing Association will continue to be managed on their behalf by Shetland islands council.

The Scottish Special Housing Association have written to all of their tenants in Shetland to notify them of these decisions. Shetland islands council, Hjaltland housing association and the Housing Corporation in Scotland have all been informed of the position.

Tree Felling

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will be taking any additional steps to monitor the amount of felling now that woodland profits are to be free of tax.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The felling of trees in Great Britain is controlled by the Forestry Commission in exercise of its powers under the Forestry Act 1967. Adequate arrangements are already in place for monitoring felling.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made as to whether felling licences will be sufficient to smooth the realisation of woodland profits in the light of the Budget tax proposals.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My right hon. and learned Friend is not aware of any reason why consideration of felling licence applications should be influenced by the changes in forestry taxation announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many homeless persons in Scotland have previously been admitted to mental hospitals; and what this figure represents as a percentage of the total number of homeless persons in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is not available.

In the year 1986-87, about 250 applicant households in priority need had a household member vulnerable because of mental handicap or mental illness. This represents approximately 2 per cent. of homeless households.

Historic Building Grants

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of historic building grants which have recently been allocated within Angus district; and what proportion the grants are of the total allocated within Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: For the three most recent financial years, the information requested is as follows:

	Angus district	*Total for Scotland*	
	£	£	*Percentage*
1985-86	193,800	4,287,000	4·5
1986-87	56,900	3,809,000	1·5
[1]1987-88	339,000	6,000,000	5·7

[1] Provisional.

Education Expenditure

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of spending in Tayside on *(a)* primary education, *(b)* secondary education, *(c)* further education and *(d)* nursery education was met by Government grant and what proportion was met by the regional council in each year since 1979; and what were the respective cash figures for each category at 1987-88 prices.

Mr. Lang: It is not possible to provide a breakdown as requested. Government grant in respect of local authority relevant expenditure, aggregate Exchequer grant, is composed of specific grants and the rate support grant. There are no specific grants available to finance any one of the broad categories of expenditure specified. RSG, by

far the largest element of AEG, is paid in support of local authorities' revenue generally and is not hypothecated to individual services. It is not therefore possible to express RSG as a proportion of expenditure on particular services.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many shotgun licences and firearm certificates were issued within the Dundee area within the last eight years.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Statistics of the issue and renewal of shotgun and firearms certificates are recorded only on a police area basis. Tayside police statistics are not compiled on a way which would enable separate figures to be given for the Dundee area.

Free School Meals

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many children in *(a)* Dundee and *(b)* Tayside region are currently in receipt of free school meals; and how many he estimates will lose this entitlement from April.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Details regarding school meals are collected centrally on a regional basis and information taken from the 1987 census indicates that 7,921 pupils in Tayside region were in receipt of free meals. This figure is not broken down by entitlement, but it is estimated that supplementary benefit recipients, for whom the position will not change, represent about 70 per cent. of those receiving free meals. The remainder, who benefit because their parents are in receipt of family income supplement or by virtue of the authorities discretion will lose their entitlement, but, because the children's rates of family credit will take account of the cost of school meals, I expect that, overall, more pupils will benefit under the new arrangements.

Tayside Health Board

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from Tayside health board regarding the authority's financial difficulties and suggesting the need for extra funds.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No representations have been received this year.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the 1986-87 half-yearly overspend or underspend position of the Tayside health board broken down into districts.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information on the expenditure of Tayside health board's units is not available centrally.

Housing

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give his estimate of how many houses in the Dundee district authority area are below the statutory tolerable standards; and how many of those *(a)* lack one or more of the basic amenities and *(b)* lack a fixed bath or shower.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The most recent available information is set out in the table, which gives the numbers of dwellings below the statutory tolerable standard in the area of the city of Dundee district council and, of those, the numbers lacking one or more of the standard amenities (sink, hot water and inside WC). It also shows the numbers lacking a fixed bath or shower.

Dwellings below tolerable standard at 31 March 1986[1]

	Number
Number of dwellings below tolerable standard	1,470
Lacking one or more standard amenity[2]	1,470
Lacking a fixed bath or shower[2]	1,426

[1] Information on dwellings below tolerable standard is collected annually from local authorities. The latest figures available from Dundee district council are as at 31 March 1986.

[2] A dwelling may be recorded in both of these columns and there is therefore an element of double counting.

Heart Surgery

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of children currently waiting for heart surgery at each regional centre for heart operations in Scotland; and what is the average longest waiting time.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is as follows:

	Glasgow	*Edinburgh*
Number of children (under 16yrs old) on waiting list[1]	35	16
Mean wait in days	77	145
Longest wait in days	569	267

[1] At 14 March 1988.

Rating Reform

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the constituencies of Scotland ranked according to the percentage of *(a)* losers and *(b)* gainers under the poll tax proposals, showing those percentages alongside that ranking; and if he will express these figures for both households and individuals.

Mr. Lang: This information is not available by constituency.

Pay Beds

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the number of pay beds available in the Tayside health board area on the latest available date; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information requested is given in the table.

Year	*Number of Authorised Pay beds*
1979	5
1980	5
1981	5
1982	39

[1] Year	Number of Authorised Pay beds
1983	[3]9
1984	[3]9
1985	[3]9
1986	[3]9
1987	[4]9
[2]1988	[4]9

[1] As at 31 December.
[2] As at 23 March.
[3] Plus 2 emergency beds.
[4] Plus 4 emergency beds.

Tourism

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to assist the tourist industry in Dundee.

Mr. Lang: The Government, through their sponsor bodies, are already fully involved in promoting the development of Dundee's tourist industry. These bodies are always willing to provide assistance, advice and encouragement for worthwhile projects. The prime current example of Government activity is the Scottish Development Agency's participation in the work of the Dundee project in facilitating tourist-related developments at the waterfront site such as the RRS Discovery visitor centre. In addition, assistance has been provided to a number of projects, including the Stakis Earl Grey hotel, and the Scottish tourist board provides financial support for the City of Dundee tourist board.

YTS

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many YTS trainees in Dundee left the scheme to enrol in another scheme run by a different employer or a different managing agent in the current year.

Mr. Lang: Information is not available in the form requested.

Data are however available from a 100 per cent. survey carried out in the Grampian and Tayside area of all trainees who had left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987. The response rate was just over 50 per cent. Of those 3,912 young people who replied, 530 (13.5 per cent.) had rejoined a YTS scheme. It is not possible to ascertain in any case whether the young person went to a different employer or managing agent.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many persons in Dundee have had a benefit penalty applied to them by an adjudication officer for refusing to enter a YTS course or for leaving a YTS course early, for each month since the scheme began.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the form requested.

In the city of Dundee for the period from 1 April 1987 to 22 March 1988, a total of 204 young people have had a benefit penalty applied by an adjudicating officer either for refusing a YTS course or for leaving one early.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the number of years for which restrictions will be necessary on sheep movement in parts of Cumbria, following radioactive fallout after the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to my replies of 8 and 15 February at columns *62* and *467* respectively and to the reply given by my noble Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary in another place on 8 February at columns *94-95*.

Milk Quotas

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many injunctions have been applied for and granted to restrain the Milk Marketing Board from transferring milk quota originally belonging to a producer in receivership to the new occupier in each year since 1984.

Mr. Donald Thompson: There have been none.

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) how many mink farms currently operate in England; and what was the figure 12 months ago;

(2) if he will give details of the licensing arrangements necessary for the establishment and operation of a mink farm;

(3) how many licences are current for the operation of mink farms in England.

Mr. Donald Thompson: As at 24 March there were 48 licences for the farming of mink in force in England. These licences covered 49 farms. One of these farms has ceased to keep mink and the licence expires this month. A year ago the number of farms licensed was 44.

Under the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932 and The Mink (Keeping) Order 1987, the appropriate Department may at its discretion issue a licence for the keeping of mink except in certain areas of Great Britain specified in the Order. The fee, currently £115, and the manner in which mink are to be confined are specified in The Mink (Keeping) Regulations 1975 as amended by The Mink (Keeping) (Amendments) Regulations of both 1982 and 1987. Before a licence is issued the premises are inspected and an assessment made of the likely impact on farming and wildlife if mink were to escape from captivity.

Meat and Poultry (Hormones)

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to ensure that no meat or poultry, in the production of which hormones have been used, is made available for sale to the British consumer without bearing a clear label indicating the fact.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My hon. Friend may be aware that the use of hormone growth promoters for fattening purposes has been prohibited in the United Kingdom since 1 December 1986.

In the light of this I do not believe that the labelling of meat or poultry would provide any further safeguard for consumers.

Irradiated Foods

Mr. Marland: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he proposes to take following the announcement on 4 February that the Government accept the advice of the Advisory Committee on Irradiated and Novel Foods on the safety and wholesomeness of irradiated foods.

Mr. Donald Thompson: It may be that this technology, if properly controlled and applied may offer real health and economic benefits for the consumer in some food areas where the alternatives are not as safe or effective in ensuring keeping food sound and wholesome. However, we must look carefully at how this might be achieved in a controlled and phased manner before we can consider lifting the current ban on the use of irradiation on food in the United Kingdom.

I have therefore asked officials to report before the end of the year. I have particularly asked for advice on the criteria for assessing applications to use irradiation, what conditions might be imposed in giving any such permission including consideration of the availability of detection tests, arrangements for licensing and inspection of food irradiation plants, the monitoring of the extent of use of food irradiation, and a complete consumer information programme including appropriate food labelling provisions. In drawing up advice officials will take into account the sorts of controls that are applied by those countries, which includes some our European partners, where food irradiation is permitted.

We shall not make any proposals to amend or adjust the current general prohibition without the full public consultation required by the Food Acts.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Housing Benefit

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate has been made of the additional cost of housing benefit from 1 April if it were given to those whose savings did not exceed £10,000 instead of the £6,000 proposed.

Mr. Portillo: The cost would be substantial. Precise estimates would depend on the nature of changes to the "tariff income" structure that currently operates for capital holdings between £3,000 and £6,000. The cost would of course be even higher if the capital limits for income support and family credit were increased in the same way in order to maintain the alignment of rules between the three benefits, which is an important achievement of the social security reforms.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the number of claimants whose housing benefit is delayed with his Department's Dundee offices.

Mr. Portillo I regret that the information requested is not available.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many claimants of housing benefit in Dundee he estimates will receive lower benefits from April; (2) what is his estimate of how many pensioners in Dundee now receiving housing benefit will lose rights after the change in the social security system in April.

Mr. Portillo I regret that information relating to loss of housing benefit is not available for individual local authority areas.

Human Organs

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether the National Health Service or any Government agency imports any human organs for transplant work in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The United Kingdom transplant service has reciprocal arrangements for organ exchange with similar organisations in other European countries. It also has an arrangement with the federally recognised organ exchange agency in the United States, the United Network for Organ Sharing, under which cadaveric kidneys surplus to United States requirements may be used to help patients in the United Kingdom.

Imported organs accounted for a very small proportion of the total transplants carried out in the United Kingdom. In the calendar year 1987, the following organs were sent from Europe:

Kidneys—6
Livers—4
Hearts and heart/lungs—13

(These figures exclude reciprocal arrangements with Dublin, which is served by the United Kingdom transplant service as if it were a United Kingdom centre).

Imports of kidneys under the arrangements with the United Network for Organ Sharing totalled 29 in the last quarter of 1987.

Elderly Patients

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the proportion of hospital beds occupied by patients who are *(a)* over 65 years and under 75 years and *(b)* over 75 years in Sunderland district health authority and the Northern regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie: The latest available information is given in the table.

Estimated Percentage of In-Patients Occupying Beds in National Health Service Hospitals in 1985

	Patients aged 65-74 years	*Patients aged 75 years and over*
Northern Regional Health Authority	18	35
Sunderland District Health Authority	21	35

Air Conditioning and Ventilation

Mr. Brandon-Bravo: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what public health policy initiatives he proposes to take in the light of the report on air conditioning and ventilation analysis by ACVA Inc., a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: As I and my noble Friend have explained when writing to my hon. Friend, the Government are actively reviewing current knowledge and research

(including a major United Kingdom study, now published, which has been carried out by a private company). The report to which my hon. Friend refers is a useful addition to the literature.

There is increasing awareness of the opportunities offered by, and the problems associated with, air conditioning and ventilation. It would be premature to take any policy initiatives before these reviews have been completed.

South Cumbria Health Authority

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what changes in front-line staff in South Cumbria district health authority have been achieved over the last five years for which figures are available in both numbers and percentages.

Mrs. Currie: Between 30 September 1982 and 30 September 1986, front-line staff in South Cumbria district health authority increased by 88 whole-time equivalents (from 1,288 to 1,376) or by 6·9 per cent.

Crewe, Chester and Halton Health Authorities

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of *(a)* physiotherapists, *(b)* speech therapists, *(c)* radiographers, *(d)* chiropodists, *(e)* occupational therapists, *(f)* dieticians and *(g)* laboratory technicians employed by (i) the Crewe health authority, (ii) the Chester health authority and (iii) the Halton health authority in each of the last five years.

Mr. Newton: The information is shown in the table.

NHS employed staff in post at 30 September

	Whole-time equivalents[1]				
	1982	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Crewe district health authority					
Physiotherapists[2]	33	30	30	38	41
Speech therapists[2]	6	7	10	12	11
Radiographers[2]	28	26	25	28	27
Chiropodists[2]	10	11	11	11	12
Occupational therapists[2]	10	9	9	11	12
Dieticians	3	3	4	3	2
Medical laboratory scientific officers	47	45	49	47	48
Chester district health authority					
Physiotherapists[2]	36	37	39	39	43
Speech therapists[2]	6	6	7	7	7
Radiographers[2]	31	30	30	29	29
Chiropodists[2]	7	9	9	10	9
Occupational therapists[2]	18	21	23	29	31
Dieticians	3	3	3	4	4
Medical laboratory scientific officers	42	44	42	43	38
Halton district health authority					
Physiotherapists[2]	14	15	17	23	26
Speech therapists[2]	4	3	4	5	5
Radiographers[2]	7	7	7	11	13
Chiropodists[2]	6	8	8	8	9
Occupational herapists[2]	5	8	12	14	12
Dieticians	[3]	[3]	[3]	1	2
Medical laboratory scientific officers	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest whole-time equivalent.
[2] Excludes helpers.
[3] Less than 0·5 whole-time equivalent.
— Nil.
Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were treated in each specialty in *(a)* the Crewe, *(b)* the Chester and *(c)* the Halton health districts in 1987.

Mrs. Currie: Information about the numbers of patients using hospital beds will in future be available for financial years. Information about completed episodes of hospital care for 1987-88 are expected by late summer this year.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the current waiting lists for *(a)* examinations, *(b)* operations and *(c)* beds in each speciality in each hospital in (i) the Crewe, (ii) the Chester and (iii) the Halton health district.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 8 March, at columns *176-7*.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the projected levels of funding for the next three years for *(a)* the Crewe, *(b)* the Chester and *(c)* the Halton health districts, expressing year-on-year changes as a percentage in both cash and real terms.

Mrs. Currie: The funding of Crewe, Chester and Halton health authorities is a matter for the Mersey regional health authority. I understand that the region will be issuing revised financial guidelines to districts soon, and my hon. Friend may care to contact the regional chairman for this information.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the bed occupancy rates in each specialty in each hospital in *(a)* the Crewe, *(b)* the Chester and *(c)* the Halton health districts in 1987.

Mrs. Currie: Information about bed availability and bed occupancy is not yet centrally available for 1987. The information which will form part of the new information set recommended by the steering group on health services information will be available later this year and will relate to the financial year 1987-88. Data on bed usage will in future relate to ward classification rather than specialty and will reflect the number of unfinished ward stays at a specific point in time which will assist in estimating daily bed usage.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of staff employed by each office of his Department in the Tottenham constituency for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The Tottenham constituency is served by only Tottenham local office. The most recent available information regarding staffing levels at social security local offices relates to 1 March 1988. The numbers of staff in post at Tottenham office on that date, and corresponding figures for previous years are as follows:

Date	*Number*
1 April 1979	148
1 March 1980	144
1 March 1981	151
1 March 1984	177
1 March 1985	179·5
1 March 1986	185·5
1 March 1987	202·5
1 March 1988	210·5

For 1979 only, the number given relates to 1 April as records of staffing at individual local offices prior to that date have not been retained. I regret I am unable to provide information for 1982 and 1983 as the relevant records have been destroyed in a fire.

Supplementary Benefit

Mr. Bernie Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the number of supplementary benefit claimants in each of his Department's offices covering the Tottenham constituency for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is as follows:

Tottenham Local Office

Date	*Number of people receiving supplementary benefit*
27 November 1979	9,328
2 December 1980	10,271
9 December 1981	12,978
7 December 1982	14,247
6 December 1983	15,124
12 December 1984	16,083
11 December 1985	17,237
10 December 1986	18,073
17 November 1987	17,235

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

The constituency of Tottenham is served by the Tottenham local office, but their boundaries are not conterminous.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many households in December 1985, December 1986 and December 1987 were having weekly deductions made from their supplementary benefit for electricity and how many for gas *(a)* under £2 per week and *(b)* in each £1 band above £2 per week up to £30 per week.

Mr. Portillo: This information is not held for the dates requested. However, the annual statistical inquiry shows that in February 1986 supplementary benefit recipients were having deductions made from their weekly benefit for electricity and gas as follows:

Bands (£)	*Electricity*	*Gas*
0·01 to 2·00	4,164	2,465
2·01 to 3·00	9,268	3,938
3·01 to 4·00	10,403	6,405
4·01 to 5·00	16,681	10,820
5·01 to 6·00	18,046	15,514
6·01 to 7·00	17,873	16,913
7·01 to 8·00	19,462	19,986
8·01 to 9·00	15,982	16,359
9·01 to 10·00	12,663	13,161
10·01 to 11·00	10,739	9,275
11·01 to 12·00	10,558	6,415
12·01 and over	32,667	10,528

Information is not readily available for separate £1 bands over £12·01 per week.

Pensioners

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many pensioners currently in receipt of supplementary benefit will receive a transitional addition after 11 April.

Mr. Scott: It is estimated that some 650,000 claimants who are, or whose partner is, aged 60 years and over will receive a transitional addition at 11 April.

Social Fund Officers

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether each office of his Department has now recruited its quota of social fund officers.

Mr. Portillo: Social fund officers are existing departmental staff who have been redeployed from other duties. They form an integral part of the complement of each local office, but no central record is kept of how each manager deploys his available staff resources.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what training has been given to his Department's social fund officers.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on 15 December 1987 at column *483-4*.

Infant Mortality

Mrs. Mahon: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the results of his consultations with medical experts on the rise in infant mortality in 1986.

Mrs. Currie: As indicated by officials to the Select Committee on Social Services, we have not yet received

any report of these consultations which are continuing. We shall consider whether further action is necessary once we receive their views.

Cancer Screening

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further plans he has to publicise the need for cancer screening; what funds are currently available for this purpose; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Personal invitations sent to women due for screening, followed by reminders both to women who do not respond and to their GPs, are the most effective single way of publicising cancer screening to those who need it. Health education activity in support of the cervical and breast cancer screening programmes will be carried out by the Health Education Authority within its overall budget next year of over £10 million. The HEA among others will be publicising the European code against cancer—which recommends regular cervical smears and, for women over 50, mammography—during EC Cancer Week from 1-7 May 1988 and EC Cancer Year in 1989. Publicity on cancer screening is also given by the Women's national cancer control campaign, which receives an annual grant of £84,500 from the Department.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those district health authorities which have set up a computerised call and recall system for cervical cancer and those which have not; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Peckham (Ms. Harman) on 10 March at column *344*.

Northern Regional Health Authority

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the percentage change in *(a)* National Health Service funding in real terms and in cash terms and *(b)* employment of medical staff, from 1979 to 1988 in the Northern regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: Following is expenditure information derived from the annual accounts of health authorities comprising the northern region for 1979-80 and 1986-87 (the latest year available):

	1979-80 £ *million*	*1986-87* £ *million*
Total Expenditure		
Cash terms	473·9	957·6
At 1986-87 prices	790·9	957·6
Increases	*Per cent.*	*Per cent.*
Cash terms	..	102·1
Real terms	..	21·1

Notes:

1 The figure for 1979-80 has been expressed at 1986-87 prices by the use of the Gross Domestic Product deflator.

2 The figures include expenditure on family practitioner services. Such expenditure cannot strictly be attributed to particular regions but has been assigned on a geographical basis from the annual accounts of the family practitioner committees which account for it.

3 The figures exclude expenditure by special health authorities, etc providing central services for the National Health Service and expenditure met centrally by the Department.

Information on hospital and community health services medical staff for 1979 and 1986, the latest year for which figures are available, is set out as follows:

HCHS medical staff at 30 September 1979[1] and 1986 wtes Northern region

1979	*1986*	*Per cent. change*
2,349·0	2,640·0	+12·4

[1] Includes permanent paid, honourary and locum staff.

Nurse-Patient Ratios

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the nurse-patient ratio in *(a)* the Sunderland district health authority and *(b)* the Northern regional health authority for each of the last nine years.

Mr. Newton: Such information as is available is shown in the table.

Due to the 1982 National Health Service reorganisation, figures on a consistent basis for years prior to 1982 are not available for Sunderland district health authority. Figures for Northern regional health authority have been given for the same years for comparison. Nursing and midwifery staff in post figures are a "snapshot" on 30 September whereas patient figures include in-patients, out-patients, day cases and emergencies aggregated over a calendar year.

Due to the differing methods of collection, any ratio calculated would therefore be crude and could be misleading. Staff and patient figures have therefore been presented separately.

National Health Service nursing and midwifery staff in post[1]

At 30 September	*Whole-time equivalents[2] Sunderland district health authority*	*Northern regional health authority*
1982	2,490	26,380
1983	2,570	26,840
1984	2,520	26,740
1985	2,580	27,110
1986	2,590	27,390

Source: DHSS annual census of National Health Service non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes agency staff.

[2] Figures independently rounded to nearest ten whole-time equivalents.

In-patient cases treated in Sunderland district health authority and Northern region

	Sunderland district health authority	*Northern regional health authority*
1982	45,559	376,067
1983	49,225	409,115
1984	50,945	420,080
1985	51,110	433,131
1986	48,820	441,095

General Practitioners (Worthing)

Mr. Higgins: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has on the number of general practitioners in the area covered by the Worthing district

health authority in 1979 and the latest date for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the corresponding increase or decrease in costs.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is collected from family practitioner committees which are not necessarily conterminous with health authority boundaries. The number of unrestricted general medical practitioners in the area covered by west Sussex family practitioner committee (which includes Worthing DHA) has risen from 294 at 1 October 1979 to 360 as at 1 October 1986, the latest date for which figures are available. Information about the corresponding change in costs is not available centrally.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the number of full-time equivalent posts dedicated solely or mainly to detect false social security claimants in *(a)* the Dundee area, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Great Britain as a whole; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: Precise figures are not available but it is possible to estimate the numbers of full-time equivalent posts on the basis of records of staff time expended on fraud-related work. The numbers of full-time equivalent posts each year since 1979 have been as follows:

	Dundee area	*Scotland*	*Great Britain*
1979-80	—	285	2,311
1980-81	—	244	2,336
1981-82	—	261	2,346
1982-83	12	251	2,185
1983-84	13	246	2,211
1984-85	14	258	2,204
1985-86	13	256	2,285
1986-87	12	238	2,390
1987-88	14	313	2,724

The figures given for the Dundee area relate to the local offices at Dundee, East and Dundee, West. Data for those offices prior to 1982 are not available.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his estimate of *(a)* the amount recovered and *(b)* the amount illegally claimed but not recovered from social security claimants prosecuted in the Dundee area for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: Information on which to base an estimate is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Supplementary Benefit Adjudication Officers

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many supplementary benefit adjudication officers in the Dundee area have less than six months' experience of adjudication work; and how many of these are section supervisors.

Mr. Portillo: There are no supplementary benefit adjudication officers in the two local offices in the Dundee area with less than six months' experience of adjudication work.

Income Support

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many disabled claimants in Dundee will receive a lower entitlement under income support than they currently receive.

Mr. Portillo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Ms. Ruddock) on 23 March 1988.

Benefits

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide an estimate of *(a)* the number of claimants in Dundee benefiting from transitional protection in April, and *(b)* the number of claimants in Dundee expected to lose that protection by April 1989 by benefit upratings, assuming benefit upratings in line with the Chancellor of the Exchequer's inflation estimates in the Autumn Statement.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that this information is not available for individual areas.

Rent Rebates and Allowances

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the gross income level, assuming standard rate of tax and national insurance, if applicable, at which *(a)* rent rebate or allowance and *(b)* rate rebate, will cease to be payable to (i) a single pensioner, (ii) a pensioner couple, (iii) a family whose head of household is in employment with one dependent child and (iv) a family whose head of household is in employment with two dependent children under the revised housing benefit scheme to be implemented in April 1988.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 3 December 1987]:* The information is in the table and is based on the average local authority rent and rates.

	Housing Benefit from April 1988			
	Rent	*Rates*	*Level*[1]	*Level*[2]
Single pensioner (under 80)	15·30	6·40	68·72	69·18
Single pensioner (80 or over)	15·30	6·40	71·09	71·55
Pensioner couple (under 80)	15·30	6·40	90·48	90·83
Pensioner couple (80 or over)	15·30	6·40	92·83	93·18
Married couple head working 1 child	17·10	7·20	110·21	112·17
Married couple head working 2 children	18·35	7·70	122·06	124·10

[1] Level of gross income at which rent rebate or allowance ceases.
[2] Rate rebate ceases.

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the gross income level at which *(a)* rent rebate or allowance and *(b)* rate rebate would cease to be payable to (i) a single pensioner, (ii) a pensioner couple, (iii) a family whose head of household is in employment with one dependent child and (iv) a family whose head of household is in employment with two dependent children who in each case is paying: *(a)* the average local authority rent and *(b)* the average local authority rate given a rent taper of 33 per cent.

Mr. Scott: *[holding answer 3 December 1987]:* The information is in the table.

Housing Benefit until 31 March 1987

	Rent	*Rates*	*Level*[1]	*Level*[2]
Single Pensioner	15·30	6·40	76·07	75·49
Pensioner Couple	15·30	6·40	99·32	98·74
Married couple Head working 1 child	17·10	7·20	133·80	133·63
Married couple Head working 2 children	18·35	7·70	150·82	150·69

[1] Level of gross income at which Rent rebate or allowance ceases.
[2] Rate rebate ceases.

Local Caseloads (Report)

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will place in the Library a copy of the full report carried out for his Department by the social policy research unit at York university on the caseloads of local offices of his Department;

(2) whether the research carried out by the social policy research unit at York university on behalf of his Department was based on a study of the caseload of a sample of local offices of his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(3) whether the study carried out by the social policy research unit at York university, on behalf of his Department, covered local offices in areas of particularly high unemployment and, specifically those offices serving Glasgow, Maryhill; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 29 February 1988]:* The social policy research unit carries out a number of surveys for the Department. In particular the unit was commissioned to carry out two pieces of work to help with the development of policy on the social fund. One study consisted of a survey of applications for single payments in 1986. The survey covered 42 local offices in a representative sample of areas, some of which would have had above average unemployment. The sample included Glasgow (Southside) but not Glasgow (Maryhill).

The second study was concerned with the reasons for the variation in single payment expenditure between local offices.

Articles based on the work are in preparation. I will arrange for copies to be placed in the Library as they are produced.

Foetal and Genetic Abnormality (Screening)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he is taking to facilitate the establishment of screening and counselling services for foetal and genetic abnormality in districts where they are currently unavailable.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 7 March 1988]:* Health authorities received some guidance on screening services in the maternity services advisory committee's reports. The decision on whether to offer screening and referral for specialist genetic advice is a matter for the clinician. In the light of recent developments of DNA techniques in diagnosis we are at present considering how genetic services which include counselling can best be provided within the NHS.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Terrorism

10. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make it his policy to invite the various legitimate Northern Ireland political parties to make common cause against terrorism and the Irish Republican Army.

Mr. Tom King: It is my policy to enlist the full support of the constitutional political parties in Northern Ireland for the Government's efforts to defeat terrorism, from whatever side of the community it may come.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

11. **Mr. McCusker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress has been made on reviewing the Anglo-Irish Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: The review of the working of the Intergovernmental Conference provided for in article 11 of the Anglo-Irish Agreement is not due until November. It is too early to comment on what may emerge from the review.

16. **Mr. Clay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has received any representations from the Irish Government under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement concerning the recent shootings in Gibraltar; and if he will make a statement.

17. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what communication he has had recently with the Government of the Irish Republic on matters falling within the ambit of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

18. **Ms. Short:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the accuracy of the information conveyed by Her Majesty's Government to the world press to justify the shootings in Gibraltar is to be discussed with the Government of Ireland under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: There has been continuing contact with the Government of the Irish Republic over a range of matters, including the attempted terrorist atrocity in Gibraltar, and subsequent events. The precise nature of communications on matters covered by the Anglo-Irish Agreement is generally confidential.

41. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current working of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Mr. Tom King: The institutions of the agreement are, I believe, working to the benefit of Anglo-Irish relations, and of the law-abiding people of Northern Ireland, and the agreement continues to provide a sound and valuable foundation for progress there.

Small Businesses

12. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what further steps he plans to take to encourage small businesses.

Dr. Mawhinney: The local enterprise development unit plans to increase its job promotion target from just under 4,000 in the current year to 5,000 jobs in 1988-89.

Wages

14. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what monitoring procedures he intends to introduce to check the effects of the Wages (Northern Ireland) Order on the level of young persons' wages; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: We shall not be introducing any specific monitoring procedures. The high minimum rates set by wages councils for young people in relation to often more experienced adult workers are prejudicial to their employment prospects and the effects of the Wages (Northern Ireland) Order can only be beneficial to young people.

Angling

15. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to exploit the potential of angling for the Northern Ireland tourist industry; what incentives are offered to attract anglers from Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: In Northern Ireland, angling, and in particular coarse angling, has always been regarded as one of the Province's most valuable tourist products. The promotion and marketing of coarse angling have attracted world-class match anglers to the Province's many sponsored competitions, not least the 1982 world championships. The incentives on offer include capital grants for the provision of sea angling boats and reduced price fishing licences for tourists.

Hospital Services, East Antrim

19. **Mr. Beggs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he gave to representations from East Antrim general practitioners, Larne and Carrickfergus borough councils and the Moyle Action Committee when determining the future level of acute, accident emergency and maternity services to be provided at Whiteabbey, Carrickfergus and Moyle hospitals in East Antrim.

Mr. Needham: I have only recently received a lengthy and detailed submission on a number of issues from the Moyle hospital action committee and the other groups listed. I am considering the points they have put to me and will be replying to them shortly.

Prisoners (Policy)

20. **Mr. Alton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he plans to review his Department's policy towards the treatment of life prisoners and persons detained at the Secretary of State's pleasure who committed crimes before, or at, the age of 18 years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: My right hon. Friend indicated our general attitude to Secretary of State pleasure cases in his reply to the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) on 25 February at column 429. He has noted the views which have been expressed by elected representatives, Church leaders and others and is considering whether any special action is called for. No decision has yet been taken.

Health and Social Services

21. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he has given to the draft proposals of the Province's four area health and social services boards for health services provision in 1988-89.

Mr. Needham: It would not be right for me to comment on draft proposals on which boards themselves have not yet taken decisions. Once boards have taken decisions on the proposals, they will be submitting revised operational plans which I shall discuss with chairmen when I hold the accountability reviews.

33. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the chairmen of the four area health and social services boards in Northern Ireland to discuss the future of the health services in the Province; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met the chairmen of the health and social services boards on 9 March 1988. At that meeting we had a full and frank discussion of the immediate problems facing boards and also of the ways in which we might seek to improve financial planning in the longer term. To assist boards to rationalise services and introduce revenue-saving measures and thus ease their current financial problems, I have decided to increase their capital allocations for 1988-89 by £5 million.

37. **Mr. Adams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration he has given to the proposals of the four area health and social services boards to cut services in order to meet Government cash limits.

Mr. Needham: It would not be right for me to comment on draft proposals on which boards themselves have not yet taken decisions.

Once boards have taken decisions on the proposals, they will be submitting revised operational plans which I shall discuss with chairmen when I hold the accountability reviews.

42. **Mr. Snape:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had on additional funding for health and social services provision in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd).

44. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many representations he has received concerning the future of health and social services provision in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: The future of the health and personal social services is an issue of constant debate in Northern Ireland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I continually receive representations, both formal and informal, on this subject.

46. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the chairmen of the four area health and social services boards in Northern Ireland to discuss the future of the health services in the Province; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Needham: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I met the chairmen of the health and social services boards on 9 March 1988.

At that meeting we had a full and frank discussion of the immediate problems facing boards and also of the ways in which we might seek to improve financial planning in the longer term. To assist boards to rationalise services and introduce revenue-saving measures and thus ease their current financial problems, I have decided to increase their capital allocations for 1988-89 by £5 million.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

22. **Mr. Ron Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he intends to announce the first environmentally sensitive areas in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: I am pleased to say that my noble Friend, Lord Lyell, announced the formal designation of the Mourne Mountains and Slieve Croob environmentally sensitive area on Monday 21 March.

Security

23. **Sir John Farr:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the current security situation.

34. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about the current security situation.

36. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the latest security situation in Northern Ireland.

39. **Mr. Molyneaux:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the security situation.

Mr. Tom King: I refer right hon. and hon. Members to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy).

30. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has recently received on matters relating to security in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Tom King: I have regular and frequent meetings with the Chief Constable and the GOC. Since the beginning of this year this House has had the opportunity to debate the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Acts 1978 and 1987 (Continuance) Order 1988 and I have listened with interest to the views of the hon. Members on this and on other occasions. I have also had discussions with leading Northern Ireland politicians and Church leaders and attended four meetings of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference.

Chinese Community (Complaints)

24. **Mr. Madden:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the disciplinary inquiry into complaints from the Chinese community in Northern Ireland against Royal Ulster Constabulary officers to be completed.

Mr. Stanley: I understand the investigation by the RUC is continuing, but it is not possible to say when it might be completed.

Harland and Wolff

25. **Mr. Nicholas Brown:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he assesses the cost effectiveness of the shipbuilding subsidies paid to Harland and Wolff.

Mr. Stanley: Cost effectiveness is assessed by reference to factors such as cost per man year by comparison with the potential cost of creating alternative jobs; the restoration of long-term competitiveness particularly through improving productivity and the rationalisation of physical facilities; and the maintenance of employment elsewhere in the economy.

Police Officers (Discipline)

26. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Northern Ireland Police Authority's progress in considering disciplinary charges for police officers above the rank of chief superintendent, in the light of Sir Philip Myer's report.

Mr. Tom King: I understand that the police authority has received Sir Philip Myers' report and is now considering its contents. As I have already said I will keep the House informed of further developments.

Rating Reform

27. **Mr. McGrady:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received concerning the additional financial burden which will be placed on Northern Ireland students studying in Great Britain, in that they will be subjected to a poll tax in Great Britain, while their parents pay full property rates in Northern Irland; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: No representations have so far been received, and the Government have no plans to introduce a poll tax.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

28. **Mr. Gow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what progress he has made in securing the objective set out in articles 4(b) and 4(c) of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 15 November 1985.

Mr. Tom King: The objective of devolution in Northern Ireland can be achieved only with the co-operation of the constitutional parties there. In order to establish whether a basis for such co-operation exists, I have been holding discussions over recent months with the leaders of the main parties and hope to have further talks with them in the near future.

Irish Foreign Minister

29. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he last met the Irish Foreign Minister; and what was discussed.

Mr. Tom King: I last met the Irish Foreign Minister at the Intergovernmental Conference on 24 February. A copy of the joint statement issued afterwards has been placed in the Library.

District Development Officers

31. **Mr. Clifford Forsythe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the responsibilities of a district development officer.

Mr. Needham: Outside the Belfast area, the district development officer service was absorbed into the planning service of the Department of the Environment on 1 April 1986 and the responsibilities of the former district development officers fell to that service. So far as Castlereagh and Newtownabbey districts are concerned, the duties passed to the Belfast development office.

The duties which were passed to the planning service included liaison with other Goverament Departments, district councils and statutory bodies, the co-ordination of emergency services, urban renewal schemes and the issue of property certificates.

Religious Discrimination (Employment)

32. **Mr. Corbett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on his letter to the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights concerning its report on "Religious Discrimination in Employment Practices".

Mr. King: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames).

Health Service (Funds)

35. **Rev. Martin Smyth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about his plans to provide additional funds for the Health Service in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: I have no plans to increase the level of revenue funding for 1988-89 for the health and personal social services in Northern Ireland beyond that already announced. Following representations from the chairmen of the health and social services boards, I have, however, decided to increase capital allocations by £5 million.

Housing Billl 1987

38. **Mr. A. Cecil Walker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he has any plans to apply the proposals contained in the Housing Bill 1987 to Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham: We are currently giving careful consideration to the provisions contained in the Housing Bill before deciding whether and to what extent they would be beneficial to current housing policy in Northern Ireland.

Some of the proposals may not be wholly relevant to the Northern Ireland housing situation because of its different administrative arrangement.

Cross-community Understanding

40. **Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he is planning any new initiatives to help cross-community understanding.

Dr. Mawhinney: A number of measures have recently been taken, including the creation of a central community relations unit to advise on all aspects of relations between the two traditions in Northern Ireland, and a new scheme to support cross-community contact between young people. My right hon. Friend and I keep under review the scope for further measures which might assist in improving community relations. In that context I met the leaders of the four main churches on 21 March.

Departmental Staff

43. **Mr. John D. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is the total number of staff in the London office of his Department; and what percentage are non-whites.

Mr. Stanley: 114; of whom 14 per cent. are non-whites.

United States Investments

45. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with United States firms on the effect of the MacBride campaign on United States investments in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Stanley: Ministers in the Northern Ireland Office have discussed the MacBride campaign with United States firms on a number of occasions, including during my recent visit to the United States earlier this month. In those discussions we have made clear our view that the campaign will do nothing to promote new United States investment in Northern Ireland with adverse consequences for those who are currently unemployed.

International Fund for Northern Ireland

47. **Mr. Illsley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the future of the International Fund for Ireland.

Mr. Stanley: The International Fund for Ireland published its first annual report last December. This sets out an impressive record of progress, including the establishment of seven priority programmes designed to stimulate economic activity in key sectors of the economy. The report notes that of the £54 million available to the board for disbursement, £48 million has already been committed across the priority programmes. The fund has announced commitments to specific projects totalling £8 million. The Government welcome the care with which the board has approached its challenging task and is confident that the fund will continue to fulfil its objectives of promoting economic advance and contact, dialogue and reconciliation throughout Ireland. We hope that further financial support may be channelled to the fund from friendly countries to enable its work to continue.

Fair Employment

48. **Mr. Battle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he or his Ministers have had with United States investors since the publication of his proposals to strengthen the employment laws on religious discrimination.

Mr. Stanley: During my visit to the United States this month I had meetings with four United States companies, one of which is already a major investor in Northern Ireland, to discuss the potential of Northern Ireland as an investment location.

Anglo-Irish Conference

49. **Mr. Fatchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the next meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference is due to take place; and what is the proposed agenda.

Mr. Tom King: I refer the hon. Member to a reply I gave earlier to a question from the Member for Liverpool, Riverside (Mr. Parry).

Prisoners (Visits)

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has received from Father Denis Faul and Father Raymond Murray regarding relatives' visits to Republican prisoners; what form the representations took; whether such visits are treated differently from visits to *(a)* loyalist prisoners and *(b)* visits to prisoners in mainland prisons; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley: I am not aware of any recent representations being received in the Department from either Father Faul or Father Murray regarding the specific matter of relatives' visits to Republican prisoners.

There is no difference in the conduct of visits to Republican or Loyalist prisoners in Northern Ireland prisons.

Visiting arrangements for prisoners in mainland prisons are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Labour (Mobility)

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to improve the mobility of labour between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Dr. Mawhinney: None. There already exists a degree of mobility, especially in areas adjacent to the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. As members of the European Community, there are no restrictions on the movement of labour between any part of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic.

Children (Education)

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what proportion of four-year-olds attend *(a)* nursery education provision, *(b)* primary school and *(c)* pre-school playgroup provision;

(2) what proportion of three-year-olds attend *(a)* nursery education provision, *(b)* primary school and *(c)* pre-school playgroup provision.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* Available information is as follows:

Proportion of three and four-year-olds in education in 1986-87

	Age three		*Age four*	
	Full-time per cent.	*Part-time per cent.*	*Full-time per cent.*	*Part-time per cent.*
Nursery Schools	4·6	5·5	5·0	2·7
Nursery Classes in Primary Schools	3·8	1·3	2·9	0·8
Primary Schools (primary classes only)	0·4	—	63·2	—

The information on pre-school playgroups is not available in the form requested. However, at 30 June 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, the percentage of the combined numbers of three and four-year-olds who attended pre-school playgroups, including playbuses, was 24·2 per cent.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 25 March 1988

THE ARTS

Arts Expenditure

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Minister for the Arts how much money per capita is expended on the arts in (i) London and (ii) the northern region.

Mr. Luce: The per capita figures in 1987-88 were as follows:

	Per capita	
	Greater London £	*Northern region* £
(a) Grants to Regional Arts Associations	1·25	1·17
(b) Grants to RAAs, direct Arts Council clients, and South Bank (BFI excluded)	7·95	1·70

Excluding Greater London, the northern region receives the second highest per capita grant of the English regions, and its figure of £1·70 is £0·45 above the average figure.

NATIONAL FINANCE

VAT (Anthelmentics)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the rates of value added tax applicable in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the Republic of Ireland for anthelmentics for worming cattle in (i) dosing form and (ii) injection form.

Mr. Lilley: In the United Kingdom, anthelmentics for worming cattle are chargeable with value added tax at the standard rate. Animal feeding stuffs are, however, liable at the zero rate and if anthelmentics are incorporated, provided they do not change the nature of the product, the entitlement to zero rating is unaffected. I understand that, in the Republic of Ireland, anthelmentics in oral form, or added to animal feeding stuffs, are zero rated. If injected into the animal they are chargeable at the rate of 25 per cent.

Gross Domestic Product (Taxation)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the percentage of gross domestic product accounted for by taxation *(a)* in the financial year 1987-88, *(b)* in the financial year 1988-89 and *(c)* in May 1979

Mr. Major *[holding answer 24 March 1988]*: Taxes and national insurance contributions are estimated to have accounted for 37·9 per cent. of gross domestic product in 1987-88. The same percentage is forecast for 1988-89, after taking account of the Budget changes. No figures are available for individual months; for the financial year 1979-80, taxes and national insurance contributions accounted for 35·1 per cent of GDP.

Income Tax

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of total central Government revenue is currently attributable to income tax paid at each rate currently in force.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 3 March 1988]*: The available information is given in the table. The estimates are based on liability to income tax and not on income tax receipts which cannot be broken down into the different rates of tax.

Income tax liability in 1987-88

Rate per cent.	*£ million*
27	36,200
40	1,010
45	1,390
50	1,370
55	860
60	3,080
Total	43,900

VAT

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he is able to make, at constant prices, of the revenue from each region of value added tax in 1978-79 and in each subsequent year.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 24 March 1988]*: I regret that the information is not available.

Inland Revenue (Savings)

Mr. Jopling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what savings in manpower and money he hopes to make in the Inland Revenue as a result of the changes to the taxation system which he announced in his Budget.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: Apart from the proposal for the independent taxation of husbands and wives, my Budget proposals (taken as a whole) would lead to significant reductions in Inland Revenue staff numbers. However, these are more than offset by the effects of independent taxation, which increases the number of taxpayers. The net result will be broadly neutral in 1988-89; an increase of around 100 staff in 1989-90; and larger increases in subsequent years.

WALES

Sheep

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many sheep have been monitored for radioactivity in each month since October 1987 in each county of Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: The information is set out in the table:

Numbers of sheep monitored for radioactivity from November 1987 to March 1988 in the counties of Wales

	November 1987	*December 1987*	*January 1988*	*February 1988*	*March 1988*[1]
Clywd	254	217	101	19	1
Dyfed	106	0	16	0	0
Gwent	0	0	1	0	0
Gwynedd	10,932	2,843	2,282	788	185
Mid Glamorgan	0	0	2	0	0
Powys	753	520	40	37	30
South Glamorgan	0	0	0	0	0
West Glamorgan	0	0	1	0	0

[1] Up to 22 March 1988.

Children (Homelessness)

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what are the annual figures for the number of children received into care by reason of homelessness; if he will give this information for Wales as a whole and for each local authority area; what are the latest figures for the number of children in local authority care where the reason for their admission into care was homelessness; if he will give this information for Wales as a whole for each local authority area for the years ended 31 March 1985, 1986 and 1987 or the three most recent years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Ian Grist: The latest available information is given in the table which shows the number of admissions and children in care where the reason recorded for admission into care was homelessness:

Local authority	*Number of children admitted into care on grounds of homelessness*[1] *in year to March*			*Number of children in care on grounds of homelessness at 31 March*		
	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Clwyd	1	—	—	3	2	2
Dyfed	2	—	1	3	3	2
Gwent	2	3	3	13	14	15
Gwynedd	—	—	3	3	2	2
Mid Glamorgan	4	15	—	14	8	4
Powys	—	4	—	—	—	—
South Glamorgan	5	3	2	12	13	12
West Glamorgan	1	—	1	11	6	5
WALES	15	25	10	59	48	42

[1] The above figures relate to the admissions principally on grounds of homelessness. Other grounds for admission may include homelessness as a contributory factor.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Senior Fire Officers

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received any representations concerning instances where senior fire officers have been appointed on the basis of factors other than their professional competence; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: Some concern about this is expressed from time to time. My right hon. Friend does prescribe by regulation basic requirements for promotions and appointments in the fire service, but it is fire authorities themselves who have the responsibility for making appointments. In discharging this function, it is clearly most important that authorities appoint those who are professionally best qualified for the posts.

Fines (Non-payment)

Mr. Skinner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide the numbers of cases of people who have received custodial sentences for non-payment of fines in the last five years.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (Table 7.3 of the latest issue, Cm. 210 for 1986) a copy of which is in the Library. Information for 1987 will be published later in the year.

Heysel Stadium Riot (Extradition)

Mr. Heffer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who paid the total cost of the extradition proceedings concerning the defendants in the Heysel stadium case to be held in Belgium; what was the total cost; and what the costs of the Merseyside police were.

Mr. John Patten: My reply to the hon. Member on 14 March gave the amounts so far identified as expenditure to be met by central Government. The £30,000 of police costs mentioned in that answer will be reimbursed by the Crown Prosecution Service. In addition, the Merseyside police have incurred expenditure of £182,000 which falls to be paid by the police authority, and is part of the expenditure in respect of which the authority receives grant under the Police Act 1964. The full cost of the case will be known only when legal aid costs borne by the Lord Chancellor's Department are settled.

Young Offenders

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what was the total number of arrests made

of offenders under the age of 17 years for each of the last five years; and if he will list the figures as a percentage of the total number of arrests;

(2) how many prosecutions were brought against persons under the age of 17 years for each of the last five years; and how many in each year resulted in convictions;

(3) if he will list the number of offenders under the age of 17 years who were *(a)* arrested, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* convicted by category of offence for each of the last five years;

(4) if he will list the number of offenders *(a)* arrested, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* convicted for each of the last five years who were under the age of 17 years by area.

Mr. John Patten: The readily available information is published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales", tables 6.1 and 7.7 and in more detail in supplementary tables S1.1(B) and S1.1(C) for proceedings at magistrates courts; and in tables S2.1(B) and S2.1(C) for proceedings at the Crown court; and in tables S3.3(B), S3.3(C), S3.5(B) and S3.5(C) for proceedings by police force area. Data on the age of persons arrested is not collected centrally. Copies of both these publications are available in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of persons *(a)* prosecuted, *(b)* convicted, and *(c)* imprisoned while under the age of 17 years who were subsequently (i) prosecuted, (ii) convicted and (iii) imprisoned when older than 17 years.

Mr. John Patten: The available information relates to a sample of offenders born in 1953 and followed up to the end of 1981. A total of 53 per cent. of males and 19 per cent. of females convicted before age 17 were subsequently convicted between ages 17 and 27. Further information on criminal careers is published in Home Office statistical bulletins: issue 7/85 "Criminal Careers Of Those Born in 1953, 1958 and 1963": and issue 35/87 "Criminal Careers Of Those Born in 1953: persistent offenders and desistance": copies of these publications are available in the Library.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the level of Sunday trading in Scotland and in other countries where trading restrictions have been liberalised.

Mr. Renton: A survey by MORI in 1985 found that in Scotland 16 per cent. of the shops in the sample opened on a Sunday. So far as other countries are concerned, I refer my hon. Friend to paragraphs 243-248 of the report of the committee of inquiry into the Shops Act, (Cmnd. 9376), copies of which are available in the Library.

Passports

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for a new passport, or to amend an existing passport, are currently waiting to be processed.

Mr. Renton: Applications for new or amended passports are being received at a rate of around 90,000 a week. It is estimated that some 365,000 such applications are at the various stages of processing within the six United Kingdom passport offices.

Ashwell Prison (Escape)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the escape of three men from Her Majesty's prison, Ashwell; whether they have yet been recaptured; and what steps are being taken to prevent a repetition of this incident.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the early hours of 12 March, 3 prisoners escaped from Ashwell by climbing over the perimeter fence. I understand that none of them has yet been recaptured. Inquiries into the incident are continuing and the need for further steps to be taken will be considered in the light of the outcome.

Media Ownership

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a further statement concerning media ownership.

Mr. Hurd: The legislative proposals which we shall bring before Parliament will include limitations on the participation of stations licensed by the radio authority in the publication of newspapers parallel to those regulating press investment in radio broadcasting.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the statistics of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in 1987 will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hurd: The statistics of notifiable offences recorded by the police in England and Wales in 1987 are published today in Home Office statistical bulletin 6/88. I have placed copies in the Library. The total number of crimes recorded in 1987 was 3·9 million, a rise of 1 per cent. over 1986. This compares with an average rise of about 6 per cent. per year since the mid-1950s.

A total of 3·7 million of these crimes were against property. There was a welcome fall in the number of burglaries in dwellings (down 5 per cent. to 483,000), especially in some of the large cities; and in thefts of motor vehicles (down by 5 per cent. to 390,000). These falls show that rising crime is not inevitable and should spur us on to a greater effort in preventing crime.

The Government view with concern the continuing rise in violent crime, which, by its nature, is less easily prevented. The more successful we are in preventing crimes against property, the more time is available for the police to devote to dealing with the most serious crimes. In 1987, the police clear-up rate for crimes of violence against the person rose from 71 per cent. to 75 per cent., and for more serious offences of violence against the person from 73 per cent. to 78 per cent. Overall, the clear-up rate rose from 32 to 33 per cent.

PRIME MINISTER

Merksworth High School, Paisley

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Prime Minister if she will accept the invitation of the Merksworth high school, Paisley, parents association to visit the school on Saturday 26 March, to view the school's educational facilities; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: A reply has been sent to the invitation from the Merksworth parents' action group explaining that I would not be able to accept their invitation to the open day.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Single European Market

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what proposals he has to promote awareness in Northern Ireland of the proposed single European market in 1992;

(2) whether he has included Northern Ireland in his proposed programmes of breakfast meetings in major cities of the United Kingdom to promote awareness of the single European market in 1992.

Mr. Alan Clark: Our campaign aims to ensure that business in every part of the country understands the importance of completing the single market by 1992. Our initial booklet has been sent to more than 2,000 firms in Northern Ireland. The programme of regional conferences includes one in Belfast this autumn. Further local initiatives are planned.

Public Companies (Accounting)

Mr. Watts: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he has any proposals to reduce the burdens on public companies imposed under the accounting provisions of the Companies Act.

Mr. Maude: I have decided that the next Companies Bill should allow all listed public companies to supply shareholders with an abbreviated version of their annual report and accounts. The Bill will contain an enabling provision for regulations to be made subject to the negative resolution procedure, prescribing the minimum contents of these accounts and dealing with how they would be made available. Copies of the companies' full accounts would still have to be filed at the appropriate Companies Registration Office and be made available, as at present, free of charge to all shareholders who wanted to receive them. My Department will in due course issue a consultative document on the details of the regulations.

Insurance

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects the 1975 European 2nd directive on freedom of service in insurance to be implemented.

Mr. Maude: The second directive on freedom of services in non-life insurance must be fully implemented within 24 months of its adoption being notified to member states. We hope that adoption of the directive will take place by the end of the German presidency in June, in which event the directive will come into force in mid-1990.

Insurance (Harmonisation)

Mr. Bowis: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to make an announcement on European Community harmonisation of life assurance and compulsory motor vehicle insurance.

Mr. Maude: I expect that in the latter half of this year the Commission will submit to the Council of Ministers proposals for directives to facilitate the freedom to provide services in the fields of life assurance and motor liability insurance. Also later this year I expect that the Commission will submit a proposal for a further Council directive harmonising the laws of member states relating to motor liability insurance.

Company Location (Irish Republic)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has on attempts by the Government of the Irish Republic to induce British-based companies to locate their activities in Southern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: I understand that the Government of the Irish Republic, in common with others, offer a range of incentives to inward investment by foreign companies including United Kingdom-based companies. This covers both the industrial and internationally traded services sectors and is administered by a number of state-sponsored organisations including the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), the Shannon Free Airport Development Company (SHADCO) and the Udaras na Gaeltachta. The IDA operate in the United Kingdom through its office in London.

The Government in the United Kingdom are fully committed to open markets in trade and investment and the Department of Trade and Industry is itself actively engaged in attracting investment into Britain through its Invest in Britain bureau.

Supermarket Price-fixing

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will refer the matter of supermarket price-fixing agreements to the Director General of Fair Trading;

(2) what evidence he has of the operation of price-fixing agreements by supermarket stores; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The Office of Fair Trading is aware of allegations of possible collusion in the level and timing of price increases for goods sold in supermarket stores. The office is currently investigating these allegations to ascertain whether action may be justified under the provisions of the Restrictive Trade Practices Act 1976.

Debts and Loans

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will introduce legislation to require voluntary organisations which give advice to individuals concerning personal debts and loans to be licensed under the Consumer Credit Act 1974; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to require commercial organisations which give advice to individuals concerning personal debts and loans to be licensed under the Consumer Credit Act 1974; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will introduce legislation to require any organisation which gives advice to individuals concerning personal loans from the social fund to be licensed under the Consumer Credit Act 1974; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: Under sections 21 and 147 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, any voluntary or commercial organisations which carry on a business of debt counselling must be licensed by the Director General of Fair Trading.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Local Management in Schools Initiative

Mr. Tracey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has for assisting the local management in schools initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Baker: I fully support this important and constructive initiative. My Department will provide £135,000 of assistance towards its costs for the production of a manual and training materials. These will provide a valuable source of practical advice for local authorities and schools in preparing schemes of financial delegation within the framework of the Education Reform Bill. The initiative deserves the attention and support of all those with an interest in this field.

ILEA (Reviews)

Mr. Straw: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* the dates and details of all reviews of the Inner London education authority carried out since 1964 *(a)* by Government and *(b)* by other bodies and individuals; and if he will place copies of reports of such reviews in the Library.

Mr. Kenneth Baker *[holding answer 21 March 1988]*: The report on this subject by the Royal Commission on Local Government in England was published in 1968. My Department published a review by Her Majesty's inspectorate of educational provision in inner London in 1980. This was followed by an internal review, the conclusions of which were reported to the House by the then Secretary of State on 4 February 1981 at column 296. My predecessor made a further announcement on the subject on 5 April 1984 at column 1124, in the context of the White Paper, "Streamlining the Cities". I am arranging that copies of the two centrally published reports are available in the Library of the House.

There have been many surveys carried out by outside bodies and individuals. Amongst the major ones are:

"No choice but to go: the case for the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority", Bow Publications, 1973;

The Marshall inquiry on Greater London, GLC, 1978;

"Arrangements for the provision, administration and financing of education in inner London", ILEA, 1980;

Report of the Committee on Education in Inner London, Conservative Party, 1980;

"The Inner London Education Authority after the abolition of the Greater London Council", Centre for Policy Studies, 1983.

DEFENCE

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the answer of 9 March, *Official Report*, columns *213-4*, he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials employed by his Department located outside London.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence employs officials in more than 430 different non-industrial grades and 530 different industrial grades. The requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Empty Properties

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many domestic properties owned by his Department in the parishes of Ambrosden, Arncott and Blackthorn in Oxfordshire have been empty for *(a)* up to six months, *(b)* up to one year and *(c)* over one year.

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence does not own any domestic properties in either Arncott or Blackthorn parishes. However, of the 533 properties in Ambrosden, details of the 39 vacant at 20 March 1988 are as follows:

	Number
(a) Vacant for up to six months	23
(b) Vacant for up to one year	8
(c) Vacant for over one year	8
	39

The 39 vacancies can be further categorised as follows:

	Number
(a) Allotted to incoming families	2
(b) Undergoing modernisation due to be completed in May	11
(c) Undergoing repair or maintenance	10
(d) Undergoing refurnishing	6
(e) Vacant and available for immediate allotment	10
	39

Rechem International, Pontypool

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if his Department uses the services of Rechem International, Pontypool.

Mr. Sainsbury: Yes. We have contracts with Rechem International for the disposal of toxic wastes at both the Pontypool and Southampton sites.

ENVIRONMENT

London Docklands Development Corporation (Leasing)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what effect his statement of 9 March last, concerning leasing by councils, will have on any arrangements made by councils with the London Docklands development corporation for the provision of rented accommodation within the statutory area of that corporation.

Mr. Trippier: It is for individual local authorities to determine whether they will incur prescribed expenditure in any arrangements into which they enter with the London Docklands development corporation.

Homeless People

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what specific legislative powers currently exist for the provision of grant-aid to voluntary organisations providing emergency accommodation for the single homeless; and if he will make a statement indicating Government intentions regarding these powers.

Mrs. Roe: Section 73 of the Housing Act 1985 empowers my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and local housing authorities to give grants to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness. My right hon. Friend has no plans to amend it.

In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has powers under schedule 5 to the Supplementary Benefits Act 1976 to give grants to voluntary organisations for providing temporary temporary board and lodging to people without a settled way of life. The provision of emergency accommodation by voluntary organisations may also be assisted, directly or indirectly, under more general powers such as the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969, the Housing Associations Act 1985, and the Local Government Act 1988.

Crown Premises, Richmond Yard

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will ask for an estimate of the cost of the Property Services Agency providing a valuation of the Crown premises at Richmond yard; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: No. It would serve no useful purpose.

Rating Reform

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he has any proposals to provide relief from the payment of non-domestic rates to parish halls or similar public buildings;

(2) whether parish halls will be liable for the uniform business rate as proposed in the Local Government Finance Bill.

Mr. Howard: Parish or village halls are presently liable to be rated and will continue to be liable after 1990. Registered charities presently receive 50 per cent. mandatory rate relief, which may be increased to up to 100 per cent. at the local authority's discretion. Local authorities may also give up to 100 per cent. rate relief to other non-profit-making social and recreational clubs and organisations. Some parish halls are run by charitable organisations, but others fall to be dealt with as non-profit making organisations. We intend to retain the same mandatory and discretionary reliefs under our proposals for rate reform.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list any sites of special scientific interest that have been ploughed up for cereal growing in the last 12 months showing their habitat type; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The Nature Conservancy Council is compiling the information requested in respect of cereal growing. I shall write to the hon. Member with the details shortly.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what further progress has been made on the privatisation of the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Chope: I have decided to appoint Samuel Montagu and Co., merchant bankers, to advise the Government on the best method of effecting the sale of the Crown Suppliers.

Departmental Cash Limits

Mr. Pawsey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits.

Mr. Trippier: The non-voted cash limit for urban aid expenditure (DOE/UA1) for 1987-88 has been increased by £0·75 million from £437·483 million to £438·233 million in respect of capital spending by local authorities on the inner cities initiative. This increase reflects a switch of provision within the inner cities initiative which was presented to Parliament in the Winter Supplementary Estimate for Class V, Vote 2 relating to expenditure by the Department of Trade and Industry.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Sheep

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sheep have been monitored for radioactivity in each month since October 1987 in each county of Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is as follows:

	October 1987	*November 1987*	*December 1987*	*January 1988*	*February 1988*	*March 1988*[1]
Antrim	1,180	299	25	154	130	Nil
Armagh	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Down	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Fermanagh	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Londonderry	3,234	863	336	48	117	36
Tyrone	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

[1] To 20 March.

In addition during this period, 575 sheep have been monitored at slaughterhouses.

Training Opportunities

Sir John Biggs-Davison: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what opportunities for training and retraining for employment are now offered in west Belfast and other areas of high unemployment in the Province.

Mr. Needham: The following is a list of opportunities for training and retraining for employment currently offered in West Belfast:

(1) The Youth Training Programme
A two year Programme of training, further education, work experience, and job opportunities offered to 16 and 17 year olds.

(2) Boucher Road Training Centre
A modern industrial training centre which serves the West Belfast area and provides off-the-job industrial skills training for young persons and adults.

(3) The Attachment Training Scheme
Provides other full time training opportunities to unemployed adults, mainly with employers.

(4) The Job Training Programme
A recently piloted programme of directed training and practical experience for the longer term unemployed adult.

(5) The Entry into Management Programme
Provides opportunities for young persons wishing to enter management, redundant managers seeking re-employment and people wishing to develop new business ideas.

Similar opportunities are provided in other areas of high unemployment in the Province.

Homelessness

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what appropriate emergency accommodation for the single homeless is currently available to accept references from each of the health and social service boards in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The information requested is:

	Number of places	
	Board run	*Voluntary*
Eastern Health and Social Services Board	74	20
Northern Health and Social Services Board	—	—
Southern Health and Social Services Board	—	16
Western Health and Social Services Board	—	66
TOTAL	74	102

Notes:

These figures exclude places in common lodging houses and in voluntary hostels whose main functions is to provide long-stay accommodation, but where accommodation may be available in an emergency.

Single homeless persons may also be placed in:
accommodation provided by Boards for other purposes, eg homes for the elderly;
temporary accommodation normally reserved for families;
private boarding houses;
other non-commercial accommodation (eg church premises) which may be used to respond to disasters which cause homelessness on a large scale.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement detailing the grants made in 1986-87 by Government Departments and the area boards to voluntary organisations providing accommodation for *(a)* the single homeless, *(b)* battered women and their families, *(c)* homeless families, and *(d)* ex-offenders.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* In 1986-87 the Department of Health and Social Services and the four health and social services boards paid grants as follows to voluntary organisations providing accommodation for homeless people:

	Mainly single persons	*Mainly battered women and their families*
	£	£
DHSS		
Simon Community Northern Ireland	17,463	—
Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation	—	33,350
Open Door Resettlement Project	21,510	—
Northern board		
Coleraine Women's Aid	—	14,169
Southern board		
Craigavon Women's Refuge	—	4,000
Edward Street Hostel	6,000	—
Eastern board		
Belfast Women's Aid	—	59,777
Extern	24,000	—
Simon Community Northern Ireland	37,250	—
Sydenham House Committee	—	7,000
Western board		
Clarendon Night Shelter	—	33,284
Derry Women's Aid	—	27,905
Omagh Women's Aid	—	2,860
The House, St. Columb's Well	8,500	—

It is normal practice for homeless families to be accommodated temporarily in facilities managed by health and social services boards, where accommodation is available, or in boarding houses, with whom standing arrangements have been made in advance.

In addition, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland paid the following grants in 1986-87 to voluntary organisations providing accommodation for ex-offenders:

	£
Extern:	
"109" Hostel	57,000
Settle Scheme	18,000
Ormeau Centre	8,000
Castlereagh St. Hostel	3,000
Thompson House	56,000
Dismas House	22,000

Water Quality

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment is made, when planning permission is sought for any dump in Northern Ireland, of the possibility of leakage, leaching or run off from such a dump to any lake, river, stream or reservoir; by whom and under what legislative authority such assessments are made; whether the maintenance of water quality is taken into account in deciding whether planning permission is granted; and whether the term discharge is treated as encompassing any such leakage, leaching or run off.

Mr. Needham *[holding answer 15 March 1988]:* Where planning permission is sought for any waste disposal site, the environmental protection division of the Department of the Environment (NI) is consulted. That division is concerned with the maintenance of water quality and the need for a consent under the Water Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 and its views are taken into account by the planning service before any such planning application is determined.

In considering the possible effect of such sites on water quality, the environmental protection division considers a number of factors to determine whether the proposed site is suitable or can be made suitable for the disposal of refuse. A hydrogeological report is now required by the Department of the Environment (NI) as empowered by section 9(1) of the Water Act to accompany any application for consent. Planning permission for a waste disposal site would not issue unless a consent under the Water Act had issued or was likely to issue. The term discharge is regarded as encompassing any leachate or surface run off water.

Hayshed Bugging

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on whose authority a bug was placed in the hayshed at Ballymeeny Road North in November 1982, prior to the death of Michael Tighe.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* It is not the practice to comment on such matters.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Middle East (Nuclear-free Zone)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received any representations from any middle east states seeking United Kingdom assistance in forming a nuclear weapon free zone in the middle east.

Mr. Mellor: No. However, we regularly join consensus at the first committee of the United Nations on a resolution sponsored by Egypt proposing such a zone.

Israel (Nuclear Weapons)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations Her Majesty's Government have made to the Israeli Government to encourage them to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Mellor: We take every opportunity to urge the Israeli Government to sign the non-proliferation treaty.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he possesses on Israeli nuclear weapons capability.

Mr. Mellor: We have no evidence either to confirm or deny that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Although she has refused to sign the non-proliferation treaty she has consistently declared that she will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the region.

Mordecai Vanunu

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the United Kingdom ambassador to Israel has made any representations to the Israeli Government over the trial of Mordecai Vanunu.

Mr. Mellor: No.

Arms Control

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to invite a representative from *(a)* the verification technology information centre (VERTIC) and *(b)* the European proliferation information centre (EPIC) to participate in the next meeting of his ad hoc advisory panel on arms control and disarmament.

Mr. Mellor: Non-governmental organisations, including VERTIC and EPIC, have been periodically invited to discussions on arms control issues with Ministers and senior officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This dialogue with NGOs will continue. I cannot at this stage anticipate whether these two bodies will be invited to participate in the next meeting of the ad hoc advisory panel.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Housing Benefit

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing how many of the people in receipt of housing benefit in each year since 1979-80 were currently in employment, including self-employment; and how many were sick, unemployed, lone parents or retirement pensioners.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that we do not have full data in the form requested. The information available is set out in the table.

Average number of recipients of rate rebate[2] in the years 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88
Thousands

Year	*Elderly*	*Sick and disabled*	*Unemployed*	*People in work*	*Others*	*Total*
1985-86	4,120	550	1,340	340	670	7,020
1986-87	4,030	670	1,350	260	740	7,050
1987-88	4,040	670	1,260	260	800	7,030

[1] Separate figures were not collected for lone parents.
[2] The figures given are based on recipients of rent rebate, as all types of tenure—local authority and private tenancies, and owner occupation—are included. Most tenants receiving rent rebates or rent allowances also receive rate rebates.

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to afford to married woman independent entitlement to housing benefit.

Mr. Portillo: No. Housing benefit is calculated on the basis of the eligible housing costs of the household and in the case of a married couple the needs and resources of both spouses are taken into account. Housing benefit may be claimed by whichever spouse is liable to pay for the housing costs of the household.

Adult Training Scheme

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he intends to amend the housing benefit regulations to allow those who participate in the adult training scheme to continue to receive housing benefit at the same level as they received before entering the scheme.

Mr. Portillo: Yes. In accordance with the assurance in paragraph 5.30 of the White Paper "Training for Employment" (Cm 316), we propose to take the necessary steps to ensure that all trainees' entitlement to housing benefit is unaffected by joining the new adult training programme. We are consulting the local authority associations at the moment over a suitable amendment to the Housing Benefit (General) Regulations.

Aspartame

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any evidence that the low-calorie sweetener aspartame is the cause of blindness, dizziness, severe headaches or confusion.

Mrs. Currie: I am aware of recent claims that aspartame can cause these effects. I have therefore requested the scientific evidence on which these claims are based. Any such evidence will be considered and the advice of the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) which advises the Government on the safety of food additives, will be obtained as necessary.

We keep under review the safety in use of food additives. The COT has reviewed the scientific data on aspartame several times since it was first approved for use, but it has not altered its advice that aspartame is safe in use.

Whooping Cough Vaccine

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many awards have been granted as a result of the whooping cough vaccine either alone or incorporated with other vaccines, in each year from 1979 to 1987; and in each case in which year the child was immunised originally and whether brain damage was part of the award.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that the requested information is not available. The information which is available is set out in the table.

Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme
Number of awards made in the United Kingdom 1979-87 where pertussis vaccine containing a pertussis element was the claimed cause of severe physical or mental disablement

Year	*Number of awards*
[1]1979-80	460
1981	62
1982	30
1983	31
1984	24
1985	25
1986	14
1987	8

[1] This figure cannot be apportioned between 1979 and 1980 calendar years.

Taxes and Benefits

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his latest estimate of the numbers of working single people and of earners with dependent families who will have marginal rates of tax and benefit withdrawal in excess of 70 per cent. in 1988-89; and what will be the combined total number of people in that situation, including earners and their dependants.

Mr. Scott: The latest readily available estimates, both including and excluding the Budget changes announced on 15 March, are shown in the tables:

Combined marginal income tax and benefit withdrawal rates 1988-89
Working heads of tax units (000s) Great Britain
Numbers facing combined rates of over 50 per cent.—in bands

Per cent.	*Pre-Budget*			*Post-Budget*		
	Families with children	*Couples and single people*	*Total*	*Families with children*	*Couples and single people*	*Total*
100	0	0	0	0	0	0
90 to 99	55	5	60	45	0	45
80 to 89	370	10	380	285	15	300
70 to 79	85	20	100	150	20	170
60 to 69	0	0	0	[1]	0	[1]
50 to 59	0	0	0	0	0	0

Notes:

(i) Pre-budget figures are based on a 27 per cent. basic rate of tax and allowances up-rated by the retail prices index only.

(ii) Figures are rounded to the nearest 5,000 except [1] which are fewer than 2,500. Rows may not add due to rounding, and, in particular, the numbers floated off income-related benefits by the Budget total 30,000 not 25,000 as the table suggests.

(iii) Unlike answers to previous questions, the figures above fully reflect lower rate national insurance contributions. In addition, the figures are based on slightly revised estimates of earnings growth to 1988-89.

(iv) The total number of working heads of tax-units with more than 24 weekly remunerative hours is approximately 17 million. Those shown

in the table therefore represent only 3 per cent. of the total.
Combined estimates of total numbers including heads of tax units, their partners and other dependants will be made available as soon as possible.

Skoal Bandits

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services why his Department is engaging in discussions regarding health warnings on Skoal Bandits in the light of his proposal to ban the product.

Mrs. Currie: In accordance with the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 my right hon. Friend is consulting interested parties about the Government's proposal. Some months will elapse before representations have been received and considered. Should we decide to proceed, we propose that a further period will elapse before the safety regulations become effective. While these procedures are being carried out, we think it right for the public to be warned of the health risks they run if they purchase Skoal Bandits.

Primary Health Care (London)

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what assessment he has made of the effect of clause 13 of the Health and Medicines Bill on the implementation of the recommendations of paragraph 13.7 of the Acheson report on primary health care in London, relating to improvement of practice premises and employment of ancillary staff.

Mr. Newton: Since the publication of the Acheson report in 1981, progress has been made towards the implementation of the recommendations of paragraph 13.7. The effect of clause 13 when enacted will be to reinforce the important role of family practitioner committees (FPCs) in securing continuing substantial improvements in family doctors' premises and in developing practice teams. In particular clause 13 will enable FPCs to target resources at areas of greatest need.

Maternal Deaths

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Caernarfon, 18 March, *Official Report*, column *711*, how many *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect maternal deaths in England and Wales in 1982, 1983 and 1984 occurred in National Health Service hospitals without consultant obstetric units; and how many were associated with anasthaesia.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested will be available on the publication of the report on confidential inquiries into maternal deaths in England and Wales towards the end of the year.

Illegal Abortions

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he is taking upon receipt of a letter from Mrs. Scarisbrick about the activities of Mr. Arnold Finks in relation to illegal abortions.

Mr. Newton: A thorough investigation into this case is being carried out by the Department and is almost complete. A reply will be sent to Mrs. Scarisbrick when it is completed.

Smoking

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will publish the fourth report of the Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking and Health; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Brigg and Cleethorpes (Mr. Brown) on 23 March at columns *158-59*.

Mr. John Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he proposes to take any action with regard to the failure of Manhattan 100s cigarettes to carry information on their tar band.

Mrs. Currie: I believe the right hon. Member is referring to a brand called United. As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State informed him in his letter of 10 March, the matter is currently being investigated by the Committee for Monitoring Agreements on Tobacco Advertising and Sponsorship and the chairman, Sir Peter Lazarus, will write to him as soon as investigations are completed. Manhattan 100s do carry tar band information.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total number of National Health Service hospital beds closed during the past 12 months in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the west midlands area; and how many have been closed where the reason given by the hospital was financial difficulties.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that information on hospitals approved for closure in 1987 is not yet available.

Consultants (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average amount of time a person in *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the west midlands will now have to wait before being able to see a consultant in the National Health Service regarding ears and eyes difficulties.

Mr. Newton: Information about out-patient waiting times in not available centrally.

Operations (Waiting Lists)

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average amount of time a person in: *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* the west midlands will now have to wait for a National Health Service operation for eyes or ears.

Mr. Newton: The information for England for the latest available year is given in the table. Information for the rest of the United Kingdom is the responsibility of my right hon. Friends, the Secretaries of State for Wales and Northern Ireland, and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Estimated median interval (in weeks) between the time a patient is placed on the waiting list and admission to a NHS non-psychiatric hospital for operations in 1985.

Condensed[1] *list operation number*		*West Midlands*	*England*
All Eye Operations			
010	Operations on muscles of eyeball	26	13
011	Operations on eyelids	4	7
012	Operations on iris and ciliary body	3	4
013	Operations on sclera, choroid, retina and vitreous	u/r	3
014	Operations on lens	27	16
015	Other operations on eye	18	8
All Ear Operations			
016	Incision of ear drum	9	10
017	Operations on middle ear and ossicles	16	14
018	Operations on mastoid	8	9
019	Other operations on ear	4	8

[1] OPCS condensed list of surgical operations.
u/r —sample number too small—unreliable estimate.

Tranquillisers

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently estimated to be addicted to the benzodiazepine group of drugs; and what estimate of the incidence of dependence was made by the Committee on the Review of Medicines in its 1980 review of the benzodiazepines.

Mr. Newton: There are no precise figures to show the level or trend in benzodiazepine dependence but it was estimated in a report published in the Adverse Reaction Bulletin of June 1986 that perhaps half a million people in the United Kingdom were dependent on benzodiazepines. I have placed a copy in the Library. A report "Systematic Review of Benzodiazepines" by the Committee on Review of Medicines published in the *British Medical Journal* on the 29 March 1980, stated:

"the number dependent on benzodiazepines in the United Kingdom from 1960 to 1977 has been estimated to be 28 persons. This is equivalent to a dependence rate of 5-10 cases per million patient months".

Perinatal Mortality

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the perinatal rates for *(a)* the Airedale health district, *(b)* the Bradford health district, *(c)* the Yorkshire health region and *(d)* England, for (i) 1979 and (ii) 1986.

Mrs. Currie: The information is shown in the table.

Perinatal mortality rate (stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life per 1,000 total live and still births) for selected areas.

Area of usual residence	*1979*	*1986*
Airedale HD/DHA	14·4	10·4
Bradford HD/DHA	18·3	15·4
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority	16·6	10·3
England	14·6	9·5

Notes:
HD = Health District 1979.
DHA = District Health Authority 1986.

Cleveland Child Abuse Inquiry

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will provide financial assistance to Cleveland county council and to the health authorities concerned in respect of their costs arising from the Cleveland child abuse inquiry.

Mr. Newton: Yes. In view of the exceptional nature and length of this inquiry I have decided to make available sums of £300,000 both to the county council and to the Northern regional health authority as a contribution towards the costs of the authorities.

Negligence

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of negligence or breach of statutory duty have been brought against *(a)* his Department and *(b)* health authorities in the last three years; whether such claims were covered by insurance; how much money was paid on settlement; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 1 February 1988, c. 483]:* I regret that the table setting out the total compensation payments by health authorities for the last three years was incorrect. The following table gives the correct figures:

	£	*Cases*
1984-85	5,058,590	3,393
1985-86	7,434,817	3,697
1986-87	9,231,044	4,234

SCOTLAND

Homelessness

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of households which applied to be classed as homeless, by local authority, in each year from 1978-79.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information requested is set out in the table:

Total Applicant Households

District	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*[1]1984-85*	*[1]1985-86*	*[1]1986-87*
SCOTLAND	16,037	15,466	14,868	15,955	16,539	15,516	20,359	23,465	24,196
BORDERS	105	93	64	80	58	37	46	33	49
Berwickshire	20	12	8	11	10	8	8	5	8
Ettrick and Lauderdale	30	26	15	23	23	16	11	11	7
Roxburgh	25	25	12	15	25	13	27	17	34
Tweeddale	30	30	29	31	0	0	0	0	0

District	*1978-79*	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*[1]1984-85*	*[1]1985-86*	*[1]1986-87*
CENTRAL	760	522	461	541	798	880	2,175	2,090	2,063
Clackmannan	202	270	235	278	294	247	262	490	652
Falkirk	207	117	94	133	152	176	1,553	1,600	1,401
Stirling[1]	351	135	132	130	352	457	360	—	10
DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY	415	369	331	378	313	337	355	348	369
Annandale and Eskdale	41	79	56	93	58	77	58	55	38
Nithsdale	267	172	158	187	167	166	174	171	185
Stewartry	38	51	54	54	68	64	95	73	76
Wigtown	69	67	63	36	20	30	28	49	70
FIFE	958	768	652	710	718	774	865	1,455	1,431
Dunfermline	435	258	268	290	301	261	321	551	461
Kirkcaldy	340	320	180	237	220	255	265	505	546
North East Fife	183	190	204	183	197	258	259	399	424
GRAMPIAN	944	1,057	1,095	957	945	855	983	1,599	2,311
Aberdeen	730	844	874	746	715	657	708	1,236	1,853
Banff and Buchan	60	25	19	27	13	7	23	46	69
Gordon	56	28	30	22	21	24	57	57	55
Kincardine and Deeside	20	20	13	16	18	21	22	18	37
Moray	78	140	159	146	178	146	173	242	297
HIGHLAND	334	428	409	439	434	465	439	394	476
Badenoch and Strathspey	19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Caithness	28	8	8	13	8	2	1	2	0
Inverness	158	288	265	274	275	346	305	273	297
Lochaber	38	33	35	91	79	50	58	42	93
Nairn	36	35	31	21	44	45	18	24	27
Ross and Cromarty	29	23	34	12	0	0	21	18	19
Skye and Lochalsh	23	39	32	28	28	22	36	34	40
Sutherland	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
LOTHIAN	1,506	1,402	1,402	1,842	1,650	1,467	1,928	2,765	3,226
East Lothian	222	221	169	263	272	257	338	566	586
Edinburgh	685	771	880	945	996	896	1,151	1,609	2,127
Midlothian	204	172	146	332	218	211	223	342	270
West Lothian	395	238	207	302	172	103	216	248	243
STRATHCLYDE	10,020	9,964	9,761	10,243	10,780	9,832	12,324	13,306	12,678
Argyll and Bute	327	242	141	142	148	180	246	386	294
Bearsden and Milngavie	10	7	0	0	0	23	60	65	59
Clydebank[1]	188	127	105	180	124	170	365	281	109
Clydesdale	115	78	32	29	23	20	26	46	95
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth[1]	231	114	170	195	312	37	392	375	318
Cumnock and Doon Valley	55	39	29	26	33	35	59	46	47
Cunninghame	347	296	242	276	291	275	327	320	314
Dumbarton	303	289	273	312	348	362	486	839	906
East Kilbride	312	211	304	236	257	255	306	431	440
Eastwood	5	8	5	9	8	9	12	7	7
Glasgow[1]	4,391	4,926	5,171	5,049	5,686	5,082	5,806	6,834	5,630
Hamilton	399	417	350	500	362	481	538	425	359
Inverclyde	307	300	360	370	329	329	334	358	415
Kilmarnock and Loudoun[1]	70	72	113	162	83	71	296	278	151
Kyle and Carrick	256	184	130	265	260	260	713	518	591
Monklands	491	430	424	500	471	267	305	403	521
Motherwell	882	1,127	990	962	994	1,007	1,082	1,105	992
Renfrew[1]	1,135	805	703	736	826	695	699	1,245	1,129
Strathkelvin	196	292	219	294	225	268	272	224	301
TAYSIDE	828	705	587	652	728	735	1,120	1,337	1,463
Angus	205	167	100	120	189	153	212	224	309
Dundee	322	275	195	188	189	210	432	662	682
Perth and Kinross	301	263	292	344	358	372	476	451	472
ORKNEY ISLANDS	8	12	4	11	6	11	12	11	6
SHETLAND ISLANDS	79	62	53	68	69	85	80	98	77
WESTERN ISLES	80	84	49	42	40	38	32	29	47

[1] Based on incomplete returns.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information is available to indicate the levels of public expenditure in Scotland in meeting responsibilities to the homeless.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: It is not possible to separate out in the way requested public expenditure incurred in meeting the needs of the homeless.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information is available to indicate the number of homeless households in Scotland in a given week.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information held centrally does not identify the number of homeless households in a given week.

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has of the proceeds of sales of mental hospitals in Scotland in each of the next seven years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: One former mental hospital is currently surplus to Health Service requirements and is expected to be sold during the next financial year. It will be sold on the open market and the proceeds cannot therefore be estimated in advance. I am not in a position to forecast disposals and their proceeds in future years. It is a matter for health boards in the first place to consider closure and, after consultation with local interests, to seek the consent of my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many homeless persons in Scotland have previously been admitted to hospitals with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many residential places have been provided in the community for patients discharged from mental hospitals in Scotland with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses in each of the last 10 years;

(2) how many residential places have been provided in the community for patients discharged from mental hospitals in Scotland in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Statistics of the type requested are not held centrally. Such figures as are available for residential accommodation in the community reflect the total provision made by local authorities and voluntary bodies for mentally handicapped and mentally ill people already in the community as well as for ex-patients of mental hospitals. Provision of places for people with specific mental illnesses is not identified separately. The numbers of residential places made available in each of the last 10 years by local authorities and voluntary bodies was as follows:

31 March	*Mental handicap*	*Mental illness*
1978	[1]1,063	
1979	1,087	168
1980	1,093	209
1981	1,155	218
1982	1,242	283
[2]1983	1,491	485
1984	1,665	559
1985	1,773	608
1986	1,951	644
[3]1987	2,129	674

[1] 1978 statistics covered the mentally handicapped and mentally ill together.

[2] From 1983 onwards, statistics included details of provision in other establishments, such as group homes, of which local authorities were aware.

[3] 1987 figures are provisional.

Sheep

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many sheep have been monitored for radioactivity in each month since October 1987 in each region.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

Number of sheep monitored between 1 November 1987 and 18 March 1988

Region	*1987*				*1988*							
	November		*December*		*January*		*February*		*March*		*Scotland Total*	
	SM	*LM*	*SM*	*LM*	*SM*	*LM*	*SM*	*LM*	*SM*	*LM*	*SM*	*LM*
Borders	1	[1]162	2	[1]18	—	[1]120	2	—	—	—	5	300
Central	—	[1]564	—	[1]776	—	[1]3	—	—	—	—	—	—
	6	[2]2,406	2	[2]1,361	2	[2]685	4	[2]1,366	—	[2]341	14	7,502
Dumfries and Galloway	—	[1]779	—	[1]788	—	[1]223	—	—	—	—	—	—
	2	[2]513	2	[2]625	—	[1]185	4	[2]369	—	[2]92	8	3,574
Fife	6	[1]80	4	[1]197	2	[1]306	3	—	—	—	15	583
Grampian	2	—	3	—	1	—	3	—	—	—	9	—
Highland	2	—	3	—	1	—	2	—	1	—	9	—
Lothian	—	[1]66	—	[1]44	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	110
Orkney	2	—	1	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	6	—
Shetland	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Strathclyde	—	[1]1,125	—	[1]467	—	[1]10	—	[1]47	—	—	—	—
	2	[2]1,190	2	[2]937	1	[2]84	3	[2]165	1	[2]41	9	4,066
Tayside	—	—	—	[1]147	—	[1]439	3	—	—	[1]32	3	618
Western Isles	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Scotland monthly total	26	6,885	19	5,360	8	2,055	26	1,947	2	506	81	16,753

Notes

SM—Slaughterhouse monitoring.

LM—Live monitoring.

[1] Marked sheep.

[2] Sheep monitored on restricted farms in conjunction with the mark and release scheme.

Housing Association Grant

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out the distribution of housing association grant by settlement size for the period from 1979 to 1988.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Housing association grant is a payment made in consequence of the approval of a project, under the approved development programme of the Housing Corporation in Scotland. The Secretary of State exercises control over the amount of public funding available to the housing association movement and the general categorisation of types of project through his approval of this annual programme.

No information is held by settlement size on the distribution of housing association grant or capital allocations to associations.

Voluntary Organisations (Grants)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what specific legislative powers currently exist for the provision of grant aid to voluntary organisations providing emergency accommodation for the single homeless in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Section 39 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 makes provision for the Secretary of State and for local authorities to give assistance to voluntary organisations concerned with homelessness. Assistance is also available under the Local Government Grants (Social Need) Act 1969.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what grants were made in 1986-87 by Government Departments and local authorities in Scotland to voluntary organisations providing accommodation for *(a)* the single homeless, *(b)* battered women and their families, *(c)* homeless families and *(d)* ex-offenders.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Some £400,000 in grant aid was provided by Scottish Office in 1986-87 via local authorities for the provision of hostel accommodation for ex-offenders, and a further £100,000 was given to voluntary organisations involved with the homeless, although not necessarily themselves providing accommodation. I do not have details of grants made by local authorities.

Children (Homelessness)

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the annual figures for the number of children received into care by reason of homelessness; if he will give this information for Scotland as a whole and for each local authority area; what are the latest figures for the number of children in local authority care where the reason for their admission into care was homelessness; if he will give this information for Scotland as a whole for each local authority area for the years ended 31 March 1985, 1986, 1987, or the three most recent years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information for Scotland, excluding Strathclyde, in the last three years for which figures are available is as follows:

Region	*Admissions into local authority care in year ending 31 March by reason of family homelessness*			*Children in local authority care at 31 March by reason of family homelessness*		
	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Borders	1	8	1	7	6	3
Central	1	0	1	4	5	4
Dumfries and Galloway	0	0	*2	3	3	5
Fife	1	0	0	9	8	8
Grampian	6	11	1	18	15	11
Highland	0	5	2	6	1	1
Lothian	2	1	0	9	4	4
Tayside	2	1	0	15	14	10
Orkney	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shetland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Isles	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland (excluding Strathclyde)	13	26	7	71	56	46

Information provided by Strathclyde regional council on admissions to care by reason of homelessness relates only to 1984-85 and 1985-86 when the numbers of children concerned were respectively 15 and 19. No information is available from Strathclyde on children currently in care for this reason.

The very difficult problems which can arise when dealing with homeless people call for the exercise of good housing management and close co-operation between all the agencies involved. The Government are committed to maintaining an effective legislative framework to help the homeless.

Labour Statistics

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were registered as unemployed in Scotland on 1 October 1981; and what was the total on 1 October 1986.

Mr. Lang: The information is not available in the precise form requested. In October 1981 the number of unemployed claimants in Scotland was 302,362. The corresponding figure for October 1986 was 359,236. Due to changes which have taken place in the compilation of the statistics during the period these figures are not directly comparable.

Merksworth High School, Paisley

Mr. Allen Adams: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will accept the invitation of the Merksworth high school, Paisley, parents' association to visit the school on Saturday 26 March to view the school's educational facilities; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Neither my right hon. and learned Friend nor I has any plans to visit Merksworth high school at present.

YTS

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the occupancy rates on the YTS in Dundee are at the latest date and for equivalent dates for each month since the scheme started.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Information in the form requested cannot be given except at disproportionate cost.

In Dundee local authority district at 26 February 1988 (the latest available date) there were 1,857 contracted places on YTS, 1,430 of which were filled (a 77 per cent. occupancy rate). For the same date in 1987, there were 1,409 contracted places of which 1,139 were filled (an 81 per cent. occupancy rate). These figures do not include occupancy rates on YTS schemes administered by the large companies unit, which does not break down figures to local level.

EMPLOYMENT

Unified Training Programme

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received about the proposed unified training programme; what problems with regard to its implementation have been drawn to his attention; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: We have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about a range of matters concerning the new employment training programme, on which the recent White Paper "Training for Employment" announced that the Government had accepted in full the recommendations made by the Manpower Services Commission. The new programme will commence on 5 September this year, and the MSC is now making detailed arrangements for its implementation.

Tourism

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the English tourist board to discuss the encouragement of tourism in the north-west of England.

Mr. Lee: I have regular meetings with the chairman of the English tourist board to discuss the development and promotion of tourism throughout England, including the north-west.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the development of tourism in the inner cities.

Mr. Lee: As part of the Government's "Action for Cities" programme, the Engish tourist board is to run a campaign to help identify and develop the tourism potential of inner city areas. Inner city tourism will continue to benefit from the English tourist board's marketing initiatives as well as the section 4 scheme of financial assistance.

Disablement Resettlement Officers

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to increase the numbers of disablement resettlement officers.

Mr. Lee: I have no plans at present to increase the numbers of disablement resettlement officers. The matter will continue to be kept under review.

Special Aids

Mr. Leighton: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what training is given to those responsible for issuing aids under the special aids to employment scheme.

Mr. Lee: Technical officers who are responsible for the provision of advice on aids issued under the special aids to employment scheme, attend training courses designed to keep them abreast of technical developments. Courses are arranged in conjunction with manufacturers, suppliers and those major voluntary organisations for people with disabilities. They are also encouraged to attend exhibitions, read publications and liaise on a day-to-day basis with manufacturers, suppliers, local colleges, the medical profession and other health care professionals.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether the Manpower Services Commission offices holds stocks of items commonly requested under the special aids to employment scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: Stocks of items commonly requested under the special aids to employment scheme are held centrally by the employment service.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average length of time between receipt of an application under the Manpower Services Commission special aids to employment scheme, and the date the equipment was delivered.

Mr. Lee: There are no figures available on the average length of time between receipt of the application for equipment under the special aids to employment scheme and the date the equipment was delivered. Typically, the period can vary from a few days to several weeks depending on the complexity of the case and the availability of the equipment.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list for each region the numbers and types of equipment issued under the Manpower Services Commission special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: There is no information readily available on the types of equipment issued under the special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years. Information on numbers is readily available only for the past four years, and is as follows:

Region	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Midlands	193	235	342	386
Wales	74	85	144	175
London	257	280	573	630
South East	264	297	415	605
Scotland	179	169	176	325
Northern	44	58	76	77
Yorkshire-Humberside	102	118	282	298
North West	121	211	354	468
East Midlands	—	—	—	192
South West	222	187	378	384

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the occupations of those receiving equipment under the Manpower Services Commission special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: A list of occupations of those receiving equipment under the special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years is not available. The following information shows some of the typical occupations of people who have benefited by the issue of equipment.

General Clerk
Cost Clerk
Bonus Clerk
Articled Clerk
Accounts Clerk
Clerical Assistant
Social Worker
Computer Programmer
Computer Operator
Printers Assistant
Technical Officer
Trainee Manager
Training Officer
Receptionist
Telephonist
Disability Services Co-ordinator
Word Processor
Typist (Audio)
Typist (Copy)
Secretary
Physiotherapist
Equal Opportunities Officer
Photographer
Porter
Medical Secretary
Production Worker
Solicitor
Circuit Board Assembler
Sales Director
Journalist
Machine Tool Operator
Scientific Officer
Appeals Organiser
Teacher
Nurse
Doctor
Accountant
Careers Officer
Engineer
Driver
Civil Servant

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average retail price of an aid issued under the Manpower Services Commission special aids to employment scheme.

Mr. Lee: The average retail price of aids issued under the scheme during the financial year 1986-87 was £473. However, discounts on retail prices are sought for bulk purchases of aids which are frequently issued.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the cost to the Manpower Services Commission of the special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: The cost to the Manpower Services Commission of the special aids to employment scheme for each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Cost £
1982-83	529,379
1983-84	792,168
1984-85	927,279
1985-86	1,094,000
1986-87	1,674,000

Premises and Equipment (Adaptation Scheme)

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many adaptations carried out under the adaptation to premises and equipment scheme were to meet the needs of people categorised as *(a)* deaf without speech, *(b)* deaf with speech and *(c)* hard of hearing.

Mr. Lee: During the first six months of the current financial year, the number of adaptations carried out under the adaptations to premises and equipment scheme to meet the needs of people categorised as *(a)* deaf without speech, *(b)* deaf with speech, *(c)* hard of hearing were *(a)* 4, *(b)* 4, and *(c)* 3.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the average length of time between the date of application for the adaptation to premises and equipment scheme and the date the application is completed.

Mr. Lee: There are no figures available on the average length of time between the date of application for the adaptation to premises and equipment scheme and the date the application is completed. Typically, the period can vary from a few days to several months depending on the complexity of the case.

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the average amount of grant awarded under the adaptation of premises and equipment scheme for each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: Total expenditure, numbers of people helped and the average amount of grant awarded under the adaptation to premises and equipment scheme for each of the last five years were:

Year	Annual expenditure £	Number of people helped	Average cost £
1982-83	107,334	117	917
1983-84	134,412	170	790
1984-85	243,649	145	1,680
1985-86	295,000	165	1,788
1986-87	257,000	253	1,016

Aural Handicap

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many copies of the Manpower Services Commission leaflet EPL 38 "Employing someone who is deaf or hard of hearing", were issued in the last five years.

Mr. Lee: Approximately 10,000 copies of the leaflet EPL 38 have been issued in the last five years.

Restart

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment, if he will provide details for each region of the average time between a new claimant's availability for work being queried and a decision being made by an adjudication officer.

Mr. Lee: Information is not available in the precise form requested. However, the speed with which adjudication officers make decisions (that is, the time between their receiving a referral and reaching a decision) is monitored in a 5 per cent. sample of cases. The sample shows that, for the three-month period ending 31 December 1987, the percentage of all availability questions (on both new and existing claims and including decisions on availability during holidays) decided within four weeks of referral to an adjudication officer, for each employment service region, was as follows:—

	Availability *Per cent.*	*Restricted Availability* *Per cent.*
London and South East	81·8	81·8
Northern	98·5	98·6
Yorkshire and Humberside	95·5	96·3
South West	89·6	85·1
Wales	82·9	97·2
East Midlands	85·3	91·1
West Midlands	76·2	78·3
North West	92·0	98·0
Scotland	74·9	93·3

Rural Areas

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the levels of unemployment in rural areas and the measures which his Department is taking to reduce them.

Mr. Lee: Information on unemployment in rural areas is not readily available. However, an independent unemployment analysis carried out for the Development Commission for Rural England suggests that rural areas are sharing in the general drop in unemployment. The analysis estimated that the average unemployment rate in the Development Commission's rural development areas as a whole fell from 10·4 per cent. to 9·7 per cent. in the year to April 1987. During the same period, the unemployment rate nationally fell from 11·5 per cent. to 10·9 per cent. National unemployment has continued to fall since last April, and is now 9·1 per cent. These further falls can only have further benefited rural areas.

My Department is playing its part with other interested Departments to foster these improvements, by providing active encouragement and support to enterprise. We are providing support for local enterprise agencies, tourism, and small businesses through our small firms service and a range of marketing improvement services. In addition, the full range of our employment, enterprise and training measures are available to help unemployed people in rural areas.

Education and Training (Tax Relief)

Mr. Maclennan: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether, pursuant to the answer of 18 December 1987, *Official Report*, column *829*, he will place a copy of the joint Manpower Services Commission, Department of Education and Science and Inland Revenue guide to tax relief for employers' expenditure on education and training in the Library.

Mr. Nicholls: The guide to tax relief for employers' expenditure on education and training was published on 15 February 1988. Copies of "Tax, Training and Education — a Guide for Employers, Education and Training Providers" are being placed in the Library.

Hotel Grading

Mr. Gregory: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consultation is taking place on a scheme for hotel grading as a separate qualitative assessment from classification.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Following extensive consultations with the serviced accommodation sector, the English tourist board has announced its intention of introducing a system of assessing quality standards as an addition to the existing crown classification system. The English tourist board is involved in detailed discussions with the industry and its trade associations on the best way to introduce the new scheme.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Beekeeping

Mr. Haynes: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he plans to meet representatives of beekeeping organisations.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have no such plans at present. My officials have regular meetings with representatives of the national beekeeping organisations and keep me in touch with their views.

European Community Agriculture Ministers

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met his counterparts from the other European Community states; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) on 10 March at columns *323-24*.

Green Pound

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects the next devaluation of the green pound.

Mr. MacGregor: Green pound devaluations are best considered at the time of the annual prices fixing when all relevant factors can be taken into account.

Cereals

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what base year he intends to operate for the area of cereals set-aside scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: This and other conditions applying to farmers entering the set-aside scheme will need to be decided in the light of the detailed Community rules yet to be established.

Severn Barrage

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects the current studies into the proposed Severn barrage to be completed.

Mr. Parkinson: The Severn tidal power group's work programme is due to conclude at the end of this year.

UKAEA (SP-100 Project)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority has had any commercial involvement in terms of advice consultancy or hardware and software development for the SP-100 nuclear powered space project;

(2) if there have been any commercial links between UKAEA's Culham laboratories and the SP-100 US space-based nuclear propulsion programme.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I understand that the UKAEA has had no commercial involvement in, or links with, this project.

Uranium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 18 March, column *685*, he will specify the exact nature of safeguards arrangements applied to South African origin uranium, giving details of date of entry into force and expiration of all such safeguards.

Mr. Michael Spicer: Specific safeguards arrangements are confidential to the parties involved.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what information he possesses on the practice of flag swapping on uranium consignments under Euratom safeguards control in European Economic Community countries, including flag swapping on uranium of United States, Canadian, Australian and South African origin.

Mr. Michael Spicer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 March 1988, at columns *200-1*.

Sellafield

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, 18 March *Official Report* column *685*, why it is expected to take until the end of 1988 to bring the first four Sellafield particular safeguards provisions into force.

Mr. Michael Spicer: The particular safeguards provisions require detailed preparation and consultation.

TRANSPORT

A2 (Accidents)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on fatal and non-fatal accidents on the A2 between Lydden and Whitfield (A256) and Whitfield and Deal (A258) for each year since 1970; and what comparable figures are available for other similar roads in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information available is as follows:

	Number of accidents		*Accident [1] rates*	
Year	*Fatal*	*Non-fatal*	*Fatal*	*All-injury*
Lydden-Whitfield (A256)				
1981	1	9	0·04	0·39
1982	1	6	0·04	0·27
1983	2	5	0·08	0·27
1984	2	9	0·08	0·43
1985	1	8	0·03	0·29
1986	2	10	0·06	0·39
Whitfield-Deal (A258)				
1981	1	13	0·07	0·92
1982	—	11	—	0·72
1983	1	8	0·07	0·59
1984	—	8	—	0·53
1985	—	2	—	0·12
1986	1	7	0·06	0·49
National average rates [2]				
1984			0·01	0·27
1985			0·01	0·24
1986			0·01	0·24

[1] Accidents per million vehicle kilometres.
[2] These rates are for all purpose single and dual carriageway trunk roads in non-built up areas in Great Britain.

Random Breath Testing

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the effectiveness of random breath testing in other countries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We keep in close touch with international experience. Although some countries that have introduced random breath testing seem to have achieved dramatic reductions in their levels of drinking and driving, they are no more successful overall than we are in containing the problem. In Australia, for example, the introduction of random breath testing in some states has reduced the level of drinking and driving to around the current level in this country. It is not always straightforward to compare one country with another and to assume that changes in one social environment would work in another. In this country the police have wide discretion to enforce the law on drinking and driving. This led to more than 300,000 breath tests last year resulting in over 100,000 convictions.

London Docklands (Roads)

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if the docklands northern relief road was taken over by his Department as a road scheme when the Greater London council was abolished; (2) what is the current official status of the docklands northern relief road; (3) what is the status of the London Docklands development corporation's proposals for the south Poplar link road and the East India dock link road; (4) what assumptions have been made about completion dates for London Docklands development corporation schemes known jointly as the docklands highway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On abolition of the GLC, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State became responsible for safeguarding the protected corridor of the proposed docklands northern relief road. The LDDC has developed proposals for docklands highways to provide access to developments within its area. These proposals, which include the south Poplar link road and the East India dock link road, follow the protected corridor. It is expected that they will have been completed by the early 1990s.

Dockland Link Roads

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what will be the status of the A13 between West India Dock road and the Leamouth road when the south Poplar and the East India Dock road are completed and linked to the A13 East India Dock road;

(2) what traffic management measures are proposed for the A13 between West India Dock road and Leamouth road once the south Poplar link road and the East India Dock link road are completed;

(3) whether heavy vehicles will be allowed along the south Poplar link road and the East India Dock link road, as well as along the A13 between West India Dock road and Leamouth road;

(4) what is the relationship, from the point of view of through traffic and local traffic, between the A13 junction improvement schemes and the docklands highway.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The docklands highway and the A13, to be improved by the six schemes whose inclusion in the Department's road programme was announced on 7 March, will together provide for traffic moving to and from the docklands area, and through it. The Department has set up a working group with the London Docklands development corporation, local authorities, police and other interested parties to discuss traffic management, including heavy vehicles in the area. There are no proposals to change the status of the A13.

Trunk Roads

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether all trunk road schemes are subject to public inquiries including an examination of the purpose, function and design of schemes;

(2) if there will be public inquiries to examine the purpose, function and design of the six A13 junction schemes which he recently announced;

(3) what are the expected completion dates of the A13 junction improvements;

(4) what public consultation is to take place about the A13 schemes he announced on 7 March.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Public inquiries are normally required to be held into unresolved objections to orders authorising trunk road schemes. The scope of the inquiry depends on the nature of the objections.

It is too early to say what public consultation and inquiries may be necessary for the recently announced A13 schemes. We hope they will be completed by the mid-1990s.

Tiger Super Puma Helicopter

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the French DGAC to complete its air worthiness review of the AS332L Tiger Super Puma helicopter; and if he will make it his policy to publish the findings.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Civil Aviation Authority is participating in the French DGAC airworthiness review of the AS 332L helicopter, which is expected to be completed shortly. It will be for the authority, which is wholly responsible for civil aviation safety regulation, to take any action on the outcome of the review.

Rail Network (London)

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to deal with congestion on the London rail network.

Mr. Channon: I have for some time been considering, with British Rail and London Regional Transport, the scope for improving and developing the railway network in London. A number of major improvements are already in hand at central London termini and I have authorised the purchase of additional rolling stock and expenditure to relieve congestion at a number of stations on the Underground. But the chairmen of BR and LRT both agree that more must be done. In particular, an urgent review is needed of capacity in the central area. We have therefore jointly established a central London rail study, to focus on these concerns in the light of present and future demand. The aim will be to develop a strategy for improving services, bearing in mind the need to maximise the use of existing assets. But I do not rule out the possible need for major extensions of London's rail infrastructure. I hope to have initial results in July. I am placing a copy of the terms of reference for the study in the Library.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Directorate

Mr. Couchman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information has been given to the staff of the driver and vehicle licensing directorate about the consequences of the proposed change to executive agency status.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are anxious that the staff in DVLD are given full information on the proposal so that they are not unnecessarily concerned about its implications. In common with the rest of the Department on 18 February, the day of the Prime Minister's announcement, DVLD staff received a message on the changes from the permanent secretary. They also received a personal message from the director and subsequently more detailed information in the form of a question and answer brief in the DVLD house journal. Staff will also be kept informed of any further development in this way. The content of the question and answer briefing is as follows.

Q1. What changes will be made at DVLD?

A1. The main changes at DVLD will be in the way the Directorate is financed, in its accounting systems, and in increased responsibility for personnel management. The changes will all be aimed at giving the Directorate greater freedom to manage its own operations and to achieve results. Ways of enabling staff to share in the benefits of improved performance resulting from the new agency status may also be possible. It is too early to be more specific.

Q2. Why has DVLD been identified as a candidate for possible Executive Agency status?

A2. DVLD is already a relatively autonomous unit within DTp. It is a large scale unit with unique executive functions. It already has many of the features of an

executive agency. It has approved annual plans and administers the bulk of its expenditure and staffing under extensive delegated powers from the Department. It agrees with and reports to the Department on its performance targets. It has a very good record on improving customer service and of reducing its operating costs. The adoption of executive agency status should help consolidate these achievements and provide more freedom for DVLD to deliver the results required of it.

Q3. Will the staff of the new agencies remain subject to civil service pay and conditions? Will there be any redundancies as a result of further improvement in efficiency?

A3. Staff in the proposed DTp agencies would remain civil servants with appropriate nationally agreed pay scales. No changes are intended at present in basic conditions of service. The Trade Unions would be fully consulted should any changes in terms and conditions of service be contemplated in the future. DVLD's workload is currently increasing at 4 per cent. per year and it is anticipated that this will absorb any staff released through efficiency improvements.

Q4. If it goes ahead will any work move from Swansea?

A4. There may be some changes at the margins as much to do with work moving to DVLD as work moving away.

Q5. What will happen to the VROs?

A5. The VROs will be included in the proposed agency along with DVLC and DVOIT.

Q6. Will agency staff have the freedom to move back to the Department?

A6. Transfer arrangements for staff between agencies and their parent and other Departments will be retained. There would be some change in personnel management responsibilities exercised by DVLD but overall the present degree of freedom should remain the same.

Q7. Will the DVLD workload change as a result of these proposals?

A7. DVLDs workload is forecast to increase at 4 per cent. per annum and no changes are foreseen as a direct result of the proposed change in status.

Q8. Will DVOIT be included in the new agency?

A8. The current intention is that it should but its future status will be subject to review in the light of the operational framework agreed upon for the proposed DVLC agency.

Q9. Does the proposal imply criticism of DVLD?

A9. Rather the reverse. The proposals build on the considerable achievements of the Directorate by giving it more freedom to run it own affairs.

Q10. What about personnel management of VRO staff?

A10. This will be reviewed to see what the most sensible arrangement would be. There will be no significant changes in the level of service provided.

Q11. Have staff been informed of this development?

A11. All DVLD staff have received messages from the Permanent Secretary and the Director. The Departmental and local TUS have been informed.

Q12. When will DVLD become an executive agency?

A12. Decisions have still to be taken on whether or not DVLD should become an executive agency. If a decision is taken in favour a great deal will have to be done and this will inevitably take some time.

Q13. How will the new DVLD agency affect the local Trade Unions?

A13. It is not expected that there will be any immediate changes to the local TUS structure if the DVLD agency is set up but the position will need to be kept under review by both sides in the light of experience with the new organisation.

Q14. What will determine whether DVLD becomes an executive agency?

A14. If Ministers consider that changes in the form of Departmental and Treasury control, together with a reduction in Ministerial involvement in day to day operations, would give agency management the opportunity to improve the efficiency of their operations.

Cash Limits

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes he proposes to make to the 1987-88 cash limits on his Department's Votes.

Mr. Channon: Running costs expenditure on Class VIII Vote 4 is expected to be £300,000 higher than was provided for in the spring Supplementary Estimates (HC284). There will be a corresponding reduction to non-running costs subheads on that vote. Running costs expenditure on Class VIII Vote 2, which is in the same running costs limit as Class VIII Vote 4, has been reduced by £300,000 and the cash limit on Class VIII Vote 2 has been reduced from £187,594,000 to £187,294,000.

Woolwich Ferry

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the progress of negotiations to end industrial action on the Woolwich ferry.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The London borough of Greenwich is still trying to negotiate a settlement with the work force. I am meeting the leader of Greenwich borough council on 28 March to discuss the position.

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many crossings have been lost as a result of industrial action on the Woolwich ferry between 1 April 1987 and the most recent convenient date.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Too many. Up to 24 March about 33,000 crossings have been lost.

London Transport

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the public subsidy to *(a)* London Underground and *(b)* London Transport in each year since 1979 at (i) outturn and (ii) constant 1988 prices.

Mr. David Mitchell: It is not possible to attribute these grants as between the Underground and other LRT activities, as grants were not so assigned when they were made. The figures for grants to London Regional Transport were as follows:

	Outturn Prices	*January 1988 Prices*
1979	148	269
1980	196	301
1981	216	299
1982	313	397
1983	339	412
1984-85	317	365
1985-86	323	349
1986-87	295	308
1987-88	239	239
1988-89	190	182

Victoria Place Road, Stoke

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why the Victoria place road scheme in Stoke-on-Trent was not included in the 1988-89 transport supplementary grant settlement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Victoria place link, Stoke-on-Trent, was included in Staffordshire's transport policies and programme submission for 1988-89. It was not

selected for transport supplementary grant support since the main works were not programmed to start until 1989-90. TSG funds are limited and grant is usually restricted to schemes already under construction or whose main works are due to start in that financial year.

Victoria place link was Staffordshire's third priority for TSG; its first two have been given grant aid. If put forward again next year with sufficient priority, the scheme will be considered on its merits in competition with schemes from other authorities for the funds available.

A50 Stoke

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the traffic flow was last measured on the A50 in Stoke-on-Trent, South; what was the number of vehicles counted on a 12-hour weekday; what was the corresponding heavy commercial vehicle count; and which major roads passing through urban areas in the west midlands have a higher traffic count.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The latest count was taken on the A50/A520 (Meir) junction in October 1987. The average weekday 12-hour flow was 23,900 vehicles of which some 19 per cent. were heavy vehicles.

Many roads through urban areas in the west midlands have a higher traffic count. In addition to the motorways, lengths of A34, A38(M), A41, A45, A435, A449, A456 and A457 within the west midlands conurbation all carry higher volumes.

M6 Stoke

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the average vehicle count for a 12-hour weekday on the M6 adjacent to Stoke-on-Trent; and what is the corresponding number of heavy lorries.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The latest 12-hour weekday average count on M6 is 61,300 vehicles (36·5 per cent. heavy vehicles) between junctions 15 and 16 and 66,700 vehicles (21·5 per cent. heavy vehicles) between junctions 14 and 15. Counts were taken in September 1987.

Traffic Counts

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the highest traffic count of *(a)* all vehicles and *(b)* heavy commercial vehicles on urban roads that has been reported to his Department in the last two years; what was the date of the count; and where was the road.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A classified traffic count of 12 hours duration (7 am to 7 pm) for one day is taken as part of the Department's rotating traffic census. Counts are taken on one sixth of major road links each year so that all links are covered in six years. The classification "urban" is no longer used, being replaced by "built-up" where a section of road has a speed limit of 40 mph or less.

The highest traffic counts on built-up roads recorded in 1986 and 1987 are:

Date of count	*12-hour count*	*Road*	*Location*	*Grid reference*
All vehicles				
13 October 1986	89,663 (90,089)	A4202	Park Lane, London	52801806
14 October 1987	73,380 (73,692)	A104	Woodford New Road, North East London	53991917
Heavy goods vehicles				
22 April 1986	8,678	A405	North Watford between A41 and M1 junction 6	51102004
14 April 1987	14,228	A282	South of Dartford Tunnel	55581750

Figures in brackets include pedal cycles.

Traffic Congestion (Stoke)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will outline the proposals supported by his Department designed to reduce peak hour traffic congestion in Stoke-on-Trent, South; what will be the expected benefit of each; and by what date completion of each proposal is expected.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Construction of a grade-separated junction at Hanford (A34/A500) is well advanced and should be completed by early summer. We also have in preparation a scheme to upgrade the A50 route between Blythe bridge and Queensway (A500). Subject to the completion of statutory processes work should start on this in 1992 and be completed in about two years.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to the answer of 8 March, *Official Report*, columns *153-4*, he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The number of staff in the Department by grade, both permanent and casual, located outside London on 18 March 1988 was:

Grade title	*Total*
Administrative Assistant	3,030
Administrative Officer	2,248
Assistant Chief Driving Examiner	1
Assistant Librarian	1
Assistant Scientific Officer	17
Assistant Storekeeper	8
Assistant Chief Reprographics Officer	3
Cartographic Assistant (Misc.)	1
Cartographic Draughtsman (Misc.)	3
Casual Administrative Assistant	243
Casual Administrative Officer	8
Casual Cleaner	6
Casual Clerical Assistant	2
Casual Government Telephonist	1
Casual Messenger	9
Casual Paperkeeper	2
Casual Personal Secretary	1
Casual Reprographics Operators II	2
Casual Technical Grade 1	1
Casual Technical Grade 2	1
Casual Typist	10
Chairman of Traffic Commissioners	8
Chief Photographer	1
Chief Typing Manager	1
Cleaner (full time)	1
Cleaner (less that 10 hours a week)	167

Grade title	*Total*
Cleaner (part time)	12
Clerical Assistant	1
Coastguard Officer	210
Data Processor	1
District Officer (Coastguard)	27
Driving Examiner	1,007
Engineer and Ship Surveyor Grade 1	20
Engineer and Ship Surveyor Grade 2	11
Executive Officer	924
Government Telephonists	8
Grade 3 (Under Secretary)	2
Grade 4 (Chief Inspector of Accidents C/Av)	1
Grade 4 (Chief Scientific Officer L/S)	1
Grade 4 (Director A—Civil Engineer)	5
Grade 4 (Director A—M & E Engineer)	1
Grade 4 (Director Middle Band)	1
Grade 5 (Assistant Secretary)	5
Grade 5 (Assistant Chief Engineer—CE)	1
Grade 5 (Director 3—Civil Engineer)	7
Grade 5 (Director 3—Electrical Engineer)	1
Grade 5 (Director 5—M & E Engineer)	2
Grade 5 (Deputy Chief Inspector of Accidents)	1
Grade 5 (Deputy Chief Scientific Officer)	7
Grade 6 (Chief Surveyor)	5
Grade 6 (Senior Principal Scientific Officer)	14
Grade 6 (Senior Principal)	13
Grade 6 (Superintending Civil Engineer)	23
Grade 6 (Superintending Electrical Engineer)	2
Grade 6 (Superintending M & E Engineer)	2
Grade 6 (Superintending Mechanical Engineer)	7
Grade 7 (Casual PP & TO Civil Engineer)	1
Grade 7 (PP & TO Civil Engineer)	81
Grade 7 (PP & TO Electrical Engineer)	12
Grade 7 (PP & TO Landscape Architect)	2
Grade 7 (PP & TO M & E Engineer)	2
Grade 7 (PP & TO Mechanical Engineer)	16
Grade 7 (PP & TO Quantity Surveyor)	2
Grade 7 (PP & TO Railway EMP Inspector)	2
Grade 7 (Principal Engineer & Ship Surveyor)	13
Grade 7 (Principal Information Officer)	1
Grade 7 (Principal Inspector of Coastguard)	7
Grade 7 (Principal Scientific Officer)	82
Grade 7 (Principal Nautical Surveyor)	9
Grade 7 (Principal Ship Surveyor)	15
Grade 7 (Principal)	59
Grade 7 (Principal Civil Engineer (Highways))	1
Graphics Officer	2
Graphics Officer Grade IV	1
Higher Cartographer Draughtsman (Miscellaneous)	1
Higher Executive Officer	400
Higher Graphics Officer	1
Higher Scientific Officer	90
HPTO (Civil Engineer Highways)	1
HPTO (Civil Engineer)	44
HPTO (Electrical Engineer)	33
HPTO (Fire)	1
HPTO (Horticultural)	5
HPTO (Landscape Architect)	1
HPTO (M & E DO)	1
HPTO (M & E Engineer)	3
HPTO (Mechanical Engineer)	108
Industrial grade	515
Inspector of Accidents (Engineering)	3
Inspector of Accidents (Operations)	2
Inspector of Coastguard	7
Librarian	2
Medical Officer	7
Messenger	152
Nautical Surveyor 1	13
Nautical Surveyor 2	9
Office Keeper II	3
Office Keeper III	5

Grade title	*Total*
Packer	16
Paperkeeper	32
Personal Secretary	77
Porter/Messenger	40
Principal Inspector of Accidents (Engineering)	2
Principal Inspector of Accidents (Operations)	2
Principal Photographer	4
Process & General Supervisory D	1
PTO (B & CE)	1
PTO (Civil Engineer (Casual))	1
PTO (Civil Engineer Highways)	1
PTO (Civil Engineer)	24
PTO (Electrical Engineer)	13
PTO (Landscape Architect Technician)	2
PTO (Landscape Architect (Casual))	1
PTO (M & E DO)	4
PTO (M & E Engineer)	9
PTO (M & E Engineering)	1
PTO (Mechanical Engineer)	446
Reprographics Manager	1
Reprographics Operator I	12
Reprographics Operator II	18
Sandwich Course Student (Comp SC) CB	11
Sandwich Course Student (Work Experience)	2
Scientific Officer	53
Security Officer Grade II (Non Uniformed)	1
Security Officer Grade II (Uniformed)	1
Security Office Grade III (Uniformed)	1
Security Officer Grade IV (Uniformed)	10
Security Officer Grade V (Uniformed)	39
Senior Inspector of Accidents (Engineering)	12
Senior Inspector of Accidents (Operations)	6
Senior Assistant Statistician	1
Senior Carto Draughtsman (Misc.)	1
Senior Coastguard Officer	199
Senior Coastguard Officer (ex Station Officer)	54
Senior Driving Examiner	328
Senior Executive Officer	120
Senior Inspector of Ships Provisions	1
Senior Librarian	1
Senior Medical Officer	1
Senior Messenger	19
Senior Paperkeeper	2
Senior Personal Secretary	3
Senior Photographer	10
Senior Scientific Officer	73
Senior Traffic Examiner	34
Ship Surveyor Grade 1	16
Ship Surveyor Grade 2	5
SPTO (Casual Civil Engineer)	2
SPTO (Civil Engineer)	172
SPTO (Electrical Engineer)	33
SPTO (Electrical Marine Engineer)	1
SPTO (Landscape Architect)	5
SPTO (M & E Engineer)	5
SPTO (Mechanical Engineer)	50
SPTO (Quantity Surveyor)	4
SPTO (Railway Employment Inspector)	5
Storekeeper	5
Stores Officer Grade B	1
Stores Officer Grade C	1
Stores Officer Grade D	3
Supervising Driving Examiner	85
Supervising Traffic Examiner	5
Technical Grade B (Mechnical Engineer)	1
Technical Grade 1	6
Technical Grade 2	1
Teleprinter Operator	1
Traffic Examiner	140
Trainee Typist	3
Typing Manager	21
Typist	271

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 28 March 1988

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Medical Research Council (Expenditure)

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much the Medical Research Council will spend on research into *(a)* mental health and *(b)* schizophrenia in the forthcoming year; what this figure represents as a percentage of the Medical Research Council's budget; and what was the comparable percentage spent in each of the last six years.

Mr. Jackson: I am advised by the Medical Research Council that expenditure on mental health (including addiction) and schizophrenia research from 1981-82 to 1986-87 was as follows:

	Mental Health £ *million*	*Percentage of MRC Budget*	*Schizophrenia* £ *million*	*Percentage of MRC Budget*
1981-82	7·8	8	*	*
1982-83	7·9	8	*	*
1983-84	8·4	8	*	*
1984-85	9·2	8	0·5	0·5
1985-86	9·1	8	0·5	0·5
1986-87	9·4	8	0·5	0·4

* Figures not available

Expenditure in these areas in the forthcoming year will be determined by the Medical Research Council in the light of its scientific priorities.

Child Guidance Service

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what steps he plans to take to ensure the continuation of the child guidance service in inner London after the abolition of the Inner London education authority.

Mr. Dunn: My right hon. Friend will wish to discuss this matter with the inner London councils, the Inner London education authority and the relevant district health authorities, with a view to ensuring that an effective child guidance service is available to each new LEA.

Free School Meals

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many children it is estimated will no longer qualify for free school meals in Bradford from April 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: In October 1987, about 7,850 pupils in Bradford received free school meals, either because their families were in receipt of family income supplement, or through the operation of LEA discretion. From 11 April, the families of those in the former category will receive a cash benefit of £2·55 per week throughout the year under the new family credit scheme, which will also cover many in the latter category. Nationally, it is estimated that about 100,000 more school age children will benefit under the family credit scheme compared with those who currently receive free school meals under family income supplement and LEA discretionary schemes combined.

French Language

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about the joint matriculation board's report on the number of pupils taking O and A-level examinations in French.

Mrs. Rumbold: The 1986-87 annual report of the Joint Matriculation Board shows a decrease in the number of French A level candidates, but an increase in the proportion taking French O-level and joint O-level/CSE. Comparable figures for all examination boards are not yet available. Under the Government's proposals for a national curriculum, a modern foreign language is a foundation subject at secondary level and will therefore form part of the curriculum for all pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. We expect the majority to want to offer it for public examination at age 16 and hope that the greater numbers studying a language to age 16 will also result in an increase in those continuing their studies to A or AS-level.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

International Atomic Energy Agency

81. **Mr. Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress on agreements to exchange and report information among member countries of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Mellor: The information requested is not yet available, as the International Atomic Energy Agency has not completed drawing up a list of member states which have entered into such agreements. The United Kingdom has entered into such agreements with Norway and

Denmark and is currently discussing agreements with the Soviet Union, the Netherlands and the Irish Republic. The United Kingdom also has an agreement on similar lines with France, which was signed in 1983.

Central America

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he proposes to take following the European ministerial conference in Hamburg on central American affairs.

Mr. Eggar: We continue to give firm support to the peace process. The commitments which the Community and its member states have entered into are recorded in the political and economic communiqués, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Sita Ram Maskey

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss the imprisonment of Sita Ram Maskey with the Nepal Government.

Mr. Eggar: Mr. Maskey was imprisoned in May 1987 under Nepal's Public Security Act. His case is cited in the Amnesty International report on Nepal published in November last year. We have drawn the attention of the Nepalese Government to this report.

Vasili Shipilov

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made to the Government of the Soviet Union about the continued imprisonment in a mental hospital of Vasili Shipilov.

Mr. Mellor: Vasili Shipilov was included on a list of human rights cases which my right hon. and learned Friend handed to Mr. Shevardnadze during his visit to the Soviet Union in February this year.

Refugees (Hong Kong)

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the longest time that anyone has been in a closed camp for refugees in Hong Kong.

Mr. Eggar: The longest time any refugee has been in a closed centre in Hong Kong is five years eight months.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Young Offenders

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of offenders under the age of 17 years *(a)* detained and *(b)* imprisoned for each of the last five years; and if he will express the figures as a percentage of the total number of prisoners detained and imprisoned for each of the years.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The readily available information is given in the table. It is derived from chapters 2, 3, 4, 5 of "Prison Statistics, England and Wales, 1986" (Cm. 210), copies of which are in the Library.

Receptions (1) juveniles into prison department establishments in England and Wales: by type of reception 1982-86.

Type of reception	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Untried	1,545	1,510	1,439	1,484	[2]1,570
Percentage of receptions of all ages	3	3	3	3	3
Convicted unsentenced	2,063	961	451	450	[2]450
Percentage of receptions of all ages	9	5	2	2	3
Sentenced[3]	7,008	6,615	6,461	5,784	4,277
Percentage of receptions of all ages[3]	10	9	9	8	6

[1] Total receptions cannot be calculated by adding receptions in each category, because there is double counting.
[2] Provisional figures.
[3] Excluding fine defaulters and non-criminal prisoners.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many 14-year-olds were in prison establishments on the last occasion for which figures are available; what information he has about the institutions in which they were held; how many were on remand; what information he has about the crimes for which those convicted were so convicted; how many previous convictions they had; and what information he has as to their ethnic origins.

(2) if he will show for each county or police force area *(a)* the number of 14-year-olds in prison establishments and *(b)* that number expressed as a proportion of the relevant age group.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The home address of persons held in prison department establishments in England and Wales is not recorded centrally. The readily available information is given in the tables. There were no 14-year-old females held or males held on remand.

Sentenced males aged 14 held in Prison Department establishments in England and Wales on 30 September 1987: by offence group, ethnic origin and establishment type

Number of persons[1]

Offence group	*White*		*West Indian, Guyanese, African*		*Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi*		*Chinese, Arab, mixed origin*		*All persons*
	Remand centre	*Detention centre*	*Remand centre*	*Detention centre*	*Remand centre*	*Detention centre*	*Remand centre*	*Detention centre*	
Violence against the person	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	4
Sexual offences	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Burglary	1	16	—	—	—	1	—	1	19
Robbery	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Theft, handling, fraud and forgery	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	3
Drugs offences	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
Not recorded	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	2	26	—	1	—	1	—	2	32

[1] The numbers are those recorded centrally and are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Sentenced males aged 14 held in Prison Department establishments in England and Wales on 30 September 1987: by offence group and number of previous convictions

Number of persons[1]

Offence group	*Number of previous convictions*						
	0	*1-2*	*3-5*	*6-10*	*11 and over*	*Not recorded*	*All persons*
Violence against the person	1	—	1	—	—	2	4
Sexual offences	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Burglary	2	5	5	3	—	4	19
Robbery	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Theft, handling, fraud and forgery	—	1	2	—	—	—	3
Drugs offences	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences	—	—	1	—	—	3	4
Not recorded	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Total	3	6	9	3	—	11	32

[1] The numbers are those recorded centrally and are approximate: detailed checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has on which other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development or European Community countries place 14-year-olds in prison institutions.

Mr. John Patten: Comprehensive reliable information is not readily available. From such information as we have, some form of custodial sanction appears to be available for 14-year-old offenders in the following member countries of the OECD or the European Community: Canada, France, the German Federal Republic, Greece, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United States. The member countries where such sanctions appear not to be available are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Spain and Sweden. We have no information about the remaining countries.

Economic League

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what inquiries have taken place into possible contacts between the Economic League and police forces in regions other than North Yorkshire; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We are not aware of any such inquiries.

Rates (Imprisonment)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have received custodial sentences for non-payment of rates for each of the last five years.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the number of persons received on committal by magistrates' courts in default of payment of rates in each of the last 11 years is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (table 6.2 of the latest volume, for 1986, Cm. 210) copies of which are in the Library. The following table gives corresponding details of those received in 1982 to 1986 following committal by county courts.

Persons received into prison department establishments in England and Wales on committal by county courts for non-payment of rates: by sex, 1982-86.

Number of persons[1]

Sex	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Males	5	11	26	9	17
Females	1	—	1	1	—

[1] Based on information recorded centrally which is approximate. Checking of individual cases would involve disproportionate cost.

Prisons (Facilities)

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what facilities exist for recreation and

exercise, and how many square feet of exercise space are available, at each of Her Majesty's prisons at Birmingham, Leeds, Pentonville, Manchester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is as follows:

	Facilities	*Approximate outside exercise space square feet*
Birmingham	gymnasium, multi-gymnasium, fitness/weight-lifting room, recreation room	65,000
Leeds	gymnasium, weight-training room	32,900
Pentonville	gymnasium, weight training room, remedial exercise room	87,800
Manchester	gymnasium, sports hall, weight-training room	30,900
Wandsworth	gymnasium, multi-purpose room	62,000
Wormwood Scrubs	gymnasium, multi-gymnasium, sports hall	72,600
Holloway	gymnasium, sports hall, swimming pool	27,000

Mr. Bermingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many hours' exercise per week prisoners receive at each of Her Majesty's prisons at Birmingham, Leeds, Pentonville, Manchester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Seven hours, weather permitting. In addition, there are varied opportunities for physical training.

Video Recordings Act 1984

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have been brought under the provisions of the Video Recordings Act 1984; and with what result.

Mr. John Patten: The Video Recordings Act 1984 is being introduced in stages, the first of which came into effect on 1 September 1985. The data held centrally, which may be incomplete, show no record of any prosecutions under the Act in 1985 and two in 1986. I would also refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) on 27 November at columns 365-66.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Juries

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Attorney-General on how many nights in each of the past five years juries in criminal trials have been sent to an hotel whilst considering a verdict; and what has been the total cost in each of those years.

The Attorney-General: This information is not readily available. It can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

PRIME MINISTER

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Prime Minister if she will set the precise responsibility which the Secretary of State for the Environment has in relation to forestry.

The Prime Minister: The Secretary of State for the Environment is responsible for environmental matters in England, and has an overall responsibility for nature conservation in the United Kingdom. He is therefore consulted by the Ministers with direct responsibility for forestry about the environmental implications of forestry policies. He is also consulted about those applications for planting grant on which the Forestry Commission has sought the views of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, as Forestry Minister for England, because there is an unresolved objection on environmental grounds from the relevant body or local authority.

PLO (Military Equipment)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Prime Minister what procedures exist within the appropriate Departments to prevent the export of British military equipment to the Palestine Liberation Organisation; and whether she is satisfied that they are effective.

The Prime Minister: Export control procedures for military equipment seek to take account of all relevant factors, including the type of equipment, its proposed destination and its end use. It has been the practice of successive Governments not to disclose the nature of the checks made.

I am satisfied with the general effectiveness of the controls.

Mr. Latham: To ask the Prime Minister by which Department information was possessed that the Lebanese company engaged in the transaction with Racal-Tacticom in 1982 had links with the Palestine Liberation Organisation; and when it was made known to that Department.

The Prime Minister: I have nothing to add to the reply given to my hon. Friend on 18 March, at column 688, by my right hon. and learned Friend the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Litter Collection (St. James' Park)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Prime Minister what was the purpose of the exercise involving the deposit and subsequent collection of litter in St. James' park on 22 March; what was the cost; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I attended the launch on 22 March of the Tidy Britain Group's series of projects designed to deal more effectively with the litter problem. The cost of the launch was less than £60.

WALES

Heart Surgery

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what private hospitals are being paid to perform the heart

operations necessary to enable the South Glamorgan health authority to meet his target of 600 heart operations per year; and how much each hospital has charged per operation done to meet this target.

Mr. Grist: South Glamorgan health authority is funded by the Department to provide an agreed level of open heart operations. The involvement of the private sector by the health authority in order to meet the agreed target is a matter for the authority. As a consequence, the information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if the cardiac surgeons employed by the South Glamorgan health authority are fulfilling their contracted National Health Service sessions to meet his target of 600 operations per year.

Mr. Grist: The consultant contracts are held by South Glamorgan health authority. The information requested is not available centrally.

ADAS

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many farmers in Wales have received fee-paying service from the Agricultural Development Advisory Service during the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many farmers in Wales have applied during the last 12 months for the fee paying service given by the Agricultural Development Advisory Service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: It is not possible to distinguish between those who apply for, and those who receive, chargeable non-statutory advice: ADAS would seldom be unable to provide a service sought by a potential customer. In the first 11 months of the scheme, chargeable advice was provided to 4,731 customers.

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much revenue has been received by the Agricultural Development Advisory Service for fee-paying service to farmers in Wales during the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: In the 11 months to 29 February 1988, receipts for advisory services totalled £502,258.

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service staff in Wales are fluent Welsh speakers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of fluent Welsh speakers employed by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service in Wales is 133.

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are employed by the Agricultural Development Advisory Service in Wales; what were the corresponding figures for the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: The number of people currently employed by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service in Wales is 354.

The information for 1 April (the nearest available date) in earlier years is as follows:

	Number
1983	377½
1984	366
1985	352
1986	347½
1987	356

Since ADAS reorganised in 1987 the figures include ADAS staff in Wales employed on the experimental husbandry farm and as national (United Kingdom) specialists. These officers were not included in the staffing figures to 1986 and the totals for 1983 to 1986 would need to be increased by about 40 to reflect the change in 1987.

Mr. Geraint Howells: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to review the service given by members of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: Services provided by ADAS are kept under continued review to ensure that the best possible advice is always available.

Wales and Marches Postal Board

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Wales and Marches Postal Board to discuss proposals to improve postal services in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker: No. My hon. Friend met the chairman of the Post Office Board, Wales and the Marches, on 17 February. They discussed a wide range of issues related to the provision of postal services in Wales.

Private Health Service Contractors

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to how many people are employed by private health service contractors in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: Information on the number of people employed by private firms providing services to the NHS is not held centrally.

Brick Industry

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to how many people are employed in the brick industry in Wales; and how many were employed in 1979.

Mr. Peter Walker: Up-to-date information is not available, but census of employment data show there to have been 1,300 people employed in the manufacture of bricks, fireclay and refractory goods in 1978; and about 800 in the nearest comparable categories, structural clay products and refractory goods, in 1984.

Council House Rents

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the average rent per council house in Wales in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The average weekly net unrebated rent of local authority dwellings in Wales was £6·32 in April 1979 and £17·91 in April 1987.

Government Employment and Training Measures

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many people are engaged in Government employment and training measures in Wales; what was the figure for expenditure on the YTS in 1986 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: The number of people engaged in the following programmes in Wales at 31 January 1988 is as follows:

	Number
New Job Training Scheme	1,241
Youth Training Scheme	23,691
Enterprise Allowance Scheme	5,289
Community Programme	19,695
Community Industry	871
Job Release Scheme	712
Job Share Scheme	85
Jobstart Allowance	286
New Workers Scheme	1,930

No figures are available for the voluntary projects programme. For the adult training programme, the only available information is that between 1 April 1987 and 31 January 1988 a total of 18,495 took part.

Expenditure on YTS in the 1986-87 financial year was £51,985,000. The latest estimate of expenditure for the 1987-88 financial year is £58,092,000.

Local Authorities Staff

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the number of full-time staff employed by Welsh local authorities in 1979 and 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: The number of full-time staff employed by Welsh local authorities in December 1979 was 108,388. The corresponding figure for December 1987 was 98,123.

Home Confinement

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what is his policy towards home confinement in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: District health authorities were given appropriate guidance in WHC(86) 69 issued in December 1986. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

Electricity Industry (Privatisation)

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary for State of Wales if he will make a statement on the implications of the privatisation of the electricity industry for employment in Wales.

Mr. Peter Walker: Employment in the privatised electricity industry in Wales will, as at present, be a matter for the industry itself. Electricity privatisation will bring new opportunities for the industry, for its employees and for the economy as a whole.

Rating Reform

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what representations he has received from the local authority associations in Wales about the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Grist: We have received a number of written and oral representations from the Welsh local authority associations about the community charge.

Breast Screening

Sir Raymond Gower: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made on the implementation of breast screening in Wales.

Mr. Grist: I am pleased to announce that Dr. Deidre Hine has been appointed as director of the breast screening service in Wales. She is taking up her post, which is on the staff of the university of Wales college of medicine, today Premises have been acquired at 18, Cathedral road, Cardiff to house the Welsh breast screening centre. Screening should start at the centre later this year and the service will spread to the rest of Wales as quickly as possible. Our aim is for all parts of the Principality to be covered by a high-quality service by 1990.

Export Breakfasts

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate he has made of the cost of his two Welsh export breakfasts; and how many *(a)* business men and *(b)* officials he expects to attend.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The catering costs, the hire of the venues, the costs associated with the presenter, the speakers, the equipment and the road crews came to £29,488·94 inclusive of VAT. The audiovisual element will be used generally by Welsh Office export staff and will feature in other presentations. Together, the two breakfasts stimulated a terrific turnout of almost 1,200 business men and women. Sixteen of my officials attended the Cardiff event, and 10 were at Rhyl. The breakfasts have already resulted in a considerable increase in inquiries for export services and have been widely praised by those who attended.

EMPLOYMENT

Tourism

Mr. Waller: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many persons were employed in the tourist industry in *(a)* the Bradford and *(b)* the Keighley travel-to-work areas at the latest convenient date.

Mr. Lee: The latest estimates of employees in employment in tourism-related industries, which relate to September 1984, are 8,200 for Bradford and 1,200 for Keighley. These estimates do not include the self-employed, for whom considerable estimates are not available.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many people were on the enterprise allowance scheme in the London borough of Lewisham in 1986 and 1987, respectively; what proportion of these small businesses employed more than 25 people *(a)* in the first year of trading and *(b)* in the second year of trading; and what proportion failed in the first year of trading;

(2) if he will bring forward proposals to monitor the success rate of businesses started under the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: The information is not available in the form requested. In the wider (inner London south) area, comprising Lewisham, Southwark, Greenwich, Bromley and Bexley, 1,506 people entered the enterprise allowance scheme in the 1986-87 financial year and 2,337 have joined so far in the 1987-88 financial year. Nationally, the rate of drop out during the allowance year has fluctuated within the range 11 to 16 per cent. since the scheme began.

The success rate of businesses started under the enterprise allowance scheme is already monitored though a programme of national surveys which was established when the scheme began. Latest evidence shows that 74 per cent. of those who complete a full year on the scheme are still trading six months after the allowance has ended, and 65 per cent. two years after the allowance has ceased.

The surveys also show that for every 100 businesses continuing six months after the allowance has ended, 71 people, in addition to the recipient of the allowance and any business partner, are employed at that time. Two years after the allowance has ceased, the number of additional people employed rises to 114 per 100 firms surviving.

Of those businesses which are employing others, at the 18-month point less than 1 per cent. are employing more than 20 people; the corresponding figure at the three-year point is around 3 per cent.

Training Project Programmes

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the companies and organisations that have been invited to tender for Manpower Services Commission training project programmes in the last two years.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many training project programmes were put to tender in 1985, 1986 and the latest figure for 1987 by the Manpower Services Commission; and what was the average value of the tenders.

Mr. Nicholls: The Manpower Services Commission did not keep a computerised central record of projects put out to tender until April 1987. From 1 April 1987 to 24 March 1988, 131 projects supporting the Manpower Service Commission's training programmes were tendered. The average contracted cost of these projects was £68,000. Information on the average value of individual tenders is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Restrictive Labour Practices

Mr. Ground: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to look into restrictive labour practices.

Mr. Fowler: As part of their general concern to see the elimination of restrictive practices in all areas the Government have today referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) certain questions as to possible restrictive labour practices in television and film production, under the terms of section 79 of the Fair Trading Act 1973.

The reference has been made jointly by my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department and myself, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Act.

The practices specified in the reference are those of *(a)* restricting the extent to which work is performed by workers who are not members of a particular trade union; and *(b)* requiring that minimum numbers of workers (whether or not of specified descriptions) be engaged on particular productions or tasks.

The questions referred are whether each practice exists; if so, whether it is a restrictive labour practice within the meaning of the Act; and what public interest effects there may be.

This reference is the first to be made under the provisions of section 79. It forms part of the initiatives which the Government have in hand following the report of the Peacock committee to promote efficiency and competitiveness in the industry. The Government believe that it will inform the steps now being taken within the industry in relation to changes in working practices to secure the future of all who work in it.

We anticipate that the MMC will be able to make its report by the end of this year.

Earnings Statistics

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretry of State for Employment what change there has been in the numbers earning double, treble and quadruple national average earnings since 1978-79; and what regional breakdown is available.

Mr. Lee *[holding answer 24 March 1988]* The numbers in the United Kingdom earning double, treble and quadruple national average earnings are estimated to have increased between 1978-79 and 1986-87 by 150,000, 90,000 and 50,000 respectively. These numbers include the self-employed. Regional data are not available.

YTS

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people aged 16 to 17 years completed a YTS training course in the London borough of Lewisham in 1987.

Mr. Cope *[holding answer 23 March 1988]*: Forty-nine young people completed a YTS training course in the London borough of Lewisham in 1987.

Two-year YTS commenced in April 1986 and young people who started a YTS course since then are not due to complete their training until 1988. Some 468 young people started YTS courses in Lewisham in 1987.

SCOTLAND

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many patients with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychosis have been discharged from mental hospitals in Scotland in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The information is as follows:

Number of Discharges with primary diagnosis of schizophrenia

Year	Number
1977	2,983
1978	2,995
1979	3,069
1980	3,314
1981	3,348
1982	3,036
1983	3,299
1984	3,489
1985	3,568
1986 (Provisional)	3,380

Information is not yet available for 1987.

Rural Infrastructure (Plantation Timber)

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has on the estimated cost to each of the regional authorities of Dumfries and Galloway, Highland and Border, of upgrading rural roads, bridges and other infrastructure to facilitate the extraction of plantation timber from remote hill and upland areas; and if he intends to lay business rates on such plantations in order to contribute towards the cost of such infrastructure.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The only information available is estimates prepared by the local authorities. Dumfries and Galloway regional council has prepared a programme totalling £13·3 million of road schemes to assist in the extraction of timber up to 1995. Highland regional council has included in its financial plan a total of £3·7 million for this purpose for the period up to 1992-93. Borders regional council is at present in discussion with the Forestry Commission in order to update its programme of schemes.

It is not intended to change the existing arrangements for the application of agricultural derating to woodlands.

Sudden Death

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish for each regional procurator fiscal jurisdiction *(a)* the number of pathologists employed, part-time or full-time, on sudden death procedure and *(b)* the number of police surgeons accredited to deal with sudden death procedures.

Mr. Rifkind: Pathologists are not employed by procurators fiscal but are instructed to perform autopsies in individual cases. It is only possible to provide the numbers of pathologists who are regularly instructed by procurators fiscal in each regional fiscaldom and these are as follows:

	Number
Glasgow and Strathkelvin	10
Grampian, Highlands and islands	5
Tayside, Central and Fife	3
Lothian and Borders	12
South Strathclyde, dumfries and Galloway	16
North Strathclyde	10

Police surgeons have a variety of duties but may be asked by procurators fiscal to assist them in sudden deaths cases. Figures are only available for the number of police surgeons in each police area rather than in each regional fiscaldom and are as follows:

	Number
Central	6
Dumfries and Galloway	1
Fife	6
Grampian	4
Lothian and borders	10
Northern	18
Strathclyde	98
Tayside	26

Forestry Grant Scheme

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will state the total hectareage for which moneys have been paid out under the forestry grant scheme from its inception in October 1981;

(2) if he will state the total amount paid out under the forestry grant scheme from its inception in October 1981.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The total amount paid out in grants to February 1988, the latest date for which information is available, was £23 million. This related to applications concerning 110,000 hectares of land.

Iceland (Electricity Imports)

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has now received any proposals concerning the possible importation of electricity from Iceland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) on 23 March 1988 at column *140*.

Uist and Galloway (Aerial Survey)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has concerning the results of the aerial survey of Uist and Galloway undertaken by the Scottish universities research and reactor centre; what action he proposes to take as a result; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The results of the survey were presented to Scottish Office officials on 25 March and they are currently being assessed.

The survey was part of a research programme initiated by the Scottish universities research and reactor centre and was one in which the Scottish Office had expressed an interest. Prèliminary examination of the result indicates that they are not greatly different from what would be expected for the areas concerned from a knowledge of the rainfall during the passage of the cloud and of other factors.

Radioactivity (Aerial Surveys)

Mr. Foulkes: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will consider commissioning the Scottish universities research and reactor centre to undertake a full aerial survey of radioactivity in Scotland to determine the residual post-Chernobyl effects and other concentrations of radioactivity.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Aerial surveying for deposited radioactivity is still at the development stage and is not yet proven or available for wider use. The widespread monitoring which was undertaken following

the Chernobyl accident identified the areas of highest deposition and more detailed monitoring of the environment, livestock, crops and foodstuffs has been concentrated in those areas. The work is still continuing, and has shown that, except as regards sheep, radioactivity values, including those in soils, are well below levels at which action would be necessary.

Scottish Office (Permanent Under-Secretary)

Mr. Nigel Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the posts previously held by the recently appointed permanent under-secretary to the Scottish Office, giving for each post the date appointed and the grades at which the post was held.

Mr. Rifkind: Mr. Hillhouse joined the Civil Service in 1960. He first entered the Government communications headquarters and then transferred in 1962 to the Scottish Office, where he was assigned as an assistant principal to the Scottish Education Department, spending his first four years on a variety of short-term assignments. His career subsequent to his promotion to principal in 1966 is outlined below:—

Date	*Post*
3 October 1966	SED—Finance—Principal
20 September 1971	Treasury, on secondment—Principal
26 August 1974	Scottish Office — Management group support staff—Assistant secretary
20 May 1975	Scottish office—Finance co-ordination—Assistant secretary
3 October 1977	Scottish home and health department—Police services—Assistant secretary
1 August 1980	Scottish office—Principal finance officer—Under secretary
1 August 1985	SED—Under secretary
1 December 1987	SED—Secretary grade 2

Ford Plant, Dundee

Mr. Dewar: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what direct personal contact he had with the Ford Motor company in the two weeks immediately preceding the announcement that the company would not be locating an electrical and electronic manufacturing plant in Dundee.

Mr. Rifkind: None. During that period all contacts with the company were being maintained through my officials in Locate in Scotland.

Inverclyde Initiative

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on Monday, 21 March, *Official Report*, column *15*, he will estimate the number of jobs created by the Inverclyde initiative; of these, how many are full-time, and how many are part-time; and how many have been filled by *(a)* males and *(b)* females.

Mr. Lang: The Inverclyde initiative aims to stimulate local economic activity and create opportunities for employment. It does not in itself directly create new jobs. Information in the form requested is not therefore available.

Between March 1985, when the Inverclyde initiative was launched, and March 1988, 11,661 new permanent jobs and approximately 1,300 new temporary jobs have been created in Inverclyde district. A breakdown between full and part-time, male and female, is not available.

Major Trunk Road Projects

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the major trunk road projects which have been started during 1987-88 and those which he expects to start in 1988-89.

Mr. Rifkind: The information is as follows:

Schemes with estimated cost over £1 million started since 1 April 1987

A75 Castle Douglas bypass
A75 Glenluce bypass
M8 Starlaw junction, Livingston
M80 Stepps bypass (advance works)
A82 Auchendennan to Arden (Loch Lomond)
A82 Luss to Camus Nan Clais (Loch Lomond)
A830 Polnish to Lochailort
A9 Dornoch Firth approach roads (south)
A9 Dornoch Firth approach roads (north)
A9 Dunbeath bridge
A92 East Fife regional road, stages III and IV[1]
A92 Ellon bypass Tipperty[1]
A94 Candy to Stonehaven[1]

[1] Contract awarded March 1988: possible works in April 1988.

Schemes with estimated cost over £1 million expected to start by 31 March 1989

A7 North Middleton
A75 Dumfries bypass
A77 Balsalloch-Balcreuchan
A835 Garve railway bridge
A87 Dornie bridge
A9 Dunblane bypass
A9 Dornoch Firth bridge
A94 Parkford-Balnabreich
A94 Upper Northwater bridge—Oatyhill
A94 Stracathro junction
A96 Inverurie bypass

Eye Tests and Dental Examinations

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* eye tests and *(b)* dental examinations took place in the Tayside health board area broken down into districts in each year since 1979.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The information for Tayside health board area is set out in the table. Disaggregated information is not available.

(Thousands)

	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Eye Tests	58·7	58·5	59·2	61·1	63·7	66·2	69·4	71·5	Not yet available
Dental Examinations	[1]	[1]	[1]	216·8	224·3	225·6	230·2	239·6	240·0

[1] Not held centrally

ENERGY

CEGB

9. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he will next be meeting the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board; and what subjects he expects to discuss.

48. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the Central Electricity Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Gentleman to the answer given earlier today to the hon. Member for Motherwell, North, (Dr. Reid).

Nuclear Power Stations (Insurance)

14. **Dr. Michael Clark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what provision he anticipates being made to ensure that nuclear power stations have full insurance cover after privatisation.

Mr. Parkinson: There are established arrangements under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 to provide compensation for claims for injury or damage arising from a nuclear incident. These arrangements satisfy our obligations under the relevant international conventions and are in line with the arrangements in force in most other western European countries.

Gas Disconnections

15. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the Gas Consumers Council document entitled "An analysis of Gas Disconnections."

Mr. Peter Morrison: I welcome the Gas Consumers' Council's report on disconnections. The council has found no evidence of a harder attitude on disconnections by British Gas since privatisation, but its report does recommend a number of important improvements to British Gas procedures.

Mr. Barron: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what steps his Department takes to monitor the operation of the voluntary code of practice on gas disconnections; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: The code of practice on gas disconnections is not voluntary; it is required under condition 12 of British Gas authorisation. Under the condition, it is the responsibility of the Gas Consumers' Council and the Director General of Gas Supply to monitor the operation of the code.

Electricity Privatisation

16. **Mr. Rogers:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what organisations he has consulted since the publication of his White Paper on electricity privatisation.

Mr. Parkinson: I am now discussing detailed arrangements with a wide range of parties, including the management, the unions and consumer bodies.

24. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what requirement he has placed upon the Central Electricity Generating Board to ensure that any coal-fired power stations sold by it to other generators maintain the highest standards of pollution control of gas and particulate emission, noise and wind-borne dust.

Mr. Parkinson: It is the responsibility of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution to determine whether and to what extent pollution control equipment is required at such stations. The level of noise generated is a matter for the appropriate local authority.

25. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many organisations have written to him as a result of the publication of his White Paper on electricity privatisation.

Mr. Parkinson: I have received representations from electricity consumers, unions, other interested bodies and nationalised industries and members of the public both before and since the publication of the White Paper.

46. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list his official outside advisers, including City institutions and others, who are being consulted on future plans for electricity privatisation.

Mr. Parkinson: My official outside advisers on electricity privatisation are Kleinwort Benson Limited, Touche Ross and Co., Slaughter and May, Merz and McLellan, and Professor Stephen Littlechild of Birmingham university.

47. **Mr. Darling:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received in connection with the powers of the regulator proposed by him for the electricity supply industry after privatisation.

Mr. Parkinson: I have received a number of representations on the proposed powers of the regulator.

Electricity Charges

17. **Mr. Prescott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met representatives of *(a)* the Confederation of British Industry and *(b)* pensioners' organisations to discuss the proposed 9 per cent. increase in electricity charges; what is his latest estimate of the effects upon (i) the average costs of industry and (ii) the average costs of a pensioner couple living on the minimum state pension and supplementary benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I last met representatives from the CBI on 8 March and a pensioners' organisation on 15 December last year. The effect of the electricity tariff rises this April will be to increase industry's average costs by between one fifth and one eighth of 1 per cent; and to increase the average pensioner couple's household expenditure by about 35p a week.

Uranium

18. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what quantity of unprocessed uranium was purchased from South Africa by British Nuclear Fuels during the last year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: None. British Nuclear Fuels plc does not purchase unprocessed uranium from South Africa or anywhere else.

Electricity Council

19. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next expects to meet the chairman of the Electricity Council, and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of the Electricity Council, Sir Philip Jones, regularly to discuss various matters, including the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Coal Industry (Productivity)

20. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest figures for productivity in the coal mining industry.

Mr. Parkinson: Deep-mined revenue output per man shift was 3·90 tonnes for the week ended 12 March.

33. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the latest figures for productivity in the coal mining industry.

32. **Mr. McLoughlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will give the latest production figures for output per manshift in British Coal; and what were the comparable figures three years ago.

Mr. Parkinson: Deep-mined revenue output per man shift was 3·90 tonnes for the week ended 12 march. The average for 1984-85 was 2·08 tonnes.

26. **Mr. Douglas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the tonnage expected to be produced by deep-mined and opencast operations in Scotland in 1988.

Mr. Parkinson: Output forecasts are a matter for British Coal.

Nirex

21. **Mr. Holt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of Nirex; and what subjects he discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I last met the chairman of UK Nirex on 1 December 1987. We discussed a number of issues.

Energy Efficiency Office

22. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what measures are currently being considered by his Department's Energy Efficiency Office; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My Department's Energy Efficiency Office continues to study a wide range of measures to help in improving efficiency in the use of energy. It is currently consulting with outside bodies about the possible development of schemes designed to recover the EEO's costs. I hope to announce the outcome of this work before the summer recess.

Coal Industry Dispute

23. **Mr. Skinner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what recent representations he has received seeking reconsideration of his decision not to raise with the chairman of British Coal the reinstatement of miners sacked during the 1984-85 coal strike; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: None, apart from those of the hon. Member.

Power Station, Kingsnorth

27. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to receive an application from the Central Electricity Generating Board for a new coal-fired power station at Kingsnorth on the Medway.

Mr. Parkinson: The timing of an application for Kingsnorth, if made, will be a matter for the CEGB.

Windmills

28. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the type of sites viable for giant windmills; and what representations he has received about the extent of visual intrusion consequent upon any projected building of such windmills.

Mr. Parkinson: The types of site considered to be viable for medium and large-scale wind turbine generators are those having medium to high wind speeds, in open terrain and which are located sufficiently far from the nearest habitation.

I have received a small number of representations from members of the public on experimental medium-sized machines currently under test.

An assessment of the environmental implications and public acceptability of renewable energy sources is a key element of my Department's current research and development programme. The programme is also examining constraints on the United Kingdom's total wind energy resource that would be imposed by such environmental factors as national parks, areas designated as being of outstanding natural beauty and urban land.

Electricity Area Board Chairmen

29. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to meet electricity area board chairmen; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

43. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to meet electricity area board chairmen; and what subjects he proposes to discuss.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the area board chairmen from time to time to discuss various matters including the privatisation of the electricity supply industry.

Offshore Oil Licensing

30. **Mr. Irvine:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce the next offshore oil licensing round.

Mr. Peter Morrison: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) on 24 March 1988, at columns *179-80*.

Heat and Power Schemes

31. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his policy regarding public funding of combined heat and power schemes.

Mr. Parkinson: My Department encourages the evaluation of CHP schemes by assisting some feasibility

studies by industry and commerce to establish whether CHP is the most energy efficient and economic option. If these studies show the developer that CHP is economically viable and affordable, then there is no need for public subsidy.

Coal Industry

34. **Mr. Eadie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Coal to discuss the long-term future of the coal industry.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of British Coal at regular intervals to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

Coal Industry (Financial Support)

35. **Mr. Gregory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received on the proposed level of financial support for the coal mining industry in 1988-89 and 1989-90; and if he will make a statement.

39. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received about the level of financial support planned for the coal mining industry in 1988-89 and 1989-90.

Mr. Parkinson: I have noted the representations made in the House about the future level of financial support for the coal mining industry.

British Coal's external financing limit for 1988-89 has been set at £670 million. It is envisaged that this will be financed as follows:

	£ million
Restructuring grant	116·0
Other non-deficit grants	273·5
Net borrowing	280·5
	670·0

The external financing limit for 1989-90 has not yet been agreed.

British Coal Enterprise Ltd.

36. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many jobs have been created by British Coal Enterprise Ltd. since its formation.

Mr. Parkinson: This is a matter for British Coal Enterprise Ltd. and I am asking the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

Renewable Energy Sources

37. **Mr. Matthew Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what representations he has received on the projected expenditure levels of research and development of renewable sources of energy by his Department over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I have received a number of representations in relation to future expenditure levels for research into the renewable sources of energy, the most recent of which have come from Members of this House.

Over £124 million has already been invested by my Department in developing and promoting the renewable technologies and strong support will continue to be provided to ensure their full economic potential is realised. The public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 288, published in January 1988) envisages around £50 million will be spent on research into these technologies over the next three years. Information for subsequent years is not available.

An energy paper setting out the Government's strategy in relation to renewable sources of energy will be published in June.

Nuclear Generation

38. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of the minimum non-fossil fuel generated electricity in the privately owned electricity industry structure which he proposes for England and Wales he envisages will be generated from nuclear stations.

Mr. Parkinson: This will depend on a number of factors, such as relative fuel prices and the development of fuel technologies. But I would expect that in the early years after privatisation the major proportion will come from nuclear power stations.

Hinkley Point C Power Station

40. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to be in a position to announce the starting date for the public inquiry into the Central Electricity Generating Board application to build Hinkley Point C power station.

Mr. Parkinson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 21 March 1988 at columns *21-22*.

CBI (Energy Costs)

41. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he proposes to have any further discussions at an early date with the Confederation of British Industry regarding energy costs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: I discussed electricity prices at a recent meeting with the CBI. I have agreed to speak to the CBI council on 12 May.

British Coal

42. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of British Coal; and what issues were discussed.

Mr. Parkinson: I meet the chairman of British Coal at regular intervals to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

South African Coal

44. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy how many tonnes of South African coal were imported into the United Kingdom in each year since 1980.

45. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the amount of coal mined in South Africa imported into the United Kingdom in each year since 1980.

Mr. Parkinson: The following is the amount of coal imported into the United Kingdom from South Africa for each year since 1980:

Year	Quantity '000 tonnes
1980	66
1981	80
1982	67
1983	58
1984	257
1985	725
1986	312
1987	221

Nuclear Waste

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) who will bear, following the privatisation of the electricity supply industry, the total costs and full responsibility for the safe disposal of nuclear waste;

(2) who will be responsible, following the privatisation of the Central Electricity Generating Board, for the decommissioning of nuclear power stations; and who will bear the cost for the decommissioning.

Mr. Parkinson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Blyth Valley (Mr. Campbell) on 22 March 1988 at column *68*.

Coal (Sulphur Content)

Sir Trevor Skeet: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will tabulate information available to him on the sulphur content of coal used *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in each other European Economic Community country for the purpose of power generation.

Mr. Parkinson: The average sulphur content of United Kingdom power station coal was 1·6 per cent. in 1986-87.

Information on the sulphur content of coal used in other EEC countries, for power generation alone, is not readily available. The following table, however, gives independent estimates of the average sulphur content of coals used for all purposes in each of the member states in 1983.

The average sulphur content of coals used in EEC countries in 1983

Country	Hard coal per cent.	Brown coal per cent.
Belgium	0·9	0·4
Denmark	1·0	—
France	0·9	5·5
Federal Republic of Germany	1·1	0·4
Greece	1·1	0·5
Ireland	1·2	—
Italy	1·0	0·8
Luxembourg	0·8	—
Netherlands	1·0	0·4
Portugal	1·4	2·5
Spain	1·4	5·0
United Kingdom	1·5	—

Source: Laikin, R. E. and others (1987). Energy based emission inventories for modelling cost-effective SO2 and NOX abatement strategies in Europe. Paper presented at the International Workshop on Methodologies for Air Pollutant Emission Inventories, Paris, 29 June-2 July 1987.

Electricity

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the average cost per kilowatt hour of electricity generation from the Central Electricity Generating Board.

Mr. Parkinson: The CEGB annual report for 1986-87 gives a figure of 3·365 p/kWh.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if his Department has received any proposals concerning the possible importation of electricity from Iceland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: No.

National Nuclear Corporation

Mr. Neil Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the National Nuclear Corporation to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Parkinson: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 25 July to 29 July 1988.

Plutonium

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if the plutonium exported to Belgium under the Euratom-UKAEA agreement of 3 May 1968 is currently still in the ownership of Belgonucléaire; if the safeguards provisions agreed to cover the export of this 180 kg consignment still exist; and what knowledge Her Majesty's Government possess regarding the current location of this plutonium;

(2) if 200 kg of plutonium exported under bilateral safeguards to the Federal Republic of Germany, for use in the NUKEM facility in Hanau, covered by an agreement between the UKAEA and Euratom dated 4 August 1969, is still owned and used by NUKEM; if any subsequent exports of safeguarded plutonium have taken place between United Kingdom companies and NUKEM; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson *[holding answer 4 March 1988]:* Deliveries of plutonium under these agreements were made under Euratom safeguards. The current location of the plutonium is a matter for the state concerned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Press Gallery

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will make a statement on the sums received from the Press Gallery in respect of accommodation and other services provided in the House; and when the sums concerned were reviewed.

Mr. Wakeham: No such payment has been received from the Press Gallery. Any review of this arrangement would be a matter for the Services Committee.

Line of Route (Refreshments)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the President of the Council if he will give consideration to making facilities available for refreshments for visitors on the Line of Route in the Palace of Westminster.

Mr. Wakeham: Existing refreshment facilities in the Palace of Westminster are already at full capacity and no

other accommodation suitable for conversion to the use suggested is available. This situation is unlikely to change until after extra catering accommodation becomes available in the New Building. At that time, the Catering Sub-Committee of the Services Committee may wish to give the matter further consideration.

ENVIRONMENT

Departmental Staff

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list by Civil Service grade the number of officials in his Department located outside London; and what proportion they represent of all officials employed by his Department.

Mr. Ridley: The table shows the latest numbers of officials, by grade, in my Department (including PSA) located outside London and the percentage which those numbers represent of my total staff.

Grade	*Number*	*Per cent.*
3	9	0·03
4	12	0·04
5	35	0·12
6	128	0·40
7	486	1·50
8[1] (Senior Executive Officer)	1,262	3·90
9[1] (Higher Executive Officer)	2,049	6·33
10[1] (Executive Officer)	3,703	11·45
11[1] (Administrative Officer)	2,234	6·91
12[1] (Administrative Assistant)	1,960	6·06
Industrial staff	7,697	23·80

[1] Civil Service grades 3 to 7 are unified. In the non-industrial grades below grade 7 different occupational groups exist; for convenience these have been grouped in bands numbered 8 to 12 which are broadly equivalent to the general grades shown in parentheses.

Tree Preservation Orders

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether, following the loss of trees through the hurricane, he has any plans to review tree preservation orders in the south of England.

Mr. Moynihan: Reviewing, and where appropriate varying, individual tree preservation orders is the responsibility of the local planning authority. The Department is undertaking a wide-ranging review of tree preservation legislation and procedures, and this will take into account the implications of the losses of trees in last autumn's storm. In addition, as I said in the Adjournment debate on March 22, our intention is to take prompt action to remedy the specific problem that now exists following the judgment of the Court of Appeal in the case of Bell *v.* Canterbury city council.

Warrington-Runcorn New Town

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give for each year since the inception of Warrington-Runcorn new town the square footage of factory space *(a)* allocated and *(b)* filled; and if he will give an estimate of the number of jobs created and safeguarded in so doing.

Mrs. Roe: Since 1981, when the Warrington and Runcorn development corporation was formed, the annual completions, and occupations of factory space, and the numbers of industrial jobs resulting are as follows:

	Factory floor space (sq ft)		
	completed	*occupied*	*Jobs created*
1981-82	683,200	519,865	1,294
1982-83	585,025	525,050	852
1983-84	46,650	679,900	1,192
1984-85	390,570	941,080	1,521
1985-86	266,000	859,090	1,050
1986-87	527,630	679,440	1,186
1987-88	542,680	918,440	1,741

Note 1. Completed factory floor space relates to the Corporation's advance factory units and to leasehold and freehold disposals of land for private development.
Note 2. Occupied factory floor space includes re-lets and stock-in-hand from previous years.
Note 3. The figures for jobs created relate to industrial development as a whole and include an element of jobs "safeguarded"; but disaggregated figures are not readily available.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the cost of his Department's research project on tenants' views on the future of certain estates in Nottingham.

Mr. Ridley: My Department is not carrying out any research on the future of any housing estates in Nottingham. A small sample of tenants in the city are, however, along with others in other places, being asked to identify the factors which are important in their choice of landlord. The cost of the interviews in Nottingham is approximately £1,550.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those local authorities which have informed his Department during the last six months of the possible transfer of their housing stock (i) to a newly created company, (ii) to a housing association, (iii) to a friendly society or (iv) to a private trust; which local authorities have informed his Department that they firmly intend to make such transfers of their stock; and which local authorities have so far submitted outline or detailed proposals of this kind for approval by his Department.

Mrs. Roe: A number of authorities have contacted the Department over the past six months to discuss the possible transfer of their council housing to other bodies. With the two exceptions stated later, those discussions have been informal. If a local authority decides that it wishes to transfer its housing, it will need to consult tenants fully before applying to the Secretary of State for consent to the transfer. No authority has yet submitted an application.

The Department has received outline proposals from Bournemouth borough council and Rochford district council.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury, *Official Report*, 20 January, columns *749-52*, how many additional units of *(a)* ordinary housing accommodation, provided by local authorities by refurbishing their empty dwellings, *(b)* hostel accommodation, provided by local authorities by buying and converting empty private dwellings, *(c)* hostel accommodition, provided by housing associations by buying and converting empty private dwellings and *(d)* other forms of accommodation are expected to be provided in *(a)* Greater London, *(b)* the south-east, and *(c)* the south-west giving this information: (i) for each of

these regions and (ii) for each local authority in these regions, which has received an additional housing capital allocation.

Mrs. Roe: The information requested, based on estimates by the authorities concerned, is given in the following table:

Local Authority	*(a) Local authority dwellings refurbished*	*(b) Hostel places provided by local authorities*	*(c) Hostel places provided by housing associations*	*(d) Other dwellings/ places provided*
Brent	37	—	—	15
Camden	51	67	—	—
Greenwich	52	19	—	15
Hackney	152	—	—	—
Hammersmith	30	—	—	32
Haringey	107	—	—	30
Islington	115	16	—	—
Lambeth	—	27	—	56
Lewisham	—	88	—	—
Newham	34	103	—	4
Tower Hamlets	110	—	—	10
Wandsworth	22	—	—	10
Westminster	—	50	—	—
Greater London	710	370	—	172
Brighton	—	—	—	6
Canterbury	—	12	—	6
Crawley	—	14	—	—
Dover	—	6	—	—
Gillingham	—	14	—	—
Gravesham	—	—	7	—
Guildford	—	6	—	—
Hastings	8	—	—	2
Lewes	—	3	—	—
Medina	—	—	—	8
Newbury	—	6	—	—
New Forest	—	20	—	—
Reading	1	—	—	12
Slough	—	8	—	—
South Oxfordshire	—	—	—	2
Wealden	—	—	—	5
Woking	—	—	—	3
South East	9	89	7	44
Bath	—	6	—	—
Bristol	40	—	—	—
Isles of Scilly	—	—	—	2
Kennet	—	—	—	8
North Dorset	—	7	—	—
Poole	—	8	—	—
Purbeck	—	9	—	—
South Somerset	—	6	—	—
Weymouth and Portland	—	10	—	—
South West	40	46	—	10

Policies (Market Research)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what market research on policies has been funded by his Department before such policies have been agreed to by the House.

Mr. Ridley: The Department carries out no market research. Research is carried out to assist in the development and evaluation of policies but not to obtain information for the purpose of "marketing" them.

Crown Premises (Valuation)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1), pursuant to his answer of 14 March, *Official Report*, column 461, why the Property Services Agency was not felt to be capable of establishing the true commercial rent for the Crown premises at Richmond yard;

(2) whether the contract to value the Crown premises at Richmond yard was subject to tender or was a single source contract.

(3) how much money is set aside by the London region of the Property Services Agency for funding private sector valuations of Crown premises.

(4) what are the criteria for deciding whether or not to have a private sector valuation of Crown premises.

Mr. Chope: It is the Government's policy that Departments should be charged a full market rent for the accommodation they occupy. As the first new freehold office to have been built in Whitehall for many years, it

was especially important to obtain an entirely independent assessment of the market rental value of Richmond house to ensure that the full costs of occupation were borne by the Department concerned.

The normal procedures for seeking independent professional advice were followed by the Property Services Agency in this case, taking into account the known experience and suitability of consultancy firms for the particular task. A tender was not considered appropriate in this case, the fees being settled by negotiation with the selected firm in accordance with commercial practice.

It is the Government's policy that Departments should place work in the private sector wherever appropriate and a substantial proportion of the Property Services Agency's work is undertaken by private consultants. The agency's London region make provision in their annual estimates for such work in the estates field, including valuations. Specific requirements for the latter are not always known at estimates time, and no specific sum is set aside in the estimates for this latter purpose.

Water

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what will be the procedure for the payment for water consumed through an underground leak during the trial period of metering; and how the sewerage return rate will be calculated.

Mr. Colin Moynihan: As with existing metered supplies, customers in the trial areas will be charged on the basis of the amount of water which passes through the meter, including any water that leaks from supply pipes on the customer's side of the meter. However, provided that there has been no obvious negligence or deliberate abuse by the customer, most water undertakers will adjust abnormally high metered consumption due to a leak back to a typical figure for measured consumption, on condition that the customer repairs the leak where it is the legal responsibility of the customer. This would apply both to the measured water supply charge and to the sewerage charge, which will be assesed on the usual fixed percentage of clean water supplied. The water industry is considering issuing a code of practice which would make a clear statement about the adjustment of bills in cases of leakage.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish the code of practice for the water metering trial areas; and when the contractors for the Isle of Wight installation will be announced.

Mr. Moynihan: We do not intend to publish a code of practice for the water metering trial areas. Subject to the enactment of the Public Utility Transfers and Water Charges Bill, each metering trial scheme will have to be approved under clause 4 by my right hon. Friend the Secretry of State, who may make his approval subject to conditions. Water undertakers are already required to make such schemes available to the public. In addition, schedule 1 to the Bill and regulations to be made under clause 5, will form a water metering code, which will apply to metering generally, as well as to the trials. The choice and timing of appointment of contractors to install meters during the course of the proposed trial on the Isle of Wight is a matter for Southern Water, although my right hon. Friend will need to be satisfied that all undertakers involved in the trials have made satisfactory arrangements to ensure that contractors who need to enter people's homes to carry out installation work are properly vetted.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many households have had their water supplies disconnected in each year between 1982-83 and 1987-88.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The number of households disconnected by water authorities in England and Wales was as follows:

	Houses
1982-83	1,171
1983-84	2,685
1984-85	2,148
1985-86	4,562
1986-87	7,400

Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what publicity has been produced by his Department to announce the new financial arrangements for customers of water authorities in the light of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* I understand that, as part of the publicity arrangements for the social security reforms, the Department of Health and Social Security is sending a leaflet explaining income support to all existing supplementary benefit claimants. This leaflet includes advice on paying water charges. Other explanatory leaflets available to the general public also include advice on the new benefit provisions.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what arrangements he has made with local authority environmental health officers for the monitoring of water disconnections to domestic users by *(a)* the water authorities and *(b)* the private water companies after 11 April; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what arrangements he has made with the private water companies for them to publicise to consumers the new financial arrangements that will be in force on 11 April;

(3) what arrangements he has made with the private water companies about monitoring the effects of the new financial arrangements for water supplies after the enforcement of the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* None. Disconnections are the responsibility of individual water undertakers. The water industry operates a strict code of practice on disconnections which is explained in its leaflet "Water Services Bills—How to get help if you can't pay your bill". It advises people who have difficulty paying their water charges to get in touch with their water supplier. It also explains that advice can be obtained from the citizens advice bureau or consumer advice bureau, and that people on supplementary benefit should contact their local social security office. These arrangements have worked well in the past, and I am confident that they will continue to do so.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans his Department has to monitor the disconnections of water supply to domestic users after 11 April.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Information on the number of disconnections for non-payment is collected annually by the Department from each water authority. We have no plans to change this arrangement.

Mr. Blair: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of water disconnections that occurred for each of the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Figures are collected by the Department on an annual, not a monthly, basis.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many cases have been reported in the past 12 months in the Houghton and Washington area of water containing nitrate in excess of the European Economic Community recommended levels.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* None.

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of legislation associated with European Community directives on raw and drinking waters when water authorities are privatised.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State for the Environment and for Wales will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of legislation associated with EC directives on drinking water quality when water authorities are privatised. The National Rivers Authority will be responsible for monitoring to assess compliance with EC directives on raw water quality. Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that EC requirements are met will, however, continue to lie with Her Majesty's Government.

Buildings (Logbooks)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has any plans to bring forward proposals for the introduction of a system of logbooks for buildings, with particular reference to their maintenance record and potential hazards; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received from Mr. Chris March of Salford university and Mr. Steve Carwell of Leeds polytechnic about their proposals for a system of logbooks in relation to buildings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: I have received no representations from Mr. March and Mr. Curwell relating to logbooks for buildings, but I am aware of their study into hazardous building materials. While I am naturally concerned that materials used in the construction of buildings should not have a deleterious effect on the health of users and occupiers, I am not convinced that the introduction of a system of logbooks would be a practical way of dealing with the problem. A study of "Health and the Building Regulations" was undertaken as part of a current review of the regulations, and further work relating to the health effects of indoor pollution is included in my Department's research programme. Some action has already been taken to deal with a number of specific hazards including lead and asbestos.

Planning Appeals

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment on how many occasions in each of the years since 1979 he has overruled his inspector's advice on planning appeals in *(a)* Suffolk county and *(b)* Waveney district.

Mr. Waldegrave: Between 1 January 1984, the earliest date for which such information is available, and 31 December 1987, there was only one planning appeal from Suffolk in which the Secretary of State's decision was contrary to the inspector's recommendation, following a public inquiry. That appeal did not come from Waveney.

Unleaded Petrol

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimates he has of the approximate percentage of petrol stations in each region of the United Kingdom where unleaded petrol is currently available; and what information he has on comparable national figures in respect of the other principal countries of western Europe.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Figures provided by the United Kingdom Petroleum Industry Association on the percentages of petrol stations in the United Kingdom which sell unleaded petrol are as follows:

	Per cent.
England and Wales	3·7
Scotland	3·8
Northern Ireland	1·5

Percentage figures are not available on a regional basis but at 15 February the numbers of stations were:

	Per cent.
Wales	27
Scotland	59
Northern Ireland	14
England:	
East Midlands	42
Eastern	102
Greater London	98
North West	70
Northern Region	13
South East	114
South West	67
West Midlands	53
Yorkshire and Humberside	54

The total number is growing rapidly.

Other countries of western Europe fall into one of two categories: either unleaded petrol is available at virtually all retail outlets, or, as in the United Kingdom, it is in the process of becoming more widely available. The Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland fall into the former category, France and Italy into the latter. For these two countries, the approximate percentages of retail outlets selling unleaded petrol are:

	Per cent.
France	1·6
Italy	2·5

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide information available to

him on the regional breakdown of the numbers of unleaded petrol outlets; what studies his Department has either commissioned or undertaken into the projected growth path of unleaded petrol; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: On the first part of his question, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill) today.

Figures provided by the United Kingdom Petroleum Industry Association show that in mid-February there were 715 stations in the United Kingdom selling unleaded petrol. The number of outlets is expected to increase rapidly following the Budget. It has already increased to 800 and by the end of 1988 there are expected to be over 2,000.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names and professional designations of the members of the Unleaded Petrol Group, indicating which interest groups they represent respectively.

Mr. Moynihan: I chair the group. The non-governmental organisations represented, with one name for each, are:

Non-governmental Organisations	*Names*	*Professional Designations*
Automobile Association	Mr. M. W. R. Frost	Head of Consumer and Current Affairs
Association of Fleet Car Operators	Mr. J. J. Hughes	National Secretary
Association of United UK Oil Independents	Mr. R. Burge	Deputy Chairman
British Tourist Authority	Mr. C. D. Barnard	Assistant Director: Policy
British Motorcycle Federation	Mr. T. Blower	Consultant to Government Relations Committee
British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association	Mr. C. Sherlock	Operations Manager
Campaign for Lead-Free Air (CLEAR)	Dr. R. Russell-Jones	Chairman
CLEAR Charitable Trust	Mr. D. Wilson	Organisation Chairman
Consumers Association	Mr. D. Prentice	Campaigns Manager
Federation of Petroleum Suppliers	Mr. E. J. Rowson	Executive Secretary
Highland & Island Development Board	Mr. R. D. Cramond	Deputy Chairman
Mid-Wales Development Board	Mr. P. Pettigrew	Director of Economic Development
Motor Agents Association/Petrol Retailers Association	Mr. C. H. Ainsley	Deputy Director and Secretary
Motorcycle Association	Mr. T. Waterer	Technical Officer
Royal Automobile Club	Mr. J. Smeaton	Public Policy Manager
Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT)	Mr. B. K. Saunders	Senior Technical Manager
UK Petroleum Industry Association (UKPIA)	Dr. I. Berwick	Director General

The Departments of Energy, of Trade and Industry and of Transport, HM Customs and Excise and the Scottish Development Department are represented at official level. The United Kingdom national committee for the European Year of the Environment was represented during the year.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what kind of information about those companies on the Crown Suppliers' approved list of suppliers he intends to release to commercial bidders for the privatised Crown Suppliers' operations; which companies are involved; whether he will seek their permission to release the information; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The Government do not intend to disclose to third parties information provided to them in confidence without the agreement of the parties concerned.

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to announce a financial institution to advise on privatising the Crown Suppliers.

Mr. Chope: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 25 March to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Chelmsford (Mr. Burns).

Rate Precepts

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a list of the rate precepts in the shire counties for 1988-89; and if he will indicate how much is given to each county under each council's spending programme for the year expressed as an amount per person in each county; how much would be given to each county as an amount per person if the councils spent at their GRE assessment levels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The information requested is as follows:

1988-89 precepts and block grant per head at budget and for spending at GRE

Shire counties	*Precept*	*Block grant per head at budget*	*Block grant per head at GRE*
	Pence	*£*	*£*
Avon	246·50	106·14	122·77
Bedfordshire	246·40	64·71	92·56
Berkshire	193·60	34·70	22·27
Buckinghamshire	227·70	43·62	63·72
Cambridgeshire	216·00	98·47	104·23
Cheshire	232·00	119·89	129·96
Cleveland	282·00	188·79	215·67
Cornwall	207·70	211·78	209·67
Cumbria	260·00	198·34	206·75
Derbyshire	297·50	154·90	171·55
Devon	209·75	166·40	164·01
Dorset	203·00	98·35	83·00
Durham	246·00	229·44	230·91
East Sussex	217·10	74·17	68·50
Essex	235·00	56·97	71·17
Gloucestershire	217·30	138·56	140·95
Hampshire	200·30	101·63	94·46
Hereford and Worcester	185·00	143·75	131·42
Hertfordshire	240·40	—	27·88
Humberside	261·00	212·89	225·00
Isle of Wight	227·23	177·37	181·37
Kent	192·00	156·31	145·63
Lancashire	234·00	239·35	241·93
Leicestershire	221·20	164·14	167·11

Shire counties	Precept	Block grant per head at budget	Block grant per head at GRE
	Pence	£	£
Lincolnshire	204·00	201·41	198·58
Norfolk	190·90	141·53	133·03
Northamptonshire	229·00	137·61	147·20
Northumberland[1]	230·10	189·02	194·51
North Yorkshire	217·00	174·15	174·83
Nottinghamshire	253·00	162·78	175·02
Oxfordshire	238·60	14·77	39·27
Shropshire	200·00	208·11	204·56
Somerset	224·00	160·27	163·90
Staffordshire	215·00	168·66	169·30
Suffolk	204·00	125·76	121·58
Surrey	202·70	17·06	—
Warwickshire	227·10	95·89	105·86
West Sussex	192·00	76·70	62·83
Wiltshire	219·30	159·22	164·45

[1] Northumberland precept excludes Northumbria Police Authority precept of 14·40p.

Rating Reform

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether students attending universities in Great Britain whose parents are resident in Northern Ireland will be required to pay the poll tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: All full-time students attending universities in Great Britain will be required to pay 20 per cent. of the personal community charge for the area in which they have their term-time address.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what, assuming the full replacement of rates by the community charge and the implementation of the proposals in the Local Government Finance Bill for non-domestic rates and the grant system, in 1988-89 *(a)* for England, *(b)* for each class of local authority and *(c)* for each local authority, showing precepting authorities separately, the following items in pounds per adult would be (i) the community charge without safety net, (ii) the safety net, (iii) needs grant, and (iv) redistributed non-domestic rate revenue, showing also the corresponding 1988-89 domestic rate poundage and, in pounds per adult, the average rate bill and local authority expenditure.

Mr. Ridley: I do not have information which is sufficiently complete upon which to make these estimates. I will publish estimates in due course. The hon. Member is, of course, aware that we do not propose to allocate either revenue support grant or non-domestic rates separately to precepting authorities.

District General Hospital (Norwich)

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when a public inquiry will be held into the plans to site the second district general hospital for Norwich at Colney; and when notice was first given of the inquiry.

Mr. Waldegrave: The non-statutory public inquiry into the East Anglian regional health authority's proposals will begin on 12 April 1988. Written notice of the inquiry was first given to the regional health authority and to the South Norfolk district council on 3 March, in keeping with the six-week minimum notice period applicable to statutory inquiries under the Town and Country Planning Acts. Copies of statements and documents have been available for public inspection at the district council offices since September 1987.

New Hospitals

Mr. Patrick Thompson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many public inquiries have been held into the siting of new hospitals since 1 April 1983 in the United Kingdom; and if he will state the amount of notice given in each case.

Mr. Waldegrave: The information is not immediately available. I will write to my hon. Friend shortly.

Superglass Insulation Ltd.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what part was played by the Association for the Conservation of Energy in drawing up the list of approved materials for the home insulation grant scheme;

(2) what representations were made to his Department to include products of the Superglass Insulation Company of Clydebank and Stirling in the list of approved materials for the home insulations grant scheme;

(3) if any products of the Superglass Insulation Company in Clydebank and Stirling are included in the list of approved materials for the home insulation grant scheme;

(4) if the Scottish Development Agency made representations to his Department regarding the inclusion of Superglass insulation board in the list of approved materials for the home insulation grants scheme.

Mrs. Roe: Superglass Insulation Ltd. have only sought the inclusion of one product in the schedule of approved materials under the homes insulation scheme, but as this did not achieve BSI registration until 1 January 1988, it could not be included in the new scheme made by Ministers in mid-December. No representations were received from the Scottish Development Agency, or anyone else, about including this company's products in the current list. The Association for the Conservation of Energy plays no part in drawing up the schedule.

Waste Disposal

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many waste disposal sites there are in the United Kingdom; and how many were the cause of methane gas explosions during the last 12 months.

Mr. Moynihan: There are approximately 5,110 waste disposal facilities in the United Kingdom, of which some 4,156 are landfill sites. Of these, some 2,100 are capable of generating methane. Information on incidents associated with methane gas from landfill sites is not collected centrally. However, the Department is aware of three explosions in the last 12 months associated with this phenomenon.

Stockport

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how the new data to calculate traffic flow for Stockport were compiled; why this affected the grant related expenditure calculations; why the formula was implemented in the current financial year; and why there was a consequent loss of grant for Stockport.

Mr. Chope: In assessing the relative need of authorities to spend on highways maintenance account is taken of the length of roads for which an authority is responsible, and relative road usage particularly by heavy goods vehicles. Estimates of road usage are produced by the Department of Transport based on measured flows at selected sites within each local authority area. The Department of Transport has recently changed the method of estimating road usage and in particular now takes account of flow estimates for all appropriate sections of road rather than only a sample of measuring sites. In the 1988-89 rate support grant settlement, we included these improved estimates of road usage in the highways maintenance GRE. Authorities that were thereby assessed to have higher relative road usage received more grant, whereas authorities such as Stockport that were assessed as having lower relative road usage received less grant.

Defective Houses (Grants)

Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he will ensure that the following applications, identified by their reference number and applicant's surname, for grant towards the repair of defective Cornish unit style former council houses, submitted to his Bristol office on 25 February, and still awaiting notice of determination, receive such determination not later than Friday 25 March, so that mortgages to finance the non-grant covered repair cost may be obtained before the law as to tax allowance on mortgages alters on 5 April: P.R.C.1 (Greenslade), P.R.C.3 (Sydenham), P.R.C.6 (Pickering), P.R.C.7 (Cotterell), P.R.C.8 (Rawding), P.R.C.9 (Maglov), P.R.C.11 (Harvey), P.R.C.12 (Cross), P.R.C.13 (Smith), P.R.C.14 (Harvey), P.R.C.17 (Morgan), P.R.C.22 (Bullivant), P.R.C.23 (Mathias), P.R.C.24 (Parsons), P.R.C.25 (Gibbons) and P.R.C.26 (Dakin); and if he will also ensure that the application P.R.C.28 by Mr. Smith on 8 March is determined by 25 March;

(2) if he will make it his policy to give notification of the acceptability of grant applications for repair of defective Cornish unit former council houses, submitted to his Bristol office on 25 February and 8 March, so that applicants are able to obtain mortgages for the rest of the repair cost before the taxation provisions applicable to such mortgages alter adversely on 5 April.

Mrs. Roe: All applications for higher expenditure limits under the housing defects legislation are dealt with as quickly as possible, and preferential treatment cannot be given to individual cases. However, irrespective of whether such decisions have been given, owners may be able to arrange loans to cover the possible extent of costs that they may need to bear themselves, and should seek their own professional advice on this.

Sports and Leisure Facilities

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to his reply of 20 January, *Official Report*, column 960, regarding the introduction of competition into the management of local authority sports and leisure facilities, he is now able to make a statement on the responses to the relevant consultation paper; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* We have yet to complete our detailed consideration of the more than 350 responses to consultation. If we do decide to apply the competition provisions of part I of the Local Government Bill to the management of sport and leisure facilities, we shall lay an order to that effect after the Bill becomes law. The nature and timing of the order-making procedure (including the necessary consultation which would have to be undertaken on the terms of the Order), would preclude the implementation of compulsory competition for the management of sport and leisure facilities in April 1989. If we do go ahead, some delay beyond that date is inevitable. My right hon. Friend will make a statement about implementation for the activities listed in the Bill shortly.

Water Authorities (Billing Lists)

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to require water authorities to have the approval of his Department before permitting the use of their billing lists by direct mail services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* No.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has of the proceeds of sale of mental hospital sites in Northern Ireland in each of the next seven years.

Dr. Mawhinney: There are no plans to close any of the major psychiatric or mental handicap hospitals in Northern Ireland in the foreseeable future. As a result, the disposal of property will depend on whether it is possible to rationalise services on the existing sites in order to free specific areas for sale. Accurate estimates of the extent of such sales cannot therefore be made at this stage.

Homosexuality (Inquiry)

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information was available to his Department on previous investigations carried out into allegations of homosexuality amongst prominent persons by the chair of the inquiry into children's homes and hostels, Sir George Terry, as chief constable of the Sussex police.

Mr. Stanley: A copy of the complete report on the investigations undertaken by Sir George Terry was received by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Patient Treatment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what is his policy towards National Health Service patients from areas of the United Kingdom where waiting lists are above the national average being offered treatment in Northern Ireland;

(2) whether any National Health Service districts in Northern Ireland are making available their excess capacity to National Health Service districts in other parts of the National Health Service; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: The services provided by the health and personal social services in Northern Ireland are available to all residents of the United Kingdom. However, for reasons of geography it is unlikely to be practical or cost-effective to reduce waiting lists by transporting patients from the mainland for treatment. In addition, the planned rationalisation of acute services in Northern Ireland means that there will be little scope to absorb any significant additional work load from outside the Province.

Private Health Care

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his policy towards the size of the private health care sector in Northern Ireland relative to that in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Government welcome the contribution at present being made by the private health care sector and would be happy to see further co-operation between the private and public sectors in the provision of health care in the Province.

Nurse Recruitment and Training

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if there are any plans for the National Health Service in Northern Ireland to recruit and train nursing staff for other parts of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Needham: The Department of Health and Social Services (Northern Ireland) wrote to all health authorities in Great Britain in May 1987 drawing attention to Northern Ireland's capacity to recruit and train a range of staff, including nurses, for other parts of the United Kingdom. Three regional health authorities subsequently sought assistance to recruit Northern Ireland school leavers into their nurse training programmes. The Northern Ireland National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting has agreed to circulate recruitment advertising material on their behalf and to draw attention to the job opportunities in these regions during school visitation programmes. No health authority has yet asked the Northern Ireland Health and Personal Social Services to recruit and train nursing or any other staff on its behalf.

Local Authority Members (Oaths)

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his current policy towards the introduction of an oath for local authority members; when he expects to bring forward legislative proposals for such an oath; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: The Government are considering the introduction of a written declaration abjuring support for terrorist violence, as a condition of election to district councils in Northern Ireland. No final decision has yet been reached.

Hayshed Bugging

Mr. Tam Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what legal authority a bug was placed in the hayshed at Ballymeeny Road North in November 1982, prior to the death of Michael Tighe.

Mr. Tom King *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given him on 25 March 1988, at column *241*.

Homelessness

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement detailing the Government's intentions on funding in 1989-90 for the Housing Executive to fulfil its proposed new responsibilities to the homeless in Northern Ireland, indicating how much of such funding will be additional and indicating the calculations and considerations involved in arriving at the Government's decision.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The resources currently devoted by the health and social services boards to helping homeless people would be transferred to the Housing Executive if the proposal that it should take over responsibility for homelessness is accepted by Parliament.

Future bids by the Housing Executive for additional funding to meet the needs of the homeless would be assessed within the framework of public expenditure surveys.

It is estimated, taking into account the current expenditure of the health and social services boards that additional expenditure of about £300,000 per annum might be required initially.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Marine Fish Farming

Mr. Canavan: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to promote the development of marine fish farming; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: Assistance for the development of marine fish farming is already available from a number of Government sources and from the European Community. In addition, the R and D effort of the Fisheries Departments involves work on species suitable for cultivation in sea water.

Peanuts

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received seeking regulations to prevent pet shops selling contaminated peanuts for human consumption, particularly by children.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I have received two representations on this subject.

As I said in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Butler) on 17 February, at column 677, it should be self-evident to the public that feed sold in pet shops was not intended for human consumption.

Sheep Exports (Restrictions)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what restrictions were placed upon sheep moved between 25 April and 20 June 1986 from the designated areas of Cumbria to Staffordshire for further export to *(a)* EEC countries and *(b)* other third countries.

Mr. Donald Thompson: None. There was no designated area in Cumbria before 20 June 1986.

Fishing Fleet

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the present restrictions on non-pressure stock licences, in particular as they affect the Lowestoft fishing fleet.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* These restrictions were introduced last August on a holding basis to ensure that United Kingdom quotas are preserved for the United Kingdom fishing industry. I am continuing to keep the restrictions under close review.

Cod

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the current evidence of cod stocks in the North sea.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* Taking account of scientific evidence including that on the strength of the 1985 year class on which the North sea cod stock will be heavily dependent in 1988, the total allowable catch for the stock in 1988 has been set at 160,000 tonnes. The annual and international process of obtaining and analysing scientific evidence should be completed when the Advisory Committee for Fisheries Management meets from 16 to 26 May 1988 and will provide the basis on which considerations would be made by the European Community in cnsultation with Norway of revisions, if any, to the courrent level of TACs.

Irradiated Food

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is yet in a position to give details of the proposed legislation to ensure that no irradiated food is made available for sale to the consumer in the United Kingdom without the fact being clearly labelled; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Gloucestershire West (Mr. Marland) on 24 March at c. *207*.

CIVIL SERVICE

Agencies

76. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what representations he has received as to possible agencies to be set up in accordance with the proposals in "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps" in addition to the first 12 announced by the Prime Minister in February.

Mr. Luce None. The project manager is considering a number of suggestions from officials in Departments which he will put to me in due course.

Reform (Public Expenditure)

78. **Mr. Thurnham:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what is his estimate of the effect on public expenditure of implementing the recommendations of the efficiency unit report, "Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps."

Mr. Luce The Government strategy on public expenditure remains unchanged, but we are always seeking ways of achieving better value for money.

Briefing Sessions

79. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister for the Civil Service what is his policy towards the provision of briefing sessions by his Department for hon. Members.

Mr. Luce I attach great importance to the provision of briefing for hon. Members on all sides of the House on the work of the Civil Service and current developments in government. In 1986 and 1987, three briefings were given on management reforms in government and on the work of the Management and Personnel Office. Earlier this month the Civil Service college organised two briefing seminars on the work of the Civil Service for hon. Members who first entered the House at the beginning of this Parliament.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Job Decentralisation

80. **Mr. Flynn:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what new proposals he has to decentralise Civil Service jobs from the south-east of England to Wales and Scotland.

Mr. Brooke: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my reply of 18 January to the hon. Member for East Kilbride (Mr. Ingram) at column *475-6*.

Income Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what reduction in projected tax receipts for 1988-89 would result from reducing the rate of income tax to 40 per cent. for those at present paying tax at a highest marginal rate of *(a)* 60 per cent., *(b)* 55 per cent. and *(c)* 50 per cent. and *(d)* 45 per cent., assuming the 40 per cent. tax rate applied on all taxable income above £18,701.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The table shows the reduction in income tax liabilities in a full year at 1988-89 levels of income resulting from the abolition of tax rates higher than 40 per cent. for taxpayers at each of the higher marginal rates. The calculations assume that the 1987-88 income tax regime is indexed to 1988-89 levels according to the statutory formula before the higher tax rates are reduced to 40 per cent.

Reductions in income tax liabilities by marginal rate:

Marginal rate per cent	*Tax reduction £ million*
45	40
50	150
55	180
60	1,710
Total	2,080

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of what a 1p, 2p, 3p, 4p, 5p, 6p and 7p cut in the standard rate of income tax would represent as a percentage of gross earnings before tax for (i) a married man and (ii) a single man on *(a)* 75 per cent., *(b)* 80 per cent., *(c)* 90 per cent., *(d)* 100 per cent., *(e)*

125 per cent., *(f)* 150 per cent., *(g)* 175 per cent. and *(h)* 200 per cent. of national average earnings, assuming that his earnings are his only source of income.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 14 March 1988]*: The information is in the table.

The calculations assume that the man's earnings are his only source of income. Average earnings are those for men in all occupations paid at adult rates who work a full week and whose pay is unaffected by absence. The level of earnings in 1988-89 is a projection based on the assumptions given to the Government Actuary for reviewing national insurance contributions in paragraph 3.02 of the Autumn Statement 1987. The single person's allowance, married man's allowance, basic rate limit and rates of tax for 1988-89 are those announced in the Budget on March 15.

Increase in income after tax as a percentage of gross earnings for 1988-89

Reduction in basic rate of income tax pence	*Gross earnings as a percentage of average earnings* 75	80	90	100	125	150	175	200
	Single man							
1	0·7	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·9	0·9	0·8
2	1·4	1·5	1·5	1·6	1·7	1·7	1·7	1·5
3	2·2	2·2	2·3	2·4	2·5	2·6	2·6	2·3
4	2·9	3·0	3·1	3·2	3·3	3·4	3·5	3·0
5	3·6	3·7	3·9	4·0	4·2	4·3	4·3	3·8
6	4·4	4·5	4·6	4·8	5·0	5·2	5·2	4·5
7	5·1	5·2	5·4	5·6	5·8	6·0	6·1	5·3
	Married man							
1	0·6	0·6	0·6	0·7	0·7	0·8	0·8	0·8
2	1·1	1·2	1·3	1·4	1·5	1·6	1·6	1·5
3	1·7	1·8	1·9	2·0	2·2	2·4	2·4	2·3
4	2·3	2·4	2·6	2·7	3·0	3·1	3·3	3·0
5	2·8	3·0	3·2	3·4	3·7	3·9	4·1	3·8
6	3·4	3·6	3·8	4·1	4·5	4·7	4·9	4·5
7	4·0	4·2	4·5	4·7	5·2	5·5	5·7	5·3

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of the income of a married man with two children on average earnings was taken in direct taxation in 1979; and what is his estimate for October.

Mr. Norman Lamont: A married man on average earnings with two children under the age of 11 paid 14·4 per cent. of his income in tax (net of child benefit) in 1978-79; under the proposed regime for 1988-89 he will pay 11·0 per cent. Average earnings are those for men in all occupations paid at adult rates who work a full week and whose pay is unaffected by absence. The level of earnings for 1988-89 (£244·70 per week) is a projection in accordance with the assumptions given to the Government Actuary for reviewing national insurance contributions in paragraph 3.02 of the Autumn Statement 1987. The estimate for 1988-89 is therefore provisional.

Betting Duty

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount of betting duty collected on-course and off-course in each of the four districts in Northern Ireland in each of the years ended 31 March 1985, 31 March 1986, 31 March 1987, and from 1 April 1987 to date.

Mr. Lilley: No separate figures are kept of the amounts of betting duty collected in Northern Ireland. The on-course betting duty was abolished with effect from 29 March 1987.

Tax Rates and Work Incentives

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the cost to the Treasury of the report by Professor C. V. Brown of Stirling University on tax rates and work incentives commissioned by his Department.

Mr. Norman Lamont: This study was initiated in 1978 and consisted of a survey of households followed by analysis of the data and econometric modelling by the University of Stirling.

The survey work was carried out by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys and cost some £400,000. The data—with full documentation—have been placed in the ESRC data archive and are available to other researchers.

The analytical work at Stirling cost some £200,000 and was funded by the Treasury. Twenty two technical working papers have been published. The report is in the Library of the House.

Interest Rates

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what policy objectives, besides the control of inflation, influence the determination of United Kingdom interest rates.

Mr. Lilley: As the Chancellor made clear in his Budget speech, short-term interest rates remain the essential instrument of monetary policy, and, within a continuous and comprehensive assessment of monetary conditions, they are set at the level necessary to ensure downward pressure on inflation in the framework of the MTFS.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average pound/deutschmark exchange rate affecting deutschmark purchases by the United Kingdom monetary authorities over the past 12 months.

Mr. Lilley: It is the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on market tactics or reveal details of the asset or currency composition of the reserves.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial incentives there are for the use of liquefied petroleum gas in cars; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Liquefied petroleum gas, when used as fuel for a road vehicle, bears excise duty at half the leaded petrol rate per liquid litre. This gives it a substantial fiscal advantage over petrol.

Take-home Pay

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much in real terms he expects take-home pay for a married man with two children on average earnings to have risen between 1978-79 and 1988-89.

Mr. Norman Lamont: I expect that his real take home pay will have risen by 27½ per cent. between 1978-79 and 1988-89.

PLO (Military Equipment Sales)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any current investigations are being undertaken by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise into possible sales of British military equipment to the Palestine Liberation Organisation; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: Customs are investigating a number of companies suspected of illegally exporting military equipment to the middle east but the investigations are not centred on any particular organisation in that area.

Debt Interest

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for each year since 1978 the general Government gross debt interest in cash and real terms and for the years 1988-89 to 1990-91, the planning figures for general Government debt interest in cash and real terms.

Mr. Major: Following is the information.

General Government gross debt interest payments

£ billion

	Cash	*Real terms*[1]
1978-79	7·4	14·4
1979-80	9·4	15·8
1980-81	11·4	16·0
1981-82	13·3	17·1
1982-83	13·9	16·6
1983-84	14·5	16·6
1984-85	16·1	17·6
1985-86	17·7	18·2
1986-87	17·6	17·6
[2]1987-88	17·5	16·7
[3]1988-89	17·5	15·9
[3] [4]1989-90	17·0	15·0
[3] [4]1990-91	17·0	14·0

[1] Cash figures adjusted to 1986-87 prices by excluding the effects of general inflation as measured by the GDP deflator.
[2] Estimated outturn.
[3] Budget forecast and projections.
[4] Rounded to nearest £ billion.

Public Corporations (Borrowing)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down the figure of £1·2 billion for public corporations' market and overseas borrowing given in the 1988 Financial Statement and Budget Report into its component parts in order to account for the difference between this figure and the figure of £0·8 billion given in table 6.4 of Cmd. 288-1.

Mr. Major: There are coverage and measurement differences between the figures for public corporations' market and overseas borrowing in Cm. 288 and the Financial Statement and Budget Report. The figure of −£1·2 billion shown in the 1988 Financial Statement and Budget Report relates to the market and overseas borrowing of all public corporations as measured for the public sector borrowing requirement. It is not possible to break this down into estimates for individual industries. The figure of −£0·8 billion shown in table 6.4 of Cm. 288-I relates to the figures included in the planning total and does not therefore include the market and overseas borrowing of all public corporations as explained in chapter 4 of Cm. 288-I. The major reason for the change between Cm. 288-I and the FSBR arises from nationalised industries switching their net borrowing from the market to Government. In part this reflects the early repayment of expensive public sector foreign currency debt given the high level of the official reserves and the removal of any interest rate benefit on new overseas borrowing under the official exchange cover scheme.

Financial Statement and Budget Report

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for each year since 1978 the figure for "other national accounts adjustments" as defined in table 1.2 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report for 1987-88 in cash and real terms and the planned figures for 1988-89 and 1990-91.

Mr. Major: The figures requested are as follows:

Other national accounts adjustments

£ billion

	Cash	*Real terms*[1]
1978-79	1·7	3·2
1979-80	2·8	4·6
1980-81	4·4	6·2
1981-82	3·2	4·1
1982-83	5·1	6·1
1983-84	5·3	6·1
1984-85	4·4	4·8
1985-86	6·9	7·1
1986-87	8·2	8·2
1987-88	8·3	7·9
1988-89	8·6	7·9
1989-90[2]	9·0	8·0
1990-91[2]	9·0	7·0

[1] Cash outturns or plans adjusted to 1986-87 price levels by excluding the effect of general inflation as measured by the GDP deflator.
[2] Rounded to the nearest £1 billion.

Land and Buildings (Departmental Sales)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give for the year 1987-88 the sales of land and buildings by Department as in the form of his answer of 27 January 1987, *Official Report*, column *229*, giving the gross figure for purchases of land and buildings for 1987-88.

Mr. Major: The table shows sales and purchases of land and buildings by department for 1987-88. The figures include sales and purchases by local authorities and new towns as well as central government and are consistent with the figures published in the 1988 public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 288.

£ million

	1987-88 estimated outturn	
	Sales of land and existing buildings	*Purchases of land and existing buildings*
Defence	68	5
Foreign and Commonwealth Office[1]	10	46
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food[2]	29	1
Trade and Industry[3]	—	—
Employment	4	5
Transport	90	126
DOE—Housing	2,063	213
DOE—Other environmental services	883	54
Home Office[4]	48	20
Education	114	16
Arts and Libraries	—	—
DHSS—Health and personal social services	221	21
DHSS—Social security	—	—
Scotland	292	31
Wales	116	23
Northern Ireland	13	9
Chancellor's departments	—	—
Other departments[5]	38	4
Total	3,989	576

[1] Including Overseas Development Administration.
[2] Including Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce and Forestry Commission.
[3] Including Export Credits Guarantee Department.
[4] This group comprises the Home Office, Lord Chancellor's Department, Northern Ireland Court Service, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office and the Crown Office, Procurator Fiscal Service and the Lord Advocate's Department.
[5] Including Property Servies Agency and Civil Superannuation.

National Accounts Adjustments

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will break down for "other adjustments" given in table 1:2 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1988-89 to show *(a)* capital consumption, *(b)* privatisation proceeds not treated as negative general Government expenditure, *(c)* grants and loans to some public corporations and PTEs, *(d)* valued added tax refunded, *(e)* pension increase payments, *(f)* employers' statutory sick pay scheme and *(g)* other.

Mr. Major: The outturn figures for national accounts adjustments are given in detail in the public expenditure White Paper each year, see for example Cm 288-I, table 6.4. Annual data for earlier years and quarterly data for the current year are given in "Financial Statistics" table 2.4. Figures for the later years are overall estimates and the individual components would be subject to considerable margins of error.

Personal Taxation

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the tax paid in respect of the tax year 1987-88 by a married man aged 51 years with no dependent children who is in receipt for that year of a salary from his employer of £1 million, assuming he has a mortgage of £30,000, a business enterprise scheme investment of £40,000, an investment of £800,000 in a new enterprise zone unit trust of which 94 per cent. is attributable to building costs and where 50 per cent. of the purchase price is borrowed in circumstances where guaranteed rent receivable equals the interest outgoing, and an investment in forestry for which a schedule D basis is claimed and for which net revenue costs in the year amount to £10,000, and who makes a contribution to a retirement annuity scheme amounting to £195,000.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 7 March 1988]*: Liability to income tax in 1987-88 would be nil.

Income Statistics

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* working families with children and *(b)* childless people in work had incomes below the tax threshold at the latest date for which information is available.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 3 March 1988]*: The table provides an estimate, derived from family expenditure survey data, of the number of single people and married couples with full or part-time earnings in 1988-89 for whom allowances and reliefs exceed their income. Also shown are the number of married women estimated to have earnings below the wife's earned income allowance but whose husbands pay income tax.

	Thousands of tax units of working age	
	With children	*Without children*
With one earner but not paying income tax	400	750
With two earners but not paying income tax	75	50
Paying income tax but where the wife earns below the wife's earned income allowance	1,300	575

Revenue Contributions

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the proportion of total receipts from *(a)* income tax, *(b)* value added tax and *(c)* national insurance paid by the top (i) 1 per cent., (ii) 5 per cent. and (iii) 10 per cent. of tax payers in 1978-79 and 1987-88;

(2) if he will estimate the proportion of total receipts from *(a)* income tax, *(b)* value added tax and *(c)* national insurance paid by the bottom (i) 1 per cent., (ii) 5 per cent. and (iii) 10 per cent. of taxpayers in 1978-79 and 1987-88.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answers 23 February 1988]*: The available information is given in the table. I

regret that reliable estimates of the income tax liability and national insurance contributions of the bottom 1 per cent. and the bottom 5 per cent. of taxpayers are not available and no estimates of the proportion of value added tax paid by percentiles of income taxpayers are available. Income tax estimates for 1987-88 are based on a projection of the 1985-86 survey of personal income and are therefore provisional.

	Percentage of total income tax liability	*Percentage of employees' national insurance contributions*
1978-79 percentile group of income taxpayers		
Top 1 per cent.	11·2	2·0
Top 5 per cent.	24·0	10·0
Top 10 per cent.	34·5	20·0
Bottom 10 per cent.	0·7	6·0
1987-88 percentile group of income taxpayers		
Top 1 per cent.	15·0	2·0
Top 5 per cent.	30·0	10·0
Top 10 per cent.	40·5	20·0
Bottom 10 per cent.	1·0	3·0

Taxation and National Insurance

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will give the percentage of gross earnings deducted in tax and national insurance for (i) a single man and (ii) a married man on the following gross salaries *(a)* £4,000, *(b)* £5,000, *(c)* £6,000, *(d)* £7,000, *(e)* £8,000, *(f)* £9,000, *(g)* £10,000, *(h)* £11,000, *(i)* £12,000, *(j)* £13,000, *(k)* £14,000, *(l)* £15,000, *(m)* £20,000, *(n)* £25,000, *(o)* £30,000 and *(p)* £50,000.

(2) if he will give the percentage of gross earnings deducted in tax and national insurance for (i) a single man and (ii) a married man on the following gross salaries after taking account of the changes in the Budget of 15 March *(a)* £4,000, *(b)* £5,000, *(c)* £6,000, *(d)* £7,000, *(e)* £8,000, *(f)* £9,000, *(g)* £10,000, *(h)* £11,000, *(i)* £12,000, *(j)* £13,000, *(k)* £14,000, *(l)* £15,000, *(m)* £20,000, *(n)* £25,000, *(o)* £30,000 and *(p)* £50,000.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answers 14 March 1988]:* The information is in the table.

	Single man		*Married man*	
Annual earnings £	*1987-88 Tax and NIC regime per cent.*	*1988-89 Proposed tax and NIC regime per cent.*	*1987-88 Tax and NIC regime per cent.*	*1988-89 Proposed tax and NIC regime per cent.*
4,000	17·6	15·7	8·4	7·0
5,000	20·9	19·0	13·5	11·5
6,000	25·1	23·1	18·9	16·9
7,000	26·6	24·7	21·4	19·4
8,000	27·8	25·9	23·2	21·2
9,000	28·7	26·8	24·6	22·6
10,000	29·4	27·5	25·7	23·8
11,000	30·0	28·1	26·7	24·7
12,000	30·5	28·6	27·5	25·5
13,000	31·0	29·0	28·1	26·1
14,000	31·3	29·3	28·7	26·7
15,000	31·6	29·7	29·2	27·2
20,000	30·6	28·9	28·8	27·0
25,000	32·8	30·0	30·3	27·6
30,000	35·2	31·6	32·9	29·6
50,000	43·2	35·0	41·5	33·8

Note:

The calculations assume that the man's earnings are his only source of income and that he has no reliefs or allowances other than the appropriate personal allowances. National insurance contributions are at the contracted-in rate.

Ethnic Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer of 25 January, *Official Report*, columns *18-20*, if he will make a further statement on progress in implementing the monitoring of the ethnic origin of the Government's own employees; and what results have so far been achieved therein, with particular reference to the pilot schemes which have been introduced.

Mr. Luce: I have been asked to reply.

The final stage of the programme of ethnic origin surveys of staff in post is almost finished. The results of the remaining phases of these monitoring surveys will be published later this year. The results of the pilot promotion monitoring projects are not yet available. The Civil Service Commissioners will be reporting shortly on the results of their monitoring of recruitment.

In the meantime, two other positive initiatives are in progress. First, my officials are exploring the feasibility of designing a short pre-employment training course for near-miss candidates for the executive officer competition with a view to enhancing their work—relevant skills and their capacity to compete on merit. I hope this will be of particular benefit to black and Asian candidates who, currently disproportionately, fail the qualifying test for this competition.

Second, the Civil Service Commission has carried out an advertising campaign designed to attract more black and Asian men and women to apply for professional and technical vacancies. The early results are encouraging, with over 500 inquiries in response to these advertisements.

SOCIAL SERVICES

NHS Staff

Mr. Ralph Howell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give a breakdown of staff, in whole-time equivalents, for Great Britain for the National Health Service in the numbers of *(a)* doctors and dentists, *(b)* nurses and midwives and *(c)* others for the years 1960, 1982, 1986 and 1987;

(2) if he will give the breakdown of staff for the National Health Service, in whole-time equivalents, for Great Britain in the numbers of *(a)* medical and dental, *(b)* nursing and midwifery, *(c)* professional and technical, *(d)* works, *(e)* maintenance, *(f)* administration and clerical, *(g)* ambulance and *(h)* ancillary; and if he will also show the totals for the years 1979, 1982, 1984, 1986 and 1987.

Mr. Newton: The details as requested are shown in the table.

National Health Service directly employed staff in Great Britain[1]	*At 30 September whole time equivalents*[2]			
	1979	*1982*	*1984*	*1986*
Medical and Dental (including locums)[3]	47,600	50,500	51,600	52,400
Non-Medical				
Nursing and Midwifery (including agency)[4]	437,600	485,000	486,100	492,900
"Other" non-Medical staff[5] broken down as follows:	456,800	473,500	460,700	436,100
Professional and Technical (excluding works)[6]	72,100	80,300	86,700	90,900
Works Professional	6,800	7,400	7,300	7,200
Maintenance	24,500	25,600	24,800	23,800
Administrative and Clerical	122,100	128,900	130,900	132,600
Ambulance (including Officers)	20,200	21,600	21,400	22,500
Ancillary[6]	211,100	209,700	189,600	159,200
Total Employed Staff (including agency and locums)	942,000	1,009,000	998,300	981,400

Source: DHSS annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower; Welsh Office; Scottish health service common services agency.
Notes:
Data on a consistent basis are not held for 1960.
Figures for 30 September 1987 are not yet available.

[1] Includes staff at the Dental Estimates Board, Prescription Pricing Authority, London Post-Graduate Special Health Authorities and Family Practitioner Committees, and equivalent organisations in Wales and Scotland.
[2] Figures are independently rounded to nearest one hundred (100) whole time equivalents.
[3] Includes all permanent paid, honorary and locum staff.
[4] Not adjusted for reduction in nurses' working hours during 1980-81 (from 40 to 37·5 hours per week).
[5] Not adjusted for transfer of Operating Department Assistants from Ancillary to Professional and Technical staff group on 1 April 1984.

Waiting Lists

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if the full £25 million allocated for waiting list reductions has been spent in 1987-88; and how many operations will have been paid for from this fund.

Mr. Newton: Health authorities are on course to spend the total £25 million allocated to them in 1987-88 on the treatment of an additional 100,000 in-patient and day cases. Final details will not be available until after the end of the financial year.

Housing Benefit

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will estimate the changes in the weekly amount of housing benefit payable to a person with the following amounts of capital *(a)* £5,100, *(b)* £6,100, *(c)* £7,100, *(d)* £8,100, *(e)* £10,100, *(f)* £12,100 and *(g)* £15,100, as a result of the April changes.

Mr. Portillo: With a capital holding of £5,100, changes in housing benefit entitlement will vary, depending upon how much interest is received at present, because that will affect entitlement under the current scheme. At £6,000, entitlement to benefit will cease altogether. Those with capital above £6,000 may or may not qualify for housing benefit under the present scheme depending on the interest which they receive and on their other income.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the numbers claiming housing benefit in each housing authority in England and Wales.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* The information available is given in the table. The figures represent the estimated numbers of benefit recipients in each authority. The number of unsuccessful claims is not available.

Estimated numbers of housing benefit recipients in England and Wales[1]*: 1987-88*

Authority	*Recipients*
Aberconwy	6,456
Adur	6,610
Allderdale	11,160
Alnwick	3,420
Alyn and Deeside	9,100
Amber Valley	11,404
Arfon	8,325
Arun	14,450
Ashfield	10,929

Authority	Recipients
Ashford	12,210
Aylesbury Vale	8,651
Babergh	7,927
Barking	21,542
Barnet	27,710
Barnsley	31,336
Barrow in Furness	10,260
Basildon	18,360
Basingstoke	8,700
Bassetlaw	11,170
Bath	10,494
Berwick-upon-Tweed	3,282
Beverley	8,572
Bexley	17,020
Birmingham	208,100
Blaby	5,817
Blackburn	21,314
Blackpool	24,800
Blaenau Gwent	11,268
Blyth Valley	10,468
Bolsover	9,619
Bolton	34,293
Boothferry	6,815
Boston	7,050
Bournemouth	28,000
Bracknell	6,639
Bradford	64,600
Braintree	11,210
Breckland	10,259
Brecknock	3,446
Brent	29,350
Brentwood	4,910
Bridgnorth	4,279
Brighton	23,700
Bristol	59 391
Broadland	7,816
Bromley	21,000
Bromsgrove	10,135
Broxbourne	6,040
Broxtowe	10,700
Burnley	10,435
Bury	22,200
Calderdale	22,342
Cambridge	20,147
Camden	27,945
Cannock Chase	9,403
Canterbury	14,513
Caradon	5,976
Cardiff	37,050
Carlisle	11,430
Carmarthen	4,328
Carrick	9,288
Castle Morpeth	4,298
Castle Point	10.189
Ceredigion	8,400
Charnwood	12,124
Chelmsford	12,221
Cheltenham	8,952
Cherwell	9,550
Chester	13,780
Chester le Street	6,603
Chesterfield	13,750
Chichester	7,100
Chiltern	7,780
Chorley	9,990
Christchurch	4,889
City of London	875
Cleethorpes	7,374
Colchester	20,380
Colwyn	7,856
Congleton	7,489
Copeland	6,704
Corby	7,254
Cotswold	5,429
Coventry	46,094
Craven	5,250
Crawley	6,991

Authority	Recipients
Crewe and Nantwich	11,340
Croydon	26,100
Cynon Valley	8,947
Dacorum	11,535
Darlington	12,145
Dartford	5,740
Daventry	5,150
Delyn	7,236
Derby	32,500
Derwentside	15,350
Dinefwr	6,285
Doncaster	45,561
Dover	9,900
Dudley	39,017
Durham	11,616
Dwyfor	2,928
Ealing	28,298
Easington	15,338
East Cambridgeshire	5,067
East Devon	14,127
East Hampshire	5,608
East Hertfordshire	6,663
East Lindsey	13,452
East Northampton	6,635
East Staffordshire	9,810
East Yorkshire	8,368
Eastbourne	11,116
Eastleigh	6,924
Eden	2,635
Ellesmere Port	8,264
Elmbridge	6,448
Enfield	28,599
Epping Forest	9,184
Epsom and Ewell	4,460
Erewash	15,595
Exeter	9,932
Fareham	6,001
Fenland	8,290
Forest Heath	5,740
Forest of Dean	9,120
Fylde	6,603
Gateshead	33,792
Gedling	9,853
Gillingham	9,912
Glanford	6,628
Gloucester	8,794
Glyndwr	3,770
Gosport	6,450
Gravesham	9,377
Great Yarmouth	12,469
Greenwich	27,927
Grimsby	12,929
Guildford	8,750
Hackney	39,100
Halton	17,408
Hambleton	5,384
Hammersmith	22,341
Harborough	4,827
Haringey	33,213
Harlow	10,499
Harrogate	11,000
Harrow	15,700
Hart	2,770
Hartlepool	14,824
Hastings	11,330
Havant	11,790
Havering	23,200
Hereford	5,447
Hertsmere	7,550
High Peak	7,473
Hillingdon	20,300
Hinkley and Bosworth	7,533
Holderness	4,676
Horsham	7,069
Hounslow	22,353
Hove	11,925
Huntingdon	9,654

Authority	*Recipients*
Hyndburn	8,817
Ipswich	16,800
Isles of Scilly	136
Islington	34,600
Islwyn	8,227
Kennet	3,966
Kensington and Chelsea	22,100
Kerrier	11,515
Kettering	10,100
Kingston-upon-Hull	46,956
Kingston-upon-Thames	12,291
Kingswood	7,732
Kirklees	48,000
Knowsley	39,244
Lambeth	59,289
Lancaster	26,342
Langbaurgh	23,200
Leeds	99,649
Leicester	47,150
Leominster	3,592
Lewes	9,600
Lewisham	34,523
Lichfield	7,615
Lincoln	10,955
Liverpool	98,800
Llanelli	9,478
Lliw Valley	7,739
Luton	19,352
Macclesfield	13,769
Maidstone	8,843
Maldon	4,326
Malvern Hills	9,240
Manchester	106,957
Mansfield	12,749
Medina	12,801
Meironnydd	4,970
Melton	4,095
Mendip	10,150
Merthyr Tydfil	9,144
Merton	16,630
Mid Bedfordshire	8,710
Mid Devon	5,620
Mid Suffolk	5,356
Mid Sussex	6,117
Middlesbrough	29,900
Milton Keynes	15,402
Mole Valley	4,514
Monmouth	5,330
Montgomery	3,980
Neath	8,214
New Forest	12,930
Newark	9,710
Newbury	7,271
Newcastle under Lyme	14,770
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	58,748
Newham	34,785
Newport	22,500
North Bedfordshire	13,520
North Cornwall	7,213
North Devon	8,150
North Dorset	3,640
North East Derby	10,770
North Hertfordshire	12,858
North Kesteven	6,141
North Norfolk	9,670
North Shropshire	5,435
North Tyneside	35,893
North Warwickshire	6,314
North West Leicester	7,374
North Wiltshire	8,120
Northampton	20,661
Northavon	8,650
Norwich	23,110
Nottingham	50,500
Nuneaton	14,185
Oadby and Wigston	4,540
Ogwr	14,622

Authority	*Recipients*
Oldham	28,010
Oswestry	3,270
Oxford	27,200
Pendle	12,700
Penwith	10,040
Peterborough	19,600
Plymouth	27,570
Poole	12,500
Port Talbot	9,120
Portsmouth	29,450
Preseli	8,282
Preston	16,831
Purbeck	3,263
Radnor	2,420
Reading	15,300
Redbridge	18,354
Redditch	9,084
Reigate and Banstead	7,900
Restormel	10,215
Rhondda	10,094
Rhuddlan	8,659
Rhymney Valley	14,638
Ribble Valley	3,281
Richmond-upon-Thames	13,584
Richmondshire	3,176
Rochdale	35,812
Rochester on Medway	12,750
Rochford	6,049
Rossendale	10,005
Rother	8,705
Rotherham	32,900
Rugby	10,302
Runnymede	6,400
Rushcliffe	7,860
Rushmoor	5,890
Rutland	1,933
Rydale	9,000
Salford	45,188
Salisbury	6,208
Sandwell	62,720
Scarborough	10,698
Scunthorpe	10,550
Sedgefield	13,626
Sedgemoor	10,046
Sefton	41,200
Selby	6,566
Sevenoaks	6,065
Sheffield	87,859
Shepway	9,850
Shrewsbury and Atcham	8,109
Slough	9,430
Solihull	24,420
South Bedfordshire	8,894
South Bucks	3,980
South Cambridgeshire	7,080
South Derbyshire	6,385
South Hams	5,492
South Herefordshire	3,610
South Holland	7,791
South Kesteven	11,820
South Lakeland	8,699
South Norfolk	9,560
South Northampton	3,910
South Oxfordshire	10,530
South Pembrokeshire	4,355
South Ribble	9,455
South Shropshire	3,730
South Somerset	13,770
South Staffordshire	9,490
South Tyneside	30,140
South Wight	6,204
Southampton	32,800
Southend on Sea	20,718
Southwark	37,800
Spelthorne	6,800
St. Albans	9,250
St. Edmundsbury	6,548

Authority	Recipients
St. Helens	27,676
Stafford	10,917
Staffs. Moorlands	8,202
Stevenage	7,892
Stockport	31,858
Stockton on Tees	39,337
Stoke on Trent	35,070
Stratford-on-Avon	11,650
Stroud	8,754
Suffolk Coastal	7,850
Sunderland	54,722
Surrey Heath	7,630
Sutton	14,568
Swale	11,102
Swansea	28,808
Taff-Ely	11,162
Tameside	37,745
Tamworth	8,477
Tandridge	4,521
Taunton Deane	8,367
Teesdale	2,366
Teignbridge	9,130
Tendring	18,090
Test Valley	6,170
Tewkesbury	6,500
Thamesdown	21,400
Thanet	16,739
The Wrekin	19,043
Three Rivers	6,449
Thurrock	14,477
Tonbridge and Malling	6,429
Torbay	18,550
Torfaen	12,785
Torridge	4,646
Tower Hamlets	30,193
Trafford	24,300
Tunbridge Wells	6,056
Tynedale	5,073
Uttlesford	4,190
Vale of Glamorgan	10,615
Vale of White Horse	6,530
Vale Royal	12,003
Wakefield	45,197
Walsall	40,314
Waltham Forest	30,800
Wandsworth	29,100
Wansbeck	10,055
Wansdyke	6,480
Warrington	19,400
Warwick	10,912
Watford	6,893
Waveney	16,700
Waverley	8,244
Wealden	13,405
Wear Valley	9,575
Wellingborough	7,240
Welwyn Hatfield	10,485
West Derbyshire	5,558
West Devon	3,191
West Dorset	6,232
West Lancashire	15,065
West Lindsey	6,514
West Norfolk	13,280
West Oxfordshire	5,700
West Somerset	3,852
West Wiltshire	8,265
Westminster	25,700
Weymouth and Portland	6,740
Wigan	42,150
Wimborne	5,825
Winchester	6,518
Windsor and Maidenhead	8,501
Wirral	58,400
Woking	8,441
Wokingham	6,790
Wolverhampton	44,690
Woodspring	18,200
Worcester	9,601
Worthing	11,859
Wrexham Maelor	14,206
Wychavon	7,991
Wycombe	11,287
Wyre	13,246
Wyre Forest	9,776
Ynys Môn	8,950
York	11,933

[1] Derived from local authority housing benefit subsidy estimates for 1987-88.

Alcohol (Cancer)

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of the declaration by the International Agency for Research on Alcohol in October 1987, asserting a causal relationship between alcohol consumption and cancer of the oral cavity, he has any plans to invoke his powers under section 11 of the Consumer Protection Act of 1987 to restrict or to bar the sale of alcoholic beverages; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: No. Heavy drinking of alcohol is only one of the risk factors associated with cancer of the oral cavity. There is no good evidence of any significantly increased risk from sensible drinking. The risks of oral cancer and of cancers of the gullet and upper digestive tract rise significantly for people who drink and smoke.

Benzodiazepines

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list how many prescriptions for benzodiazepines have been issued by general practitioners for each of the last five years; and what was the average quantity of drugs per prescription for each of these years.

Mr. Newton: The information is not available in the form requested. The number of prescriptions for benzodiazepines dispensed by community pharmacists in Great Britain for each of the last five years was as follows:

	Millions
1982	29·7
1983	28·7
1984	28·0
1985	25·7
1986	25·4

The figures for 1987 are not yet available.

It is not possible to construct a meaningful overall average quantity per prescription because benzodiazepines are dispensed in a variety of formulations (for example, tablets, capsules, suppositories and elixirs) and most are offered in several different strengths.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list by region the amount and value of benzodiazepines prescribed by general practitioners for the last five years.

Mr. Newton: The information is not available in the form requested. Information on benzodiazepines can be extracted from data from the hypnotic and sedative and tranquilliser therapeutic categories of drugs. These data are broken down by region in the table. Benzodiazepines account for about 85 per cent. of the prescriptions for hypnotics, sedatives and tranquillisers.

Number and net ingredient cost of prescriptions for hynotics, sedatives and tranquillisers (millions)

Region	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986	
	Number	£ NIC	Number	£ NIC	Number	£ NIC	Number	£ NIC	Number	£ NIC
Northern	2·333	3·949	2·003	3·605	2·068	3·925	1·786	2·975	1·802	2·721
Yorkshire	2·661	4·200	2·342	4·026	2·198	3·895	2·066	3·177	2·049	2·965
Trent	2·974	4·473	2·638	4·317	2·450	3·961	2·392	3·485	2·310	3·112
East Anglian	0·956	1·400	0·861	1·347	0·801	1·278	0·726	1·123	0·747	0·961
North West Thames	2·154	3·390	1·937	3·321	1·852	3·151	1·578	2·450	1·545	2·339
North East Thames	2·137	3·283	1·964	3·212	1·924	3·367	1·707	2·552	1·711	2·360
South East Thames	2·425	3·593	2·111	3·365	2·065	3·558	1·933	3·095	1·793	2·468
South West Thames	1·941	3·061	1·691	2·879	1·637	2·873	1·498	2·455	1·494	2·319
Wessex	1·815	2·887	1·603	2·780	1·538	2·713	1·446	2·321	1·431	2·055
Oxford	1·220	1·931	1·069	1·855	1·090	1·859	0·991	1·660	0·940	1·314
South Western	2·258	3·533	1·988	3·364	1·828	3·110	1·770	2·854	1·674	2·298
West Midlands	3·380	5·201	2·944	4·824	2·784	4·826	2·535	3·862	2·506	3·552
Mersey	1·940	2·863	1·769	2·824	1·685	2·650	1·667	2·416	1·626	2·165
North Western	3·624	5·594	3·228	5·243	3·173	5·380	2·852	4·217	2·854	3·753
Total	31·818	49·355	28·146	46·963	27·093	46·546	24·948	38·642	24·480	34·382

The net ingredient cost (NIC) refers to the basic cost of the drug and does not include any discounts, dispensing costs or fees.
The sum of each region may not add up to the total because of rounding.

The information for 1987 is not yet available.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many homeless persons in England and Wales have previously been admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses.

Mrs. Currie: I regret I cannot give my hon. Friend the information he seeks as it is not centrally collected for England. The information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many residential places in the community will be provided for those discharged from mental hospitals in each health region in England and Wales in each of the next seven years;

(2) how many residential places have been provided in the community for patients with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses discharged from mental hospitals in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years;

(3) how many residential places have been provided in the community in each health region in England and Wales for patients discharged from mental hospitals in each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is not available. The number of places in homes and hostels for the mentally ill in each local authority in England is published in "Homes and Hostels for Mentally Ill and Mentally Handicapped People"; a copy of which is in the Library. Information for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mental Hospital Sites (Sales)

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimate he has of the proceeds of sale of mental hospital sites from each health region in England and Wales in each of the next seven years.

Mrs. Currie: The information routinely collected on forecast of sales proceeds relates only to the coming three financial years and is not broken down into care groups. Information in respect of all surplus sites for the next three years is as follows:

	Forecast Approximate Values £ million		
	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Northern	5·4	0·4	0·5
Yorkshire	7·0	1·3	2·9
Trent	3·2	3·4	3·1
East Anglian	4·1	1·6	1·5
North West Thames	44·0	57·0	50·0
North East Thames	17·7	21·4	7·0
South East Thames	21·0	21·0	21·0
South West Thames	46·3	n/a	n/a
Wessex	8·9	14·8	7·7
Oxford	6·2	4·1	2·7
South Western	10·4	3·5	8·0
West Midlands	2·1	1·4	2·2
Mersey	Nil	Nil	0·7
North Western	1·4	0·8	0·2
England	177·7	130·7	107·5

Note:
n/a = Not available.

Community Care

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates he has for expenditure on community care in *(a)* each health region in England and Wales and *(b)* each health district, for each of the next three years.

Mr. Newton: The Department does not hold estimates of expenditure for the provision of community care in the form requested, nor does it generally identify funds for specific purposes such as the provision of care in the community within its overall allocations to regions, or in its indicative figures for local authority social services expenditure. It is for regions and districts to determine, within a national framework of health care priorities, and in the light of local needs and circumstances, how all their resources can best be used. So far as local authorities are concerned, it is for them to determine the level and balance of their expenditure on the provision of social services.

Broad strategies of expenditure were outlined in regions' strategic plans, and annual regional short-term programmes give estimates of expenditure at a regional level for community services which would included provision of community care. Detailed figures for 1988-89 are not yet available and no figures are available for the following two years.

Expenditure on the Health Service in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services which health regions in England and Wales *(a)* have provided bridging funds for local care of patients discharged from or excluded from mental hospitals and *(b)* not so provided.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Irving) on 5 February 1988 at column *800*.

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the monitoring of the follow-up of care in the community for mentally ill people, which regional health authorities were asked by his Department to carry out in their districts in the care in the community and joint finance circular (HC 83/6).

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 14 March 1988]:* The monitoring of progress within each region is a regular feature of the annual review meetings which Ministers hold with regional chairmen. Information provided by regions indicates that the development of locally based community-oriented mental illness services is at present rather patchy but there is evidence of a continuing build-up of such services. Our policy remains that the reduction of hospital provision should not take place without steps being taken to ensure appropriate alternative arrangements.

Hospital Hostels

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what experiments in hospital hostels for discharged mental patients have been conducted in each health region in England and Wales; what lessons have been learnt; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department has been associated to some degree with the establishment of three hospital hostels whose work has been subject to careful evaluation; these are in South East Thames, Wessex, and North Western regions. I am aware that in some other regions there are similar hospital hostels, that is accommodation in which a small group of long-stay patients requiring 24-hour medical and nursing supervision are provided with in-patient care in an informal domestic environment.

The evaluations have reported encouragingly on the quality of life obtained, and we intend such units to form a permanent part of district pyschiatric services. For this reason, we have funded a series of seminars in different parts of the country designed to spread knowledge, among both psychiatric professional staff and planners, of the best ways of meeting the needs of those people chronically disabled by mental illness who may need long-term in-patient care, whilst avoiding the institutional environment of traditional long-stay wards.

Griffiths Report

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the covering letter from his Department which has accompanied the circulation of the Griffiths report to district health authorities.

Mr. Newton: Copies of health notice (88)8, which accompanied the circulation of Sir Roy Griffiths' report to health and local authorities, family practitioner committees and community health councils, have been placed in the Library.

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will consult representatives of Health Service staff, voluntary and other relevant organisations regarding proposals made by Sir Roy Griffiths in his report to him, "Community Care: Agenda for Action".

Mr. Newton: We will take account of any views put to us by interested groups or organisations as part of our consideration of Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations.

Mr. O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made any assessment of the number of additional social workers that would be required to implement the Griffiths report on residential care for old people; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We will take any implications for social work into account as part of our consideration of both Sir Roy Griffiths' report on community care and the report of the review of residential care chaired by Lady Wagner.

Medical Laboratory and Pathology Staff

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the Management Advisory Services report on medical laboratory scientific officers.

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Management Advisory Services' manpower planning group report on the review of pathology services staffing is to be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to respond to the report by Management Advisory Services on pathology services; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We intend to circulate the report to health authorities and others in the near future after consideration by the NHS Management Board and regional chairmen.

Ward Closures

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* all wards or units closed for financial or other reasons in the North Western regional health authority; and if he will indicate the reason in each instance.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not held centrally.

Riverside DHA (Hospital Closures)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Riverside district health authority issued the consultation document concerning the closure of the Westminster, the Westminster children's, St. Mary Abbots, and the West London hospitals; and what is the normal length of a consultation period for proposals of this nature.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that the consultation document issued by Riverside health authority on the "Westminster and Chelsea Hospital Project" was issued to

the Riverside community health council on 1 February 1988, and to other bodies listed on its formal distribution list in the week up to 9 February. Comments were requested by 1 May 1988.

Health authorities are required by the NHS (Community Health Council) Regulations 1973 to consult community health councils about proposed service change; the regulations do not specify a time limit. We also expect authorities to consult other interested bodies and the arrangements for this are set out in circular HSC(1S) 207. We recommend there that health authorities should require comments "within a period of three months".

Regional Health Authorities

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what rules or guidance govern the attendance of chairpersons of regional health authorities at party political functions relating to the Health Service.

Mrs. Currie: There are no such rules or guidance.

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he has received any proposals that regional health authorities should be encouraged to privatise assets or operational activities, other than land, buildings or equipment; and whether he plans to introduce legislation on this matter;

(2) whether any regional health authority has, within the past five years, privatised assets or operational activities valued at more than £1 million, other than land, buildings or equipment; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Every regional health authority has awarded contracts to private contractors for some operational activities where this represents better value than in-house services. NHS management recognises competitive tendering as a valuable management tool in testing the efficiency of its services. The Government have no wish to inhibit such enterprise where it is cost-effective and represents good value for money in the particular local circumstances. We have no plans for legislation on this matter. Information is not centrally available on the number of individual contracts with a value in excess of £1 million which have been negotiated by regional health authorities.

Northern Ireland (Tax Benefits)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish tax benefit tables, taking account of rent and rates levels in Northern Ireland, to show the net weekly spending power of *(a)* a single person, *(b)* a married couple with no children, *(c)* a couple with a child aged 11 years, *(d)* a couple with two children aged eight and 11 years, *(e)* a couple with three children aged eight, 11 and 15 years, *(f)* a couple with four children aged three, eight, 11 and 15 years, *(g)* a single person with two children aged eight and 11 years, and *(h)* a single person with two children under four years of age, with weekly earnings of (i) £60, (ii) £70, (iii) £80, (iv) £90, (v) £110, (vii) £130, (viii) £140, (ix), £150, (x) £160 and (xi) £170 under (1) the existing tax and benefit system and (2) the new system to be implemented in April.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that it is not possible to produce average rent and rates figures for Northern Ireland similar to those previously published for Great Britain.

AIDS

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to the incidence of anonymous testing of patients for the human immuno-deficiency virus without their consent.

Mr. Newton: The Department does not have information about all the research that may be taking place, but I am advised by the Medical Research Council and the public health laboratory service that none of the studies currently being funded by them involves the anonymous testing of patients without their consent.

Sir David Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidance is given to hospital authorities on the testing of patients for the human immuno-deficiency virus without their consent.

Mr. Newton: The Department has not issued specific guidance to health authorities on the need for HIV antibody tests to be carried out only with the consent of the patient. However, we have always stressed that tests should be carried out only on a voluntary basis and in a context of pre-test and post-test counselling. The precise details of how, and in what circumstances, tests are discussed with patients is primarily a matter for the individual professionals guided by their professional bodies, and the health authorities concerned.

Cervical Cancer

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to the answer of 16 March, *Official Report*, column 613, he will state how many automated systems for cervical cancer screening have been considered by his Department; and when a final decision as to funding of such systems may be expected.

Mrs. Currie: The expert panel chaired by the Department's chief scientist on 26 February reviewed 13 separate applications for funds to support developments in this field.

In the light of the panel's views, the Department is now exploring putting together a package of interrelated work. This is being done as speedily as possible.

Departmental Research Funding

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 16 March, *Official Report*, column 613, what is his definition of the phrase "scientific merit" as a criterion for assessing projects for research funding by his Department.

Mrs. Currie: The scientific merit of proposals submitted to the Department is determined through critical review and assessment of the objectives and methods proposed for each study. The costs and resources proposed for the study are also taken into account.

The research objectives are reviewed to ensure that the scope, nature and purpose of the work is clearly described, that the work envisaged will make a contribution to existing knowledge or theory and not simply replicate existing data, and that the anticipated results hold promise of exploitation and applicability. The policy relevance of the research objectives is also assessed. The plan of research is reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate and relevant to the subject area of the study and most

important that the research objectives are likely to be achieved by the methods proposed, although by the very nature of research this cannot be guaranteed.

General Practitioners

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what sterilisation standards are laid down for general practitioners; what steps are taken by his Department to monitor them; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Sterilisation standards for general practitioners are not laid down centrally. This is a matter of good professional practice and advice is available in publications such as the British Pharmacopoeia.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are taken by his Department to seek to minimise the dangers of cross-infection in general practitioners' surgeries; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: General practitioners are required under their terms of service to provide proper accommodation for the provision of general medical services. This includes adequate safeguards to minimise the dangers of cross-infection. Family practitioner committees have powers to inspect general practitioners' surgeries to ensure that they meet the proper standards.

Dentistry (Hepatitis)

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether the recommendations made by the expert group on hepatitis in dentistry have been implemented; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what standards are required by his Department for sterilisation equipment used by dentists; what steps are taken to ensure such standards are met; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what sterilisation standards are laid down by his Department for dentists; what steps are taken to ensure those standards are maintained in dentists' surgeries; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The report of the expert advisory group on hepatitis in dentistry was published in 1979 and was distributed to all dental practitioners at that time. Its recommendations have been incorporated in both undergraduate and postgraduate training courses since then.

The procedures recommended in the report were re-emphasised in guidance prepared for surgeons, anaesthetists and dentists on the transmission of HTLV (HIV) and issued in April 1986 to all dentists under cover of a letter from the chief dental officer, since the procedures are essentially the same for all blood-borne viruses. It included advice on methods of achieving the sterilisation of non-disposable instruments and equipment.

General dental practitioners are required under their terms of service to furnish their surgery with adequate equipment, and to use adequate skill and attention in providing treatment. Any dentist who fails to do so renders himself vulnerable to disciplinary proceedings. These could lead to charges of serious professional misconduct brought by the General Dental Council, with the possibility, if found guilty, of erasure from the dental register.

Benefits

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the value of *(a)* the ordinary rate of supplementary benefit for a single householder, *(b)* the ordinary rate of supplementary benefit for a couple, *(c)* the long-term rate of supplementary benefit for a single person living alone and *(d)* the long-term rate of supplementary benefit for a couple, expressed as a proportion of average earnings in each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo: The information is contained in tables 5.6 and 5.7 of the "Abstract of Statistics for Index of Retail Prices, Average Earnings, Social Security Benefits, and Contributions—August 1987", a copy of which is in the Library.

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently in receipt of *(a)* supplementary benefit and *(b)* family income supplement in the borough of Sunderland.

Mr. Portillo: The information requested is as follows:

	Figure
(a) Supplementary benefit	36,743 (latest available figure —17 November 1987)
(b) Family income supplement	Figures not available

Note: The figure for *(a)* relates to the two local offices which serve the Borough of Sunderland. The boundaries are not conterminous.
Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

Hospitals and Wards (Closure)

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the hospitals or wards in England and Wales in respect of which he has received notice of *(a)* permanent closure or *(b)* temporary closure since 1 November 1987.

Mrs. Currie: General information on hospitals approved for closure in 1987 is not yet available. Information on temporary closures is not held centrally. The following proposals for specific closures have been referred for ministerial decision since 1 November 1987. Only closures which have been opposed by the relevant community health councils are routinely referred to Ministers. I refer my hon. Friend to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales for information on hospitals in Wales.

Region	*Facility*
West Midlands	Whitley Hospital, Coventry
North Western	Dr. Kershaw's Hospital, Oldham
Oxford	Iver Cottage Hospital
North West Thames	Transfer of plastic surgery from West Middlesex Hospital to Charing Cross Hospital
Yorkshire	Wharfedale General Hospital—Maternity Unit
South West Thames	St. James Hospital, Balham—Accident and Emergency; Outpatients; Day Care Abortion Units

Region	Facility
South East Thames	Rationalisation of hospital services in Medway

NHS Hospitals (Income)

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Southport (Mr. Fearn) of 10 March, *Official Report*, columns 347-8, if he will give the figures for income under section 65 as adjusted by the hospital and community health services pay and prices deflator.

Mrs. Currie: The information requested is given in the table.

Income under section 65 of the National Health Service Act 1977 (Constant prices)[1]
(Charges for private in-patient beds)

£ thousands

Regions	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Northern	959	1,105	1,200	740	1,107	1,081	1,026	1,093
Yorkshire	3,137	3,069	3,498	2,520	3,249	3,273	3,143	2,601
Trent	2,403	2,493	2,383	2,143	1,873	1,542	1,600	1,561
East Anglian	2,058	2,162	2,554	1,940	2,098	1,660	1,907	1,898
North West Thames	10,076	9,382	9,804	7,591	7,032	6,450	6,122	5,096
North East Thames	7,356	7,173	7,716	10,650	9,885	9,071	8,695	7,569
South East Thames	8,139	8,330	8,621	7,669	7,366	6,631	6,699	5,732
South West Thames	3,339	3,222	3,459	3,216	3,118	2,814	2,412	2,070
Wessex	2,211	2,466	2,793	2,252	2,413	1,980	1,529	1,282
Oxford	3,828	3,656	3,694	3,249	3,253	3,242	3,410	3,320
South Western	1,678	1,811	1,947	1,699	1,886	1,604	1,794	1,721
West Midlands	3,861	4,048	4,414	2,994	3,496	3,251	2,987	2,582
Mersey	1,412	1,535	2,039	1,601	1,645	1,564	1,806	1,663
North Western	3,907	4,126	4,378	2,805	3,199	3,094	3,238	2,727
REGIONS TOTAL	54,364	54,578	58,500	51,069	51,620	47,257	46,368	40,915
Special health authorities[2]	7,078	6,836	7,226	6,636	7,278	7,516	8,992	7,548
ENGLAND TOTAL	61,442	61,414	65,726	57,705	58,898	54,773	55,360	48,463

Notes:
[1] 1986-87 levels as measured by the hospital and community health services pay and price deflator.
[2] Special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals.

Salford and South Manchester Health Authorities

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the financial position of *(a)* Salford health authority and *(b)* the South Manchester health authority.

Mr. Newton: The allocation of resources to individual health authorities is a matter for the regional health authority. I understand both authorities will benefit from record levels of revenue funding in 1988-89 which includes allocations from the waiting list fund, the special bridging fund and central funding for AIDS.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on which date the Minister for Health, the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), first received a request for a meeting with hon. Members about the financial position of South Manchester health authority; and on what date he decided not to meet them.

Mr. Newton: I received the request from the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley) on 29 February. My office contacted him on 8 March with the offer of a meeting with my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health. This offer was declined.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what factors he considered in forming a judgment that he would meet hon. Members about the financial position of Salford health authority; and which factors were considered by the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), the Minister for Health, in forming a judgment that he would not meet hon. Members to discuss the financial position of South Manchester health authority.

Mr. Newton: Decisions to meet delegations are dependent on the circumstances of each request and the commitments of Ministers. I was aware that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health was willing to meet the hon. Member, an offer he refused.

Departmental Offices, Bradford

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what strengthening arrangements have been made to the partitioning separating officials from the public in his Department's offices in Law Russell house, Vicar lane, Bradford, and Leeds road, Bradford; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: In December 1987, a claimant climbed over a protective interview screen at Law Russell house after damaging the surrounding framework. Contractors are currently strengthening the partition supports. At Leeds road office, two existing private interview rooms are being fitted with protective screens and counters.

Departmental Offices (Social Security Act 1986)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps his Department's local offices take under the terms of the Social Security Act 1986 to make themselves aware of the objectives of charitable organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: It is for local office managers to decide how best to do this. As a matter of good administration, local offices will be expected to keep themselves informed about the objectives of charitable organisation in the future, as they have also had to do in the past.

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines his Department issues to his Department's local offices on their obligations under the Social Security Act 1986 with regard to the information they keep on charitable organisations, and the use they make of any such information; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Guidance in the social fund manual explains that consideration of help which might be available from another source, including a charity, is mainly appropriate to applications for crisis loans; and then only provided that there is a realistic expectation that the help would be available, and available in time, were the applicant to seek it.

Social Security Regulations

Mr. Barry Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will meet Age Concern and other associated voluntary groups in Wales to discuss the impact of the April 1988 Social Security Regulations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Any representations from voluntary bodies in Wales to meet Ministers of this Department will always be given full consideration.

On 10 March my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Social Security met pensioner representatives including representatives from Welsh pensioners and discussed a number of topics, including the social security reforms which take effect from April.

District Health Authorities (Chairmen)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what criterion his Department has employed to select the 21 new district health authority chairmen and to reappoint the other district health authority chairman;

(2) if he will state the criterion his Department employs when deciding to replace district health authority chairmen.

Mrs. Currie: In considering these important posts, we seek to appoint people of the highest calibre. We take account of a wide variety of factors, such as personal qualities, knowledge of the NHS, management or other relevant experience and age. The majority of chairmen not reappointed had indicated previously that they did not wish to be considered for a further term. Some were not reappointed on age grounds. It is also necessary to bring in some new people to provide fresh insights. The decisions not to reappoint some chairmen in no way reflects on them personally.

Blood Transfusion Service

Dr. Marek: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to place in the Library a copy of the report on the future of the blood transfusion service.

Mrs. Currie: It is intended that the report on the organisational study of the national blood transfusion service of England and Wales, prepared for the Department by National Health Service management consultancy services branch, will be placed in the Library with the consultation paper discussing the options for change once this has been prepared.

School Meals and Welfare Milk

Mrs. Beckett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is expected to be the cost in 1988-89 of the £2·55 per week per child compensation for the loss of free school meals and free welfare milk in the family credit rates;

(2) what proportion of the £220 million extra spending on family credit mentioned in the *Official Report*, 27 October, column 181, is accounted for by the compensation for the loss of free school meals and free welfare milk.

Mr. Portillo: The net cost (after allowing for the cost of free school meals and free welfare milk which would otherwise arise) is around £65 million. This represents around 30 per cent. of the extra spending on family credit.

Housing Benefit (Sunderland)

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will estimate how many people will receive a reduction in housing benefit in the borough of Sunderland from April;

(2) if he will estimate how many people will lose their entitlement to housing benefit in the borough of Sunderland from April.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information relating to loss of housing benefit is not available for individual local authority areas.

Income Support and Family Credit (Sunderland)

Mr. Clay: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate how many people will receive *(a)* income support and *(b)* family credit in the borough of Sunderland from April.

Mr. Portillo: No local estimates are available of the number of people who will receive income support and family credit from April.

NHS Performance Indicators

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will make the National Health Service performance indicators for 1986-87 available in the Library.

Mr. Newton: We hope to make the indicators available later this week.

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has as to why

Hampstead, Preston and Bloomsbury district health authorities have large estates in relation to the resident population in their health districts; and if there has been a recent review of their property usage;

(2) what information he has as to the reasons for the numbers of staff in the ancillary, building and maintenance, administrative and clerical, professional and technical categories which Halton district employs in relation to its patient work load;

(3) what information he has as to the reasons for the level of costs of administrative and medical record keeping in the leading London hospitals and the Bristol Royal infirmary;

(4) what information he has as to the reasons for the size of the complement of consultant and senior doctors in general medicine in the Barking and Havering district;

(5) what information he has as to why expenditure by West Birmingham, Richmond and Twickenham, Rugby, Central Manchester, Merton and Sutton and West Lancashire district health authorities on building maintenance is relatively high in relation to other authorities; and what plans are there to review their performance in this respect.

Mr. Newton: I assume my hon. Friend's questions were stimulated by an analysis of Health Service indicators. Although the purpose of the indicators is to raise questions at all levels about health service performance in delivering services to patients, most of the reasons behind detailed variations shown by indicator analysis can only be identified at local level where the analysis can be informed by local knowledge. This is why in our approach to the use of the indicators — full details of which will be announced in a forthcoming health circular — we have concentrated on ensuring that detailed local analyses are undertaken and on monitoring the results and the action taken. My hon. Friend may therefore wish to direct his specific questions about the reasons for these variations between districts and regions to the district or regional authorities concerned.

He will additionally wish to be aware that there is at present an initiative underway throughout the NHS to ensure that under-used properties are either disposed of or put to better use.

South East Thames Regional Health Authority

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list how many consultants are *(a)* full-time, *(b)* maximum part-time and *(c)* part-time in the South East Thames regional health authority.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 17 March 1988]*. The information requested is shown in the table.

Hospital medical and dental consultants in South East Thames Region at 30 September 1986

	[1]	[2]
(a) Whole time	[3]451	442
(b) Maximum part time	445	445
(c) Part time (including honorary staff)	351	187

[1] Figures are based on number of contracts.
[2] Whole time equivalents, rounded to nearest whole number.
[3] May also be working in other regions.

In-patients

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the average length of time spent in hospital by *(a)* each private pay-bed patient and *(b)* each National Health Service patient; and if he will break this figure down by each specialty and for each region and the special health authorities.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 1 March 1988]*: I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member all the information he seeks. The numbers in the central data sample are too small for reliable estimates to be made for private patients at regional level. The available information is given in the following table: all figures are for 1985.

Estimated number of discharges and mean duration of stay (days) of National Health Service and private patients from National Health Service non-psychiatric and non-maternity hospitals, by specialty
England 1985

		National Health Service Patients							
	England	*Northern RHA*	*York-shire RHA*	*Trent RHA*	*East Anglia RHA*	*North West Thames RHA*	*North East Thames RHA*	*South East Thames RHA*	*South West Thames RHA*
General medicine — Est. No.	877,210	65,920	63,920	77,370	25,060	63,710	80,410	73,430	41,530
Mean duration of stay	9·9	9·5	9·7	8·8	8·7	12·4	11·1	10·5	9·4
Paediatrics — Est. No.	333,280	24,200	24,450	29,390	9,400	27,730	24,890	27,930	13,740
Mean duration of stay	3·9	4·1	5·0	3·1	2·8	3·8	3·6	3·8	3·2
Infectious diseases — Est. No.	22,800	380	4,840	2,530	320	610	4,870	1,920	2,030
Mean duration of stay	6·7	8·0	6·1	5·1	6·1	11·1	6·7	5·9	5·4
Thoracic medicine — Est. No.	61,190	3,150	3,980	5,200	3,040	4,130	5,870	4,550	1,170
Mean duration of stay	11·7	9·0	11·2	13·5	7·2	10·2	18·6	10·9	12·8
Dermatology — Est. No.	19,930	2,020	2,790	2,120	480	1,170	810	1,460	490
Mean duration of stay	19·4	15·2	16·8	19·5	24·4	19·4	16·5	20·8	19·1
Neurology — Est. No.	42,880	3,230	3,430	3,330	1,400	1,480	3,730	2,200	2,750
Mean duration of stay	11·5	7·0	13·0	10·0	14·6	11·3	14·5	10·8	11·4
Cardiology — Est. No.	54,570	2,960	5,670	3,710	1,660	5,840	2,960	7,570	280
Mean duration of stay	7·0	6·0	6·8	5·3	6·2	8·1	7·4	6·9	6·1
Rehabilitation — Est. No.	7,880	630	90	880	1,180	1,110	1,350	150	970
Mean duration of stay	30·2	25·3	26·3	53·5	20·2	29·5	24·2	16·7	26·8
Genito-Urinary medicine — Est. No.	480	10	40	140		90	60	10	
Mean duration of stay	6·3	2·0	9·5	6·1		5·7	15·2	3·0	
Rheumatology — Est. No.	27,600	1,920	2,860	2,850	1,470	1,640	1,380	2,200	640

	National Health Service Patients								
	England	*Northern RHA*	*York-shire RHA*	*Trent RHA*	*East Anglia RHA*	*North West Thames RHA*	*North East Thames RHA*	*South East Thames RHA*	*South West Thames RHA*
—Mean duration of stay	17·3	16·4	19·0	15·8	19·8	15·5	21·5	13·7	13·8
Geriatric medicine —Est. No.	358,540	18,620	43,780	39,520	18,140	20,590	23,190	28,730	16,940
—Mean duration of stay	50·1	61·9	39·8	45·6	46·1	56·6	71·2	44·0	49·8
Units for younger disabled —Est. No.	5,200	290	820	1,010	240	330	420	360	320
—Mean duration of stay	65·0	49·2	13·7	49·0	105·3	75·6	46·7	300·1	14·3
General surgery —Est. No.	456,670	63,050	71,670	91,710	41,320	66,900	81,920	80,920	52,720
—Mean duration of stay	7·0	7·9	7·2	6·5	6·4	8·1	7·5	6·9	6·7
Ear, Nose and Throat —Est. No.	264,300	18,390	22,290	24,490	12,560	16,250	23,770	21,060	13,370
—Mean duration of stay	3·4	3·1	3·1	3·4	2·6	3·6	3·6	3·4	3·3
Orthopaedic surgery —Est.No.	506,760	32,160	45,550	45,980	17,360	33,420	36,870	36,870	25,800
—Mean duration of stay	11·0	11·8	10·1	11·9	9·9	11·6	12·9	12·0	11·5
Ophthalmology —Est.No.	138,860	9,650	14,150	12,950	6,840	7,750	7,960	10,380	7,270
—Mean duration of stay	5·3	4·4	6·0	5·7	5·1	5·9	6·1	5·6	5·1
Radiotherapy —Est. No.	58,900	3,260	2,590	7,280	2,830	4,990	6,550	2,720	1,940
—Mean duration of stay	10·0	7·5	12·5	11·9	11·2	9·9	10·2	11·3	7·6
Urology —Est. No.	149,500	8,790	15,180	12,510	9,010	7,630	16,030	15,460	6,880
—Mean duration of stay	6·4	6·1	6·5	5·7	5·5	6·4	6·9	6·7	6·6
Plastic surgery —Est. No.	53,550	6,030	4,950	4,740	2,550	3,450	2,250	2,910	2,000
—Mean duration of stay	7·2	5·5	6·5	7·6	7·2	7·0	6·3	7·1	6·7
Thoracic surgery —Est. No.	40,430	2,020	4,160	3,810	1,240	3,210	2,200	3,190	700
—Mean duration of stay	11·1	10·2	10·2	12·7	8·3	13·2	12·1	10·6	10·4
Oral surgery —Est. No.	87,330	3,660	7,910	6,510	4,600	8,020	7,910	7,680	4,680
—Mean duration of stay	2·2	2·3	1·9	2·0	2·1	2·7	2·4	2·4	2·2
Orthodontics —Est. No.	340	20	—	30	—	10	—	50	20
—Mean duration of stay	4·0	3·5	—	1·0	—	2·0	—	1·2	2·0
Neurosurgery —Est No.	29,350	2,200	3,200	2,090	1,890	600	2,210	1,060	1,880
—Mean duration of stay	11·7	19·2	8·1	13·8	9·3	7·8	15·8	10·0	9·7
Gynaecology —Est. No.	566,300	34,100	43,570	61,080	24,040	39,550	52,610	43,400	27,820
—Mean duration of stay	3·9	4·0	4·4	3·7	3·8	4·1	4·1	3·7	4·2
Special care baby unit —Est. No.	61,240	3,860	5,970	5,160	2,080	4,970	4,840	4,750	3,190
—Mean duration of stay	11·0	9·0	10·7	12·9	10·1	8·7	11·8	11·7	10·4
General practitioner (other)—Est. No.	91,740	5,610	4,640	7,260	4,010	2,450	3,600	5,680	5,440
—Mean duration of stay	18·7	20·0	14·3	16·5	14·2	38·5	19·2	15·9	27·1
General practitioner (dental)— Est. No.	800	—	—	10	—	—	—	20	580
—Mean duration of stay	1·6	—	—	1·0	—	—	—	2·0	1·4
All other specialist units —Est. No.	183,970	11,750	23,230	12,920	5,780	12,560	14,010	21,090	4,010
—Mean duration of stay	7·8	6·0	7·0	6·0	7·1	7·4	15·9	10·2	5·0

	National Health Service patients							*Private patients England*
	Wessex RHA	*Oxford RHA*	*South Western RHA*	*West Midlands RHA*	*Mersey RHA*	*North Western RHA*	*Special health authori-ties*	
General medicine —Est. No.	45,650	40,020	50,460	94,700	50,690	49,330	5,010	4,620
—Mean duration of stay	9·5	8·3	9·0	9·7	10·3	9·6	6·8	7·2
Paediatrics —Est. No.	13,410	17,260	22,270	37,030	21,220	38,530	1,830	350
—Mean duration of stay	6·8	3·6	3·1	3·5	3·7	3·9	5·5	7·6
Infectious diseases —Est. No.	40	540	770	1,120	760	2,070	—	80
—Mean duration of stay	9·8	6·9	8·4	7·4	10·0	8·5	—	6·0
Thoracic medicine —Est. No.	2,140	2,660	2,970	7,140	2,840	4,040	8,310	840
—Mean duration of stay	11·5	11·3	11·2	11·8	12·6	13·5	3·4	5·2
Dermatology —Est. No.	1,050	750	1,230	2,870	950	1,570	170	100
—Mean duration of stay	25·9	23·2	14·3	20·3	21·2	20·7	6·6	15·7
Neurology —Est. No.	1,780	2,810	2,280	5,350	1,980	4,240	2,890	1,100
—Mean duration of stay	11·4	19·2	12·0	10·5	7·6	10·3	10·6	6·0
Cadiology —Est. No.	1,680	1,880	390	6,440	3,160	5,800	4,570	1,250
—Mean duration of stay	8·5	6·6	6·5	6·9	8·0	6·6	7·8	3·9
Rehabilitation —Est. No.	680	390	30		110	310	—	70
—Mean duration of stay	20·2	29·1	63·3		34·9	78·4	—	12·4
Genito-urinary medicine —Est. No.			40	90			—	30
—Mean duration of stay	—	—	1·5	3·0	—	—	—	2·7
Rheumatology —Est. No.	2,130	2,000	1,260	2,300	760	3,920	270	320
—Mean duration of stay	23·0	13·7	16·6	16·9	16·8	18·5	8·9	12·4
Geriatric medicine —Est. No.	14,880	14,600	23,100	35,210	19,580	41,150	710	140
—Mean duration of stay	50·7	45·0	42·4	68·3	57·0	37·9	51·2	19·9
Units for younger disabled —Est. No.	60	10	300	320	230	490	—	10
—Mean duration of stay	11·7	19·0	33·3	150·3	18·7	35·2		1·0
General surgery —Est. No.	49,890	47,270	60,290	96,920	50,310	97,470	4,310	11,920
—Mean duration of stay	6·6	5·7	6·4	6·6	7·9	7·0	8·7	5·8
Ear, nose and throat —Est. No.	14,680	14,530	15,340	27,510	11,000	27,720	1,240	5,950
—Mean duration of stay	4·0	2·6	3·5	3·5	3·9	8·2	3·1	2·7

	National Health Service patients							Private patients England
	Wessex RHA	Oxford RHA	South Western RHA	West Midlands RHA	Mersey RHA	North Western RHA	Special health authorities	
Orthopaedic surgery —Est. No.	30,940	32,020	31,850	64,860	25,650	45,320	2,110	7,310
—Mean duration of stay	10·5	7·9	10·5	10·0	12·1	11·2	9·1	6·6
Opthalmology —Est. No.	7,680	5,010	9,100	13,800	6,520	13,990	8,810	4,750
—Mean duration of stay	5·1	4·3	5·5	5·4	5·5	5·6	4·0	3·1
Radiotherapy —Est. No.	2,790	2,800	6,110	5,460	3,970	4,460	1,150	1,160
—Mean duration of stay	11·9	8·3	8·5	6·0	12·1	12·2	8·1	6·8
Urology —Est. No.	7,210	3,450	8,280	16,110	5,230	16,270	6,460	2,840
—Mean duration of stay	5·7	5·2	6·8	6·5	7·5	6·6	7·7	5·5
Plastic surgery —Est. No.	2,200	4,820	3,790	4,860	2,880	5,480	640	890
—Mean duration of stay	10·8	7·3	8·8	7·9	5·4	8·0	5·8	4·2
Thoracic surgery —Est. No.	1,050	250	3,200	4,540	1,670	6,510	2,680	1,770
—Mean duration of stay	7·2	9·4	10·2	10·6	9·4	11·8	12·6	9·5
Oral surgery —Est. No.	4,880	4,330	6,160	7,910	3,810	9,070	200	2,050
Mean duration of stay	2·3	1·7	2·1	2·0	2·6	2·4	2·6	1·7
Orthodontics —Est. No.	—	—	120	—	50	10	—	—
—Mean duration of stay	—	—	1·7	—	11·5	2·0	—	—
Neurosurgery Est. No.	700	1,420	2,360	3,320	2,100	3,200	1,120	1,220
—Mean duration of stay	9·0	8·8	8·7	10·0	10·8	13·4	19·2	9·2
Gynaecology —Est. No.	29,800	29,150	34,370	57,240	25,960	58,010	5,550	7,090
—Mean duration of stay	3·9	3·3	3·7	4·0	4·6	4·0	3·8	3·9
Special care baby unit —Est. No.	2,950	2,690	2,440	7,800	3,980	5,940	620	100
—Mean duration of stay	9·9	13·6	12·9	9·8	9·8	11·8	24·3	9·6
General practitioner (other)—Est. No.	10,170	7,980	20,270	10,410	2,560	1,660	—	120
—Mean duration of stay	17·5	20·3	17·4	17·6	20·1	21·8	—	10·8
General practitioner (dental)—Est. No.	60	10	110	—	10	—	—	—
—Mean duration of stay	1·8	2·0	2·3	—	3·0	—	—	—
All other specialist units —Est. No.	7,130	1,010	12,010	5,910	30,580	16,560	15,420	3,580
—Mean duration of stay	5·7	15·9	5·3	8·1	5·8	6·0	8·8	8·4

THE ARTS

Library Services (Old People)

54. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received, prior to February 1988, from library authorities about making library services to local old people's homes the subject of competitive tendering.

59. **Dr. Marek:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what evidence he has of a desire by library authorities to make library services to local retirement pensioner homes subject to competitive tendering.

Mr. Luce: None so far. Library services to old people's homes is one example of services which, I suggest in my Green Paper, might be put out to competitive tender. The Government want to encourage library authorities to contract out services where this will produce greater efficiency or economies of scale.

Business Sponsorship

55. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he has any plans to review the business sponsorship scheme for the arts in the light of the annual report of the Association for Business Sponsorship for the Arts for 1986-87, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Luce: As I announced on 26 January, the scheme has been revised and strengthened for 1988-89. The budget will be increased by over 70 per cent. from £1·75 million to £3 million to reflect the growth in sponsorship and will be operated in two six-monthly periods, on the basis of allocations reflecting the take-up pattern in previous years. This should ensure that adequate resources are available throughout the year.

Public Library Service

56. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what consultations he had with local authorities prior to publishing his Green Paper, "Financing Our Public Library Service."

Mr. Luce: None. The period of consultation is now taking place. Before I exercise the proposed power to make regulations on fees and charges, I will consult further those representatives of local government as appear to be appropriate.

Library Services (Norfolk)

57. **Mr. John Garrett:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what information he has about the level of expenditure per capita on library services by Norfolk county council.

Mr. Luce: Information about public library expenditure is included in the statistics collected and published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. In the latest year for which information is available, 1986-87, Norfolk county council spent £4·84 per head of resident population.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

58. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Minister for the Arts to what extent those engaged in the arts have benefited from the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Luce: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend for Stroud (Mr. Knapman) earlier today.

Heritage (Funding)

60. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what assessment he has made of the extent to which plural funding can aid the preservation of Britain's heritage.

Mr. Luce: I am convinced that the co-operation of public and private interests is essential to preservation of the heritage. The national heritage memorial fund often works in partnership with the private sector in contributing to heritage appeals. Its many successes in recent years demonstrate the value of this approach.

Opera

61. **Mr. John Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what he is doing to encourage opera in the regions.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council is allocating an extra £1·5 million in 1988-89 for increased touring in regions outside London. I would expect opera companies to benefit from this increase.

National Theatre

62. **Mr. Tony Banks:** To ask the Minister for the Arts when he last met the chairman of the National theatre to discuss its level of Arts Council funding.

Mr. Luce: I meet the chairman from time to time, most recently on 27 September last year. Funding decisions relating to the National theatre are a matter for the Arts Council.

Marketing Skills

63. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what encouragement he is giving to the development of marketing skills by arts organisations.

Mr. Luce: I continue to be very interested in ways in which arts organisations can be encouraged to market themselves more effectively. As I told the House on 25 February at column 307, I am supporting two new initiatives in 1988-89 which will help arts bodies to become more skilful at marketing: a distance learning package and a programme of training courses for top management.

Libraries (Services)

64. **Mr. Waller:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what services are currently provided free to commercial organisations by public libraries.

Mr. Luce: There is considerable variation in library authority practice. However, the services provided free to commercial organisations include reference and information services and book-lending and reservation services.

Libraries (Funding)

65. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what representations he has received on the level of public funding of libraries, in the light of the proposals in the Green Paper Cm. 324.

Mr. Luce: None.

70. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what consultations he will be having in relation to the Green Paper on the financing of libraries.

Mr. Luce: My Green Paper invites public comment on the measures put forward. when I have fully considered all the views expressed, I will, as necessary, consult formally on the means to give effect to the Government's objectives.

Private Patronage

66. **Mr. John M. Taylor:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement about the prospects for enhanced private patronage of the Arts consequent upon the Budget tax changes.

Mr. Luce: I warmly welcome the Budget announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The reduction of the higher rates of income tax to 40 per cent. will ensure that high-earning individuals have more disposable income to invest as well as to give in charitable donations. Doubling the ceiling on payroll gifts from £120 to £240 per annum will make it more attractive for donors to select a wide range of charities to receive their gifts (they may choose up to eight), among which I hope arts charities will figure prominently.

Theatres (Funding)

67. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what estimates he has made of the financial assistance that will flow to the theatre from his incentive funding policy.

Mr. Luce: The Arts Council is looking to incentive funding to generate increased income of £2 from private sector sources for every £1 of taxpayer's money.

Community Library

68. **Mr. Gerald Bowden:** To ask the Minister for the Arts if, following the announcement of the closure of Kingswood library by Southwark London borough council and the publication of the Green Paper on the financing of libraries, he will give consideration to allowing alternative agencies to provide community libraries in cases where the relevant local authority is unwilling or unable to provide this service.

Mr. Luce: Statutory responsibility for providing a comprehensive and efficient public library service rests with the London borough of Southwark. My Green Paper does not propose any changes in responsibility, only that library authorities should consider contracting-out as a means of providing services more efficiently and effectively. There is nothing to prevent a private library seeking to provide a service to the public being financed by voluntary contributions or private sector sponsorship.

Inner-city Regeneration

69. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Minister for the Arts what assessment he has made of the extent to which the arts can aid the regeneration of the inner cities.

Mr. Luce: I have been impressed by the arts contributions being made to inner-city regeneration, which I have seen during regional visits. I commend the efforts of the Arts Council and regional arts associations to build on these by presenting opportunities to developers and business interests.

Museums, Galleries and Libraries

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Minister for the Arts what is his involvement in the formulation of corporate plans for national museums, galleries and libraries.

Mr. Luce: I believe that it is vital that the trustees and staff of the national museums and galleries and the British library have a clear view of the objectives of their institution, of the means by which those objectives can be attained and of the targets against which their achievements will be measured. It is important too that objectives and achievements should be reviewed regularly to take account of new developments.

In 1986 I asked each of the national museums and galleries and the British Library to produce a strategic or corporate plan looking five years ahead, and to roll forward the plans annually.

The institutions are now putting the final touches to the second round of planning, and I am meeting each of them in turn to discuss their plans.

British Theatre Association (Library)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what are the terms of reference of the working party currently investigating the British Theatre Association's library.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 23 March 1988]:* The terms of reference are as follows:

Given that there is to be no additional public funding of the library, to consider—

(a) whether it is possible for the library to balance its income and expenditure; and

(b) if this is not possible, what would be the best way in which the library's functions could be carried on and to report to the director of the BTA.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what he estimates would be the cost of disposing of the contents of the British Theatre Association's library in relation to *(a)* relocation and *(b)* staffing.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 23 March 1988]:* I have commissioned a study of the BTA library, which is to consider, among other things, the best way in which its work could be carried on if it could no longer operate independently. This will include an estimate of costs.

"The Urban Renaissance"

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the research and publication cost of the Arts Council's paper "The Urban Renaissance".

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 4 March 1988]:* The total cost of the published pamphlet was £5,410, divided thus:

	£
Research and consultancy costs (the paper forms a part of a larger research project)	1,400
Time of Arts Council's permanent staff	1,000
Printing and distribution	3,010
	5,410

Museums

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Minister for the Arts what initiatives are currently being developed in the area of museum collections management.

Mr. Luce: Museums and galleries are increasingly aware of the importance of developing clear policies of collections management which relate to their overall aims and resources. I am keen to encourage this. The museums database project, recently undertaken by the Museums Association, identified this as a key area where further research would be of practical help to museum managers.

I have decided therefore to commission a study in conjunction with the Museums Association, to look at the wider resource implications of maintaining and managing museum collections. The study will examine, and attempt to quantify, factors such as display and storage space, curatorial and conservation costs, cataloguing and stocktaking costs and will emphasise the need for effective accountability for collections. The study will look also at the opportunities for improved public access to collections.

I am particularly pleased that the initiative for such a study has come from museum professionals. The study will be undertaken by consultants experienced in the field of museums management and is expected to take nine to 12 months to complete. Information and advice will be gathered from a wide range of museum personnel and from a representative survey of institutions—national, local authority, university and independent. I am confident that the report will provide valuable information and practical guidance for all those responsible for efficient management and decision-making in museums and galleries.

TRANSPORT

Vehicle Records

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the progress of the current review examining the civil defence implications of computerising heavy goods vehicle and public service vehicle records; and if a copy of the report will be placed in the Library;

(2) if he will make a statement on the likely expenditure implications of the introduction for civil defence purposes of computerised vehicle records.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The vehicle inspectorate and good operator licensing records are being computerised for reasons other than civil defence. Consideration is being given to the possibility of using these records to locate vehicles in any type of emergency. The internal departmental papers forming part of this consideration are not appropriate for placing in the Library.

Unsafe Vehicles (Sale)

Mr. Archer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will introduce legislation to make it a criminal offence to display for sale a vehicle in an unsafe condition and to give local authority trading standards officers the power to authorise routine inspections.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The offence already exists in section 60 of the Road Traffic Act 1972. We have agreed with the Director General of Fair Trading, trading standards organisations and representatives of the motor trade and consumers the desirability of improving section 60 to make it easier to enforce and apply. We are also discussing with them the powers of inspection.

Airports (Delays)

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to reduce delays for passengers at British airports.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Passenger flows at airports are influenced by a variety of factors, most of which are the responsibility of the airport operator. The Government seek to ensure that their own airport activities — including customs and immigration control — cause no unnecessary delay.

Roll-on/Roll-off Ferries (Inspection)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport in what form statistics are now available for the two years and two months prior to the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise concerning inspections of ro/ro ferries by marine surveyors.

Mr. David Mitchell: These statistics are available in the form quoted by my right hon. Friend in his reply on 10 March at column *294*.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the reason for the change in recording methods of inspection of ro/ro ferries by marine surveyors before and after the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise, and the date of this change.

Mr. David Mitchell: The reason for changing the method of recording the inspections of ro/ro ferries was to ensure that all such ships and their on-board operation practices were being inspected. The changes dated from 6 March 1987.

Herald of Free Enterprise (Marine Surveyors)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement of the relative priorities of different tasks performed by marine surveyors both *(a)* before and *(b)* after the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise.

Mr. David Mitchell: Statutory surveys are generally given first priority by marine surveyors but the safety inspections of United Kingdom and foreign ships are also given a high priority. Since the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise an increased proportion of surveyor effort has been directed towards the inspections of United Kingdom and foreign ro/ro passenger ferries.

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has on *(a)* the total number of inspections completed by marine surveyors on the Herald of Free Enterprise, *(b)* the number completed in port, and *(c)* the number completed at sea in (i) the 10 years five months prior to its sailing and (ii) since its registration.

Mr. David Mitchell: During the construction period of the Herald of Free Enterprise in Bremerhaven prior to the issue of the first passenger and safety certificate in May 180, numerous visits were made by marine surveyors from my Department. The vessel was first registered on 29 May 1980. Subsequently, the Herald of Free Enterprise was surveyed and certificated by marine surveyors from my Department as follows:

Date	*Place*	*Passenger and Safety Certificate*
March 1981	Amsterdam	Renewed
February 1982	Amsterdam	Renewed
February 1983	Bremerhaven	Renewed
January 1984	Dover	Extended
March 1984	Newcastle	Renewed
February 1985	Newcastle	Renewed
February 1986	Newcastle	Renewed
February 1987	Dover	Extended

Several visits to the ship were made in connection with each renewal of the passenger and safety certificate to survey the ship and her equipment.

Passenger and safety certificate surveys are conducted in port, apart from sea trials prior to the issue of the initial certificate, and the two surveys for extension of certificates noted above.

Road Accidents

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to the number of *(a)* road accidents and *(b)* fatalities which occur amongst (i) children (ii) adults in inner-city areas, (iii) suburban areas and (iv) rural areas; and what estimates he has of the relative rates per head of population.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information requested is not available.

The STATS 19 road accident reporting system does not identify inner-city areas or distinguish between suburban and rural areas.

Lydden and Dover Eastern Docks

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer of 23 March, *Official Report*, column 129, he will place in the Library a copy of the standard cost benefit analysis in respect of the A2 dualling between Lydden and Dover Eastern docks.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Helicopters (Coastal Rescue)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost to public funds per annum of providing a helicopter for coastal rescue work; how many such helicopters are on stand-by for the south Devon coastline; how many times these helicopters have been used in the last three years for cliff rescue; and what is the cost of each such operation.

Mr. David Mitchell: Helicopters are provided for a wide variety of civilian and military marine and aviation search and rescue tasks and the cost of coastal rescue cannot be separately identified. The overall cost in 1987-88 is some £61 million, falling mainly on the Defence vote.

There are helicopters available for coast rescue duties on the south Devon coast at RNAS Culdrose (5), RAF Chivenor (2) and at Lee-on-Solent (2). The Navy detachment at Lee is shortly to be withdrawn and replaced with a contract helicopter provided by the Department of Transport.

Helicopters were asked to assist in cliff rescue operations in Devon on 10 occasions over the last three years, as follows: 1985 (4), 1986 (4), 1987 (2).

Breeches Buoy Equipment

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if, pursuant to his answer of 14 March, *Official Report*, column *482*, he will give in the *Official Report* a detailed breakdown of the individual cost per station per annum of retaining breeches buoy equipment.

Mr. David Mitchell: The individual cost per station per annum of retaining breeches buoy equipment is approximately £1,400. This figure is made up as follows:—

	Cost (£)
Payment to auxiliary in charge for maintenance of equipment—2·5 hours per week at £2·17	282·00
Trailer replacement and maintenance	200·00
Replacement and maintenance of equipment	466·00
Replacement line-throwing pistol (present system now obsolete and unobtainable)	150·00
Rockets, Ten per annum at £30·00 each	300·00
Total	1,398·00

The figures for replacement rocket equipment are approximate, and should be taken as a minimum.

Woolwich Ferry (Electronic Warning Signs)

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the outcome of discussions he has had with Newham council about the replacement of the electronic warning signs on major roads leading to the Woolwich ferry; and if he will make a statement on when he expects these signs to be back in action.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We are currently considering cost estimates from Newham for the replacement of the signs. A solution of the current industrial dispute at the ferry will avoid much of the need for such signs and this still remains our aim.

Airports (Flight Delays)

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many air flights were delayed by up to *(a)* one hour, *(b)* three hours, *(c)* six hours and *(d)* 12 hours within the period of 12 months for which records are available at the following airports: *(a)* Heathrow, *(b)* Gatwick, *(c)* Stansted, *(d)* East Midlands, *(e)* Manchester, and *(f)* Leeds/Bradford.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The information sought by my hon. Friend is not held centrally; I suggest that he approaches the airports concerned direct.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Manufactured Goods

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the percentage share of the British domestic market for manufactured goods held by British manufacturers in 1979; and what was the percentage share held in 1987.

Mr. Maude: It is estimated that 73 per cent. of the United Kingdom home demand for manufactured goods was met by United Kingdom manufacturers in 1979. This compares with an estimate of 65 per cent. for the 12 months to September 1987, the latest period for which figures are available.

Insider Dealing

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will publish a list of the names of those persons who have been referred by the stock exchange surveillance department to his Department following inquiries into insider dealing in stocks and shares.

Mr. Maude: No.

Arthur Bell and Son plc and DCL (Takeover)

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will outline the current situation regarding his Department's inquiry into the takeover of Arthur Bell and Son plc and DCL by Guinness; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Maude: The investigation into the affairs and membership of Guinness plc continues.

Lebanon (Military Equipment)

Mr. Latham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what the name of the company in Lebanon to which military equipment was erroneously sent in 1982; what was the specific nature of the company's links with the Palestine Liberation Organisation; and what specific links existed between that company and Racal-Tacticom;

(2) what disciplinary action has been taken regarding the error in 1982 which allowed an export licence to be given to a consignment of military equipment to be sent to a Lebanon company with links with the Palestine Liberation Organisation; and what departmental procedures have been established to prevent a repetition of this incident.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have nothing to add on these points to the reply I gave on 18 March to my hon. Friend.

Plastics (Exhibition)

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to plastics to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Atkins: Yes. Arrangements have been made for such an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall to take place from Monday 9 May to Friday 13 May.

United States Space Station

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what United Kingdom participation *(a)* is currently fulfilled and *(b)* is expected in the United States space station project.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* European involvement in the international space station programme will be through the European Space Agency's Columbus programme. This is an optional programme of the agency and for the present the United Kingdom will not be participating in it, but we are continuing to discuss this with our partners in ESA.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether the European Space Agency has any current involvements or is planning any involvement with the United States space station project.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 25 March 1988]*: The European Space Agency will, through its Columbus programme, be participating with the USA, Canada and Japan in the development of a manned space station. The European involvement will be principally through a laboratory for microgravity research on the core space station, an independently orbiting unmanned experimental module for long duration experiments in space and a polar orbiting platform, mainly for earth observation.

Horizon 2000

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on developments in the Horizon 2000 space project.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 25 March 1988]*: the Horizon 2000 space project, which was agreed by the Ministers of ESA member states in 1985 and considered again in 1987, is a space science programme spread over 20 years. It comprises four major cornerstone missions together with a number of smaller missions. Preparations are under way for the first cornerstone mission. However, the United Kingdom has not agreed to ESA proposals for increased funding for the five-year period 1990 to 1994, the programme having already benefited from a 27 per cent. increase agreed for the period 1985 to 1989. In the circumstances, some modifications to the programme as originally conceived are likely, and this is currently under consideration by ESA.

Nissan

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions took place with Nissan as part of the negotiations leading to the offer of Government grants for the plant at Sunderland, regarding the availability of a partially or totally non-unionised work force; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 25 March 1988]*: The availability of a partially or totally non-unionised work force did not form part of the negotiations with Nissan which led to the offer of Government financial assistance for the Sunderland plant. Nissan was concerned to establish an effective working relationship with the United Kingdom trade union movement and it subsequently signed an agreement with the Amalgamated Engineering Union, membership of which the company encourages.

Tour Operators (Surcharges)

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) whether his Department has investigated the practice by tour operators of charging customers for fuel surcharges in respect of aeroplane flights;

(2) when he or his representatives plan next to meet the Association of British Travel Agents;

(3) whether he or his representatives have ever discussed the question of fuel surcharges with the Association of British Travel Agents.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 25 March 1988]*: Specific provisions about the levying and explanation of surcharges are contained in the tour operators' code of conduct drawn up by the Association of British Travel Agents in consultation with the Director General of Fair Trading. I am already examining this matter to ascertain whether such charges are justified and are clearly explained to customers. The Director General, who monitors the effectiveness of such codes, has told ABTA that he is concerned about recent media reports of excessive fuel surcharges. ABTA is expected to make a considered response in the near future. My Department is in close touch with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) on this issue and I shall be meeting OFT officials with officials from the Civil Aviation Authority in April to discuss the position. I plan to meet ABTA representatives shortly after that.

Internal Market

Mr. Warren: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the extent to which approximation of member states' value-added tax rate on all items is essential for the completion of the internal market.

Mr. Lilley: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General to the hon. Member for Bradford, South (Mr. Cryer) on 14 January 1988 at column *442*.

DEFENCE

Exercise Outback 88

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the ports at which Royal Navy ships will call during Exercise Outback 88;

(2) if he will state *(a)* those countries in which defence equipment will be displayed by the Royal Navy for commercial purposes in Exercise Outback 88, and *(b)* what assessment he has made of their human rights record.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The detailed planning of the Royal Navy task group deployment is still in progress, and it is too early to give a list of all the countries which the task group is likely to visit. However, the deployment will include visits to Malta, Singapore, Brunei, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Papua New Guinea, as well as participation in the Australian bicentennial celebrations. The purpose of the deployment is to exercise with the forces of our friends and allies, and to demonstrate a British naval presence in the areas to be visited. In the process, it will naturally provide an opportunity to display a wide range of British defence equipments in the ports to be visited. The Government do not permit the export of equipment to countries with a record of human rights violations when it is felt likely that the equipment in question might be used for internal repression.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether any of the Royal Navy ships involved in Exercise Outback 88 will be carrying nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It is our policy neither to confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons on board Royal Navy vessels.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which other navies will be exercising with the Royal Navy in Exercise Outback 88;

(2) if he will list those areas in which the Royal Navy will be exercising in Exercise Outback 88 *(a)* with the

Unites States navy, *(b)* with the Royal Australian navy and *(c)* with other navies; and if he will state the purpose of these exercises.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Arrangements for the Royal Navy task group to exercise with the navies of other countries during Outback 88 are not yet finalised. However, I can say that during the deployment the task group will be participating in two exercises with nations which are party to the five-power defence arrangements: a maritime exercise and an air defence exercise in the South China sea area. The task group will also exercise with the United States navy, and with the Royal Australian navy and probably various other navies off Australia after the fleet review in Sydney in October. The purpose of these exercises, as with all such exercises, is to maintain the fighting effectiveness of our naval forces.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of the impact on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's capabilities in the North Atlantic of the absence for six months of the Ark Royal and other Royal Navy ships in Exercise Outback 88;

(2) if he will list the Royal Navy ships that will participate in Exercise Outback 88 *(a)* by port of departure, *(b)* by date of departure and *(c)* by date of return to the United Kingdom.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The task group is due to deploy from Portsmouth in mid-June, returning to the United Kingdom in mid-December. The task group will consist of Her Majestys ships Ark Royal, Edinburgh and Sirius, together with the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries Fort Grange, Olwen and Orangeleaf. The ships will remain assigned to NATO, and we retain the option not to deploy the group or to recall it to the NATO area in the event of an emergency.

Psychological Warfare

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish all figures available to him on the number of armed forces personnel and civilians who attended psychological operations or psychological warfare courses since 1973, including such figures as do not distinguish between those courses and others run at the same institution.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 7 March 1988 at column *59*, in which I gave the information which is available on numbers of Ministry of Defence personnel who have undertaken psychological operations training.

I would also refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a similar question on 27 October 1976, *Official Report*, column *263*, covering the period 1973 to 1976. The original records upon which this answer was based, and records for the period 1976 to 1982, are no longer available and were destroyed in 1978 and 1982 as these were no longer required.

Forged CIA Documents

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide details of the use of forged CIA documents by the armed forces in Northern Ireland from 1971 to current date.

Mr. Freeman: I am unaware of any evidence that such documents have been used at any time by the armed forces in Northern Ireland.

Captain Fred Holroyd

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who sat on the full medical board in the case of Captain Fred Holroyd (retired) on 1 July 1975; and if he was informed of its conclusions.

Mr. Freeman: It is not my Department's policy to name individual officers acting in any particular case.

Captain Holroyd (retired) was informed of the findings of the full medical board which sat on 1 July 1975.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date in June 1975 the special confidential report on Captain Fred Holroyd (retired) was written; who wrote it; and whether Captain Fred Holroyd (retired) was informed of its findings.

Mr. Freeman: The special confidential report was initiated by Captain Holroyd's commanding officer on 5 June 1975. Captain Holroyd was subsequently informed of its findings.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on what date in 1982 assistance was given by his Department to the Royal Ulster Constabulary inquiry into the allegations of Captain Fred Holroyd (retired);

(2) what was the nature and scope of the assistance given by his Department to the Royal Ulster Constabulary inquiry in 1982 into the allegations of Captain Fred Holroyd (retired).

Mr. Freeman: The Ministry of Defence responded appropriately on various dates to inquiries and requests for assistance from the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under what Army regulations the special investigation branch of the Royal Military Police carried out their investigations into the allegations of Captain Fred Holroyd (retired).

Mr. Freeman: Assistance to civil police forces is given in accordance with Queen's Regulations for the Army and the Provost Manual.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the answer of the 29 February, *Official Report*, column *422*, the full Army medical board held on 1 July 1975 formally sat as a result of consideration given to the special confidential report written in June 1975.

Mr. Freeman: No. The full Army medical board proceedings were entirely separate from the special confidential report.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 29 February, *Official Report*, column *422*, if the special confidential report relating to Captain Fred Holroyd (retired) written in June 1975 was subsequently amended.

Mr. Freeman: Yes.

Service Personnel (Psychiatric Treatment)

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what redress is available for those Army service

men and women casualty-evacuated to a military psychiatric hospital as a result of false information provided by superior officers.

Mr. Freeman: The individual may appeal under section 180 of the Army Act 1955.

Service Personnel (Downgrading)

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 29 February, *Official Report*, column *422*, under what regulations the downgrading of Army service men and women could have been recommended before 1975.

Mr. Freeman: The regulations under which medical downgrading of Army personnel may have been recommended before 1975 will have been contained in the following publications: The PULHEEM'S administrative pamphlet (1972); Regulations for Army Medical Services (1954); Queens Regulations for the Army 1961; the Army Commissioning Regulations 1971 and PULHEEM'S—A Joint Services System of Medical Classification 1951.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1), pursuant to the written answer of 29 February, *Official Report*, column *421*, what is the significance in respect of the duties an individual is assessed as capable of performing of a medical report which recommends in a clinical summary of a patient's condition that the patient be medically downgraded from 'S2' to 'S3' on the PULHEEM'S system;

(2) if he will list the terms used under *(a)* S2 and *(b)* S3 of the PULHEEM'S system of medical reports.

Mr. Freeman: The terms used under the PULHEEM'S system of medical classification are as follows:

S2. "emotionally fit to perform Army duties adequately under full combatant conditions in any part of the world."

S3. "although having a history of emotional instability is at present well adjusted and fit to serve in any part of the world in a role which is not primarily a fighting one".

Royal Engineers Surrey Troop, Castledillon

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which members of the Royal Engineers survey troop stationed at Castledillon in 1974-75 belonged to Army units other than the Royal Engineers;

(2) how many officers and of what rank served in the Castledillon, Royal Engineers survey troop in 1974-75;

(3) what role the Royal Engineers survey troop was carrying out whilst stationed at Castledillon in 1974-75;

(4) how many service men and women served in the Royal Engineers survey troop stationed at Castledillon from 1974-75.

Mr. Freeman: Detailed information on this unit, which is not now deployed in the Province, is no longer available. The role of a Royal Engineer field survey is to provide or process aerial photographs, ground surveys and mapping for the Army as required. The strength of such a unit at that time varied between about 30 and 40, depending upon its specific task, and usually included two officers.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what unit the Royal Engineers survey troop stationed at Castledillon in 1974-75 was guarded.

Mr. Freeman: The RE squadron based at Castledillon at that time would have been responsible for the overall security of the base.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the numerical designation of the Royal Engineers survey troop stationed at Castledillon in 1974-75.

Mr. Freeman: 4 Field Survey Troop, Royal Engineers.

Army Medical Board

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in what circumstances a full Army medical board sits in the absence of the patient when medical reclassification is being considered.

Mr. Freeman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 11 December 1987 at column *311*.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what safeguards there are to prevent false information being given by commanding officers on special confidential reports to the Army medical authorities concerning officers under their command who may be undergoing medical assessment.

Mr. Freeman: The individual who is the subject of a special confidential report or a medical report may appeal under section 180 of the Army Act 1955. Special confidential reports are distinct from medical reports.

Medical Reports (False Information)

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what safeguards there are to prevent false information being given on medical reports.

Mr. Freeman: I have nothing further to add to the reply I gave on 29 February 1988 at column *422*.

Northern Ireland Training and Advisory Team

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will provide details of the role and composition of those elements of the Northern Ireland training and advisory team based in Northern Ireland from 1973 to the current date.

Mr. Freeman: Detailed organisational information on this is no longer available. There is no Northern Ireland training and advisory team (NITAT) currently in Northern Ireland. The role and composition of the NITATs are as described in my reply to the hon. Member on 29 February at column *422*.

AWACS

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the progress being made on the AWACS programme.

Mr. Sainsbury: The E-3 AWACS programme is progressing well. The RAF looks forward to receiving the first aircraft as agreed.

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many jobs have been created in defence industries as a result of the Boeing AWACS offset arrangement; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many offset jobs have been initiated in civilian manufacturing industries as a result of the Boeing AWACS offset arrangement; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Boeing's offset obligation to the Ministry of Defence is a financial one and will be measured in terms of the value and quality of contracts placed. Although we would expect the net effect on job numbers to be favourable, the Department has never set a target for jobs.

Air Combat Manoeuvring System Platforms

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nationality of the successful tenderer for the contract to build six air combat manoeuvring system platforms in the North sea; what was the value of the contract; and how many United Kingdom-based firms or yards tendered for the contract.

Mr. Sainsbury: The project referred to is a private venture to which my Department has made no commitment.

Royal Navy (Engineer Officers)

Miss Fookes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action is taken by him to ensure that training for Royal Navy engineer officers takes account of developments in the wider engineering field.

Mr. Freeman: Most Royal Navy engineer officers are trained to a degree standard at the Royal Naval engineering college (RNEC), Manadon. Like other higher education institutions, RNEC needs to keep itself informed of, and take into account as necessary, developments within its own sphere of activity. The mechanism for such communication and consultation is often provided by advisory bodies and it has, therefore, recently decided to form an advisory council for the RNEC with the following terms of reference:

"To advise the Admiralty Board, with particular regard to the role and work of the Royal Naval Engineering College on matters relating to:

(a) higher education and the award of first and second level degrees.

(b) national qualifications and training of Chartered Engineers; and

(c) research and funding thereof."

Professor Sir Hermann Bondi, KCB, FRS, has kindly accepted an invitation to serve as chairman of the advisory council, whose membership will include four ex officio representatives of the Ministry of Defence:

the Director General Naval Manpower and Training;
the Chief of Staff to the Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command;
the Chief Naval Engineer Officer; and
the Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser.

The following have also kindly accepted an invitation to serve on the advisory council:

Lord Caldecote KBE, DSC, FEng
Mr. T. N. Corkhill MSc, BSc, CEng, MRAeS
Professor B. Crossland CBE, MRIA, FEng, FRS
Professor D. E. N. Davies CBE, FEng, FRS
Professor M. G. Farley CEng, FRAeS, FIMechE, FIProdE, CBIM
Mr. A. Frodsham CBE
Professor W Gosling DSc
Dr. D. Harrison FEng
Mrs. J. A. G. Kennedy CEng
Mr. J. R. S. Morris CBE
Professor G. D. Sims OBE, DSc, LLD, FIEE, FEng.

The inaugural meeting is planned to take place on 10 May 1988 at the college.

155 mm Dual Capable Gun

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the date upon which the 155 mm dual capable gun started in service.

Mr. Sainsbury: The current 155 mm dual capable gun first entered United Kingdom service in 1967.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United States air force proposal to site a deep space tracking station at RAF Feltwell is in connection with the strategic defence initiative; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The tracking station is not part of the SDI programme.

Operational Support Unit

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the role and function of the operational support unit of the Ministry of Defence police; of which section of the Ministry of Defence police it is a part; when it was first set up in its current role; what is its annual budget; and whether it is autonomous from local Ministry of Defence police units in the areas in which it is deployed.

Mr. Sainsbury: the operational support unit (OSU) was set up on 1 April 1984, and comprises 50 MDP officers commanded by a chief inspector. Their primary role, which has remained unchanged, is explained in paragraph 9 of Cmnd. 9422, but they are also available to reinforce any MOD police detachment under pressure for any policing task, or to police MOD locations normally without MOD police should a need arise.

The OSU is an independent unit reporting direct to MOD police headquarters, but when deployed comes under the operational command of the senior MOD police officer at the location.

The OSU does not have a separate budget; its basic staffing costs are of the order of £775,000.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 29 March 1988

ENVIRONMENT

EC (Non-quota Textile Scheme)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what money is available for allocation in the final round of bids under the European regional development fund non-quota textile allocations scheme; what bids have been submitted for consideration; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Trippier: £13·2 million of grant remains available under the textile non-quota special measure, for which applications worth £4·3 million have been received. £37·9 million of grant has already been awarded under this measure.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals there are for an EEC scheme to replace the European regional development fund non-quota textile scheme on its expiry.

Mr. Maude: I have been asked to reply.

None. However, as stated in my answer on 3 March, at columns *641-42*, to which I would refer the hon. Member, small and medium sized firms throughout Great Britain may now apply for consultancy grants under my Department's enterprise initiative. In the urban programme area of Burnley these are available at the higher (two thirds) rate.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on levels of production of *(a)* CFC 11, *(b)* CFC 12, *(c)* CFC 13 and *(d)* CFC 14 for each year since 1975 in (i) the EEC, (ii) the United States of America and (iii) the rest of the world.

Mr. Moynihan: Following is information on production of *(a)* CFC 11 and 12 and *(b)* CFC 113 and 114 in the European Community, the United States and globally.

Kilotonnes

	(a) CFC 11/12			*(b) CFC 113/114*		
	EC	*US*	*World*	*EC*	*US*[1]	*World*
1975	n.a.	n.a.	695	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1976	326	n.a.	751	24	31	n.a.
1977	319	n.a.	703	24	37	n.a.
1978	307	n.a	681	n.a.	39	n.a.
1979	304	209	647	n.a.	50	n.a.
1980	296	206	640	n.a.	57	n.a.
1981	300	221	638	n.a.	57	n.a.
1982	289	180	599	n.a.	57	n.a.
1983	310	207	647	n.a.	57	n.a.
1984	322	237	694	54	68	n.a.
1985	336	202	703	64	73	158
1986	372	235	748	66	60	185

[1] CFC 113 only

Sources

(i) *EC*: European Council of Chemical Manufacturers' Federation (CEFIC). No figures for CFC 113/114 available between 1978 and 1983.

(ii) *US*: 1979-85: "Product Uses and Market Trends for Potential Ozone Depleting Substances 1985-2000" Rand Corporation 1986. 1980 figures are United Kingdom industry estimates.

(iii) *World*: CFC 11/12: Chemical Manufacturers' Association do not include Eastern bloc countries. CFC 113/114: 1985 figures: Rand Corporation. 1986 figures are United Kingdom industry estimates.

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to sales of *(a)* CFC 11, *(b)* CFC 12, *(c)* CFC 113 and *(d)* CFC 114 in (i) the United Kingdom, (ii) the EEC, (iii) the United States of America and (iv) the rest of the world, for each year since 1975.

Mr. Moynihan: Global sales of CFCs may be taken as roughly equivalent to the global production figures which I am giving in response to another question by the hon. Member. Separate figures are not available for the United States or (since the EC took collective action on CFCs in 1980) for the United Kingdom. Sales within the EC are as follows:

Kilotonnes

	(a) CFC 11/12	*(b) CFC 113/114*
1975	n.a.	n.a.
1976	244	18
1977	233	19
1978	231	n.a.
1979	220	n.a.
1980	217	n.a.
1981	210	n.a.
1982	207	n.a.
1983	216	n.a.
1984	218	39
1985	228	44
1986	259	48

Source:

European Council of Chemical Manufacturers' Federations (CEFIC). No figures for CFC 113/114 available between 1978 and 1983. All figures exclude exports outside the EC.

Pollution Paper No. 15

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to commission research to update the findings of his Department's pollution paper No. 15 of 1979; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Pollution paper 15, published in 1979, reviewed research on chlorofluorocarbons and their effect on stratospheric ozone.

The Department now supports a broadly based programme of research into stratospheric ozone; I refer the hon. Member to my replies of 2 November 1987, at column *437*, and 17 March 1988, at column *645*. In addition, the stratospheric ozone review group presented an assessment of our current understanding (which updates pollution paper 15) to the Department last August. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House. A follow-up report from it is due this autumn.

Rockwool and Glasswool Fibre

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the cancer risks

of rockwool and glasswool fibre padding; how many houses have this material installed; what steps he is taking to minimise any risk; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Waldegrave: I refer to the reply by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Banbury (Mr. Baldry) on 1 December 1987, at column *551*, on the health risks to householders from man-made mineral fibre (MMMF) loft insulation. Rockwool and glasswool fibre padding are forms of MMMF widely used for loft insulation. They are also used in new buildings for cavity wall insulation. Only limited information is available on rockwool and glasswool cavity wall insulation but this indicates that the risk to health from them is of no more consequence than that from loft insulation. Information from Audits Great Britain Ltd. suggests that at the end of 1986 14 million households at most had these materials installed as loft insulation. The Department has no information on the number of houses with rockwool or glasswool cavity wall insulation. The risk to health from these materials is extremely small, but people handling them are advised to wear a face mask conforming to BS 6016 or BS 2091 to reduce the risks still further. The Secretary of State has published further advice in the booklet "All about loft, tank and pipe insulation," which is sent to persons seeking assistance under the homes insulation scheme.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Ridley: The Department's financial records relate to financial years. In 1986-87 DOE (Central) spent £5·7 million on management and other consultancies (including computing). The forecast outturn for 1987-88 is £4·7 million.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total amount spent by the Property Services Agency in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Ridley: Expenditure by the Property Services Agency, on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases, in 1987 was £3,572,487.

Local Authorities (Superannuation Funds)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to table regulations allowing local authorities to charge administrative expenses of superannuation funds directly to those funds; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: The proposal to charge the administration expenses of local government superannuation funds to those funds was the subject of statutory consultations with representatives of local government and others in 1987. In the light of those consultations my right hon. Friend expects to make later this year the amending regulation effective from 1 April 1986 charging the above expenses to the funds.

RNAD, Coulport

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment of what material the floating jetty for the RNAD, Coulport, is to be constructed; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: Tenderers are free to make offers using either concrete or steel for the pontoons.

Chemical Warfare Research (Marmosets)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information is available on attempts by the Government of the Netherlands to secure marmosets from the United Kingdom for the purpose of chemical warfare research; and if he proposes to take steps to prevent such animals being exported for such purposes.

Mr. Moynihan: The Department has no information on attempts by the Government of the Netherlands to secure marmosets from the United Kingdom for the purpose of chemical warfare research.

Litter

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what specific proposals and projects are currently in operation to combat littering in the urban centres of the north-east.

Mr. Moynihan: Projects currently in operation to combat littering in the north-east include Operation Clean-up at Middlesbrough under the urban programme and Tidy Britain Group's projects on cleaning and renovating the railway corridor between Newcastle and South Tyneside and cleaning areas on the River Tyne, together with a Tidy Up Middlesbrough campaign. The Tidy Britain Group has an ongoing programme to combat litter in collaboration with all sections of the community in all the urban centres of the north-east.

Rating Reform

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has yet completed his consideration of responses to the consultative paper "Non-Domestic Rates: Amendments to the Rating Legislation in England and Wales", published in July 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Howard: I have today written to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) setting out the Government's conclusions, including some modifications to the Government's proposals in the light of consultees' views. These mainly concern the power to remit rates on grounds of hardship; local authorities' involvement in the determination of rateable values; the proposed limit on the period in which ratepayers may propose alterations to rateable values; the backdating of alterations to the valuation list; and the duty on local authorities to consult business ratepayers. I have placed copies of that letter in the Library. The changes will be given effect in the Local Government Finance Bill or in regulations made under it.

Waterways

Mr. Barry Field To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received a response from the

British Waterways Board to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the maintenance of the boards' waterways; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I am grateful to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for its wide-ranging investigation of BWB. The board has carefully studied the Commission's report under its new chairman, Mr. David Ingman, and I am placing copies of its initial response in the Library of the House.

The commission proposed a major programme of changes and improvements, some of which BWB has already begun or identified as necessary, for implementation over the next two to three years. Its recommendations cover the definition of maintenance standards and tasks, achieving the optimum balance between in-house work and the use of contractors or consultants, the development of procedures for project appraisal, the basis for allocating resources to individual waterways, BWB's freight operations, the raising of revenue both from leisure use and from BWB's estate, the management of BWB's direct labour force and salaried staff, and some aspects of management systems and structure. The Government broadly endorse the commission's findings.

BWB has accepted most of the commission's recommendations and has set in hand the process of management change. Key elements are the development of comprehensive plans for individual waterways as a basis for budgetary control and resource allocation, structural reorganisation, the appointment of new commercial and personnel directors, and the overhaul of cost control systems. I welcome the board's positive response to the report and its commitment to change. I support both its overall approach and the action it is taking to implement the report's recommendations. I attach particular priority to making progress with the recommendations on maintenance and contracting out, direct freight activities, project appraisal, and the management of BWB's estate.

The Department is liaising with BWB on the development project appraisal procedures, and will review the guidelines on submission of schemes to the Department for approval in the light of the new arrangements. I shall also keep under review BWB's responsibilities for public road bridges over canals.

Some of the commission's recommendations on BWB's financial and budgetary framework would require Government action. The commission thought it important that the guidance figures which BWB is given on grant levels for future years should be respected. It also recommended that the Government should consider the possibility of relating part of the grant to meeting the cost of non-revenue earning requirements and that BWB should be given an incentive to increase its income from users by being allowed to retain at least part of any such increase.

These issues need further consideration in consultation with BWB. I recognise that BWB would like as much assurance as possible about future grant levels, subject always to public expenditure constraints. I also attach importance to incentives. The existing grant arrangements do, however, already allow BWB to use all receipts within the same financial year and to carry over to the following year, subject to approval, receipts from the sale of land. Further work is needed to assess the feasibility and practical value of splitting the grant between revenue and non-revenue earning requirements.

I will make a further statement this autumn in the light of the first substantive report which BWB will prepare then on progress in implementing the commission's recommendations.

ENERGY

Nuclear Installations (Incidents)

125. **Mr. Eastham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he has met the Chairman of the Health and Safety Commission to discuss the report "Statement of Incidents at Nuclear Installations".

Mr. Parkinson: A range of nuclear issues was discussed when I met the HSC chairman in November 1987.

Nuclear Power Stations

126. **Mr. Lofthouse:** To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what action he intends taking following the Health and Safety Commission's recent publication, "The Tolerability of Risk from Nuclear Power Stations".

Mr. Parkinson: The document was published by the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Commission will be considering the document and comments thereon, including those of the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Nuclear Installations, before formulating its own view. Comments have been requested by 6 May 1988.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Parkinson: My Department expects its total expenditure in the 1987-88 financial year on management and computer consultancy contracts to be about £283,000.

Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation

Mr. Eadie: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, when he next meets the chairman of British Coal, he will seek an assurance that the corporation will provide the general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, as a director of the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation, with details of the number of members of each union in accordance with the memorandum and articles of association of CISWO as amended by Statutory Instrument No. 1225 of 1987, so that individual unions can satisfy themselves as to the fairness of allocation of seats; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: British Coal has provided to the unions concerned all the information required under the amended memorandum and articles of CISWO. That information, including the allocation of seats, was verified by the corporation's auditors as required by the articles. A procedure is incorporated in the articles for the unions to challenge the information provided. None did so.

Sizewell B Power Station

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what information he has as to how many contracts for the building of Sizewell B have been awarded

to date; what percentage of them have gone to East Anglian firms; and what is his estimate of the number of Suffolk residents being employed at Sizewell B;

(2) if he will make a statement on the progress of building work at Sizewell B;

(3) what is his assessment of the current and projected impact of the Sizewell B project on the labour market in *(a)* East Anglia and *(b)* Suffolk.

Mr. Parkinson: This is a matter for the CEGB, and I have asked the chairman to write to my hon. Friend.

Amersham International

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends to exercise his option, under the articles of association, to require Amersham International plc to redeem on 31 March his special rights preference share in the company.

Mr. Parkinson: I have no present plans to do so.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Magistrates (Sentencing Policy)

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Attorney-General whether, in the light of the most recent Home Office statistics in relation to sentencing and the ethnic minorities, the Lord Chancellor intends to provide *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* training to magistrates; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: The magisterial committee of the Judicial Studies Board (which advises the Lord Chancellor on the training of magistrates) has in the last 12 months taken two initiatives to improve arrangements for the training of magistrates in sentencing and the ethnic minorities. In April last year the committee sent to all magistrates' courts committees, which are responsible for delivering training to magistrates locally, the first two in a series of cards to be issued, setting out a structured, step-by-step approach to decision making. One of these cards covered sentencing, and is designed to ensure that all relevant considerations relating to the offence, the offender and other matters are taken into account by magistrates in arriving at a sentence.

In June last year the committee organised a seminar on training in ethnic minority cultures, attended by representatives of selected magistrates' courts committees. This subject is listed as an approved subject in the training syllabus, so it may be included by magistrates' courts comittees in a training programme without prior application to the Lord Chancellor for approval. The seminar has been a stimulus to action and such training is increasingly being provided to magistrates.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General what was the total amount spent by his office in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

The Attorney-General: Nil.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General what was the total amount spent by the Lord Chancellor's Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

The Attorney-General: The total amount spent by the Lord Chancellor's Department in this financial year on management and computer consultancy, excluding hardware and software purchases, is £348,593·75.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General what was the total amount spent by Her Majesty's Land Registry in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

The Attorney-General: The sum spent by Her Majesty's Land Registry on management and computer consultancy contracts in 1987 was £487·02.

PRIME MINISTER

Q16. **Mr. Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will raise at the next meeting of the European Council the size of the United Kingdom's trade deficit with the EEC; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: No. The EC is our largest market, which takes about 50 per cent. of our exports; it is up to United Kingdom exporters to take further advantage of the market of 320 million people that the EC provides. The removal of remaining barriers to trade leading to the achievement of a single market in 1992 will afford plenty of opportunities to do so.

Scotland

Q130. **Mr. Norman Hogg:** To ask the Prime Minister whether she has any plans to visit Scotland.

The Prime Minister: Yes.

China (Ministerial Visits)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Prime Minister whether she will list the Ministers who have paid official visits to China in each of the last five years and the year of each such visit.

The Prime Minister: According to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's records, the information requested is as follows:

1983

January:—The right hon. Patrick Jenkin, MP, Secretary of State for Industry.

November: — The right hon. Peter Walker, MBE, MP, Secretary of State for Energy.

1984

March:—The right hon. Paul Channon, MP, Minister for Trade.

April:—The right hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

July:—The right hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

December:—Mr. A. Buchanan-Smith, MP, Minister of State, Department of Energy.

The right hon. Margaret Thatcher, FRS, MP, Prime Minister.

The right hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

1985

March:—The right hon. Lord Young of Graffham, Minister without Portfolio, and trade delegation.

September:—The right hon. Nicholas Ridley, MP, Secretary of State for Transport.

November:—The right hon. Michael Jopling, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

December:—The right hon. Lord Young of Graffham, Secretary of State for Employment.

1986

January: — Mr. Timothy Renton, MP, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
April: — Mr. Norman Lamont, MP, Minister of State for Defence Procurement.
The right hon. Richard Luce, MP, Minister for the Arts.
July: — The right hon. Timothy Raison, MP, Minister for Overseas Development.
October: — State Visit by Her Majesty The Queen, accompanied by the right hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.
November: — The right hon. Lord Young of Graffham, Secretary of State for Employment.
Mr. George Walden, CMG, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science.

1987
May: — Mr. Michael Spicer, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport.
September: —The Lord Skelmersdale, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security.
October: — The right hon. Lord Young of Graffham, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what was the total amount spent by the Cabinet Office in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

The Prime Minister: The total amount spent by the Cabinet Office on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases, during the calendar year 1987, was £355,000.

Litter Collection (St. James' Park)

Mr. Nellist: To ask the Prime Minister what was the cost to public funds of the dispersal of litter in St. James' park on Tuesday 22 March, prior to her attendance; and on which vote this expenditure will be borne.

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 28 March, at column *280*. The cost of less than £60 will be met from the Department of the Environment's provision for expenditure on the royal parks (class X, vote 4).

Interception of Communications Act 1985

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Prime Minister when the commissioner appointed under the Interception of Communications Act 1985 will present his annual report; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: A copy of the 1987 annual report by Lord Justice Lloyd has been laid before the House today in accordance with section 8(7) of the Interception of Communications Act 1985. The confidential appendix to the report has been excluded from that copy in accordance with section 8(8) of the Interception of Communications Act 1985. I am grateful to the commissioner for his work on the report and the reassurance it contains, that care is taken by all concerned to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of the Act. The commissioner's report suggests a small number of improvements to the procedures observed in dealing with these cases. Careful consideration is being given to ways of implementing these suggestions.

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 29 March.

The Prime Minister: This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including the Prime Minister of Fiji and the Mayor of Shanghai. In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Electrical Installations (Safety)

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent representations he has received about safety standards for electrical installations; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I regularly receive correspondence from colleagues, trade associations and members of the public concerning safety standards for electrical installations, most recently arising from the exhibition on safety and electricity presented by the Electrical Contractors Association in the Upper Waiting Hall between 2 and 6 November last, arranged by my hon. Friend.

In response to these inquiries, I have welcomed the efforts to promote greater awareness of the dangers of electricity and the potential hazards arising from the misuse of electrical equipment. In order to emphasise the importance of this area, my own Department, in collaboration with the industry, will shortly be launching an electrical safety canpaign with the specific aim of heightening people's awareness of the benefits to be gained by the installation of residual current devices in providing additional protection against electric shocks.

Telecommunications Industry

Mr. Anthony Coombs: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has as to (*a*) the number of employees in the British telecommunications industry per telephone subscriber and (*b*) the comparable figure for West Germany and France.

Mr. Butcher: The latest edition of the "International Telecommunication Union's Yearbook of Common Carrier Telecommunication Statistics" gives the following information.

	Total staff in telecommunication services	Main lines (telephone exchange connections)
United Kingdom (British Telecom) 31 March 1986	230,197	21,653,639
Germany (Federal Republic) (Bundesministerium fur das Post-und Fernmeldewesen) 31 December 1985	212,364	25,588,585
France (Direction generale des telecommunications) 31 December 1985	166,788	23,031,972

Direct comparison of such figures can be misleading as different operators offer different services whilst the amount of sub-contracted work also differs. A comparison of prices charged suggests that for typical telephone use United Kingdom prices are at least in line with France and Germany.

China

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what has been the level of United Kingdom exports to China in each of the last five years in *(a)* records, *(b)* television programmes and *(c)* films;

(2) what has been the level of *(a)* exports to and *(b)* imports from China in manufactured goods in each of the last five years;

(3) what has been the level of *(a)* exports to and *(b)* imports from China in each of the last five years;

(4) whether he will list the five industries which have exported goods or services to the highest value to China in each of the last five years;

(5) what has been the level of United Kingdom exports of books to China in each of the last five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: Information on the value of exported goods to China by industries, as defined in the standard industrial classification, is not available: figures have been compiled using standard international trade classification revision 2 divisions equating to the broad industrial sectors. Information on the value of services and the "performance fee" value of television programmes and films exported to China is not available. Television programmes are not identified in the *Overseas Trade Statistics;* figures for recorded videos have been provided and may include television programmes. The available information is given in the following tables:

United Kingdom trade with China 1983 to 1987
I—Total trade and trade in manufactured goods

£ million

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*January to December 1987*
Total exports	160·3	317·3	396·5	535·9	416·0
Of which:					
Manufactured goods	136·1	308·3	369·4	511·7	391·1
Total imports	231·4	278·4	308·0	327·0	391·8
Of which:					
Manfactured goods	132·5	163·0	171·4	185·3	270·3

II—Analysis of exports by SITC R2 divisions equating to broad industrial sectors

£ million

Division(s)	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*January to December 1987*
71-74 (Industrial machinery and plant)	27·2	74·7	132·0	209·4	148·6
78-79 (Transport)	9·6	12·4	50·3	62·4	72·5
67 (Iron and steel)	11·1	15·3	44·8	41·5	38·7
87 (Professional and scientific instruments)	18·0	41·0	35·7	33·4	36·3
Section 5 (Chemical)	31·5	35·2	42·6	38·0	35·4

III—United Kingdom exports of books, records, videos and films

£ thousand

	1983	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*January to December 1987*
Books	414	937	507	343	808
Records	6	9	—	—	0
Recorded videos	2	8	20	6	4
Developed cinematographic films	9	42	26	11	11

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics.
Notes:
1. 1987 figures provisional.
2. Manfactured goods are defined as sections 5 to 8 of the standard international trade classification revision 2 (SITC R2).
3. Books are defined as United Kingdom tariff headings 4901 0010 and 4903 0000.
4. Records are defined as United Kingdom tariff headings 9212 3400, 3510 and 3599.
5. Recorded videos are defined as United Kingdom tariff heading 9212 3950.
6. Films are defined as SITC R2 item 883.00.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will list the number of trade delegations to China that his Department has supported in each of the last five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: The numbers of outward missions to China supported by the Department for the period were:

	Number
1983	3
1984	8
1985	7
1986	12
1987	7
Total	37

In addition, the Department supported 14 seminars in China over the same period:

	Number
1983	None
1984	4
1985	1
1986	4
1987	5

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many United Kingdom companies have established joint ventures in China in each of the last five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: The information is not readily available.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will list the British trade fairs supported by the British Overseas Trade Board in China in each of the last five years.

Mr. Alan Clark: The trade fairs held in China over the past five years which attracted support through the British Overseas Trade Board are as follows:

Opening Date	*City*	*Title*
1983-84		
12 April 1983	Shanghai	Multinational Instrumentation Conference and Exhibition
18 July 1983	Shanghai	Naval Technology and Shipboard Electronic Defence Equipment Show
26 August 1983	Guangzhou	International Telecommunications Scientific and Technical Expo Conference
21 October 1983	Shanghai	International Marine Equipment Show (Marintec)
7 November 1983	Shanghai	International Congress and Exhibition on Heat Treatment.
22 November 1983	Guangzhou	Offshore Oil Exhibition and Conference
20 February 1984	Tianjin	All-British Scientific Instruments Exhibition/Seminar
27 February 1984	Peking	Multi-Nation Medical Equipment and Instrument Exhibition
1984-85		
5 April 1984	Beijing	International Electronic Production Conference
10 June 1984	Shanghai	International Exhibition on Textiles
17 September 1984	Shanghai	International Exhibition of Rubber and Plastics Industries
9 October 1984	Shanghai	International Environmental Control Measuring and Testing Equipment
30 October 1984	Beijing	International Tourism and Hotel Facilities Exhibition
30 October 1984	Beijing	Beijing International Printing Technology Exhibition
5 November 1984	Beijing	International Telecommunications, Computer and Electronics Exhibition and Conference
19 November 1984	Hangzhou	International Food Processing and Packaging Equipment Exhibition
21 November 1984	Beijing	Railway and Subway Expo/China '84
29 November 1984	Tianjin	Electric Power and Water Expo
4 December 1984	Shanghai	International Exhibition on Advanced Electronic Technology
1985-86		
21 April 1985	Shanghai	Semiconductor International
16 May 1985	Nanjing	International Exhibition on Building Equipment, Building Material Machinery and Building Material
22 May 1985	Guangzhou	Port Development and Coastal Transportation Expo
3 July 1985	Shanghai	International Exhibition on Automotive Industry
18 September 1985	Beijing	2nd International Environmental Control, Measuring and Testing Equipment Exhibition
8 October 1985	Chengdu	China Medical Expo
22 October 1985	Beijing	International Packaging Conference and Exhibition
4 November 1985	Beijing	International Agrobusiness Exhibition and Conference
26 November 1985	Guangzhou	3rd Offshore Oil Exhibition and Conference
2 December 1985	Shanghai	Marintec China
7 December 1985	Beijing	International New Computer Technology Exhibition
22 February 1986	Beijing	Nuclear and Power China '86
13 March 1986	Beijing	International Textile Industry Exhibition
14 March 1986	Beijing	2nd International Petroleum Equipment Show
20 March 1986	Beijing	International Exhibition on Machine Tools, Metalworking and Allied Industries
28 March 1986	Beijing	International Amusement and Educational Technology Exposition
1986-87		
8 April 1986	Shanghai	International Exhibition on Textile Machinery
16 April 1986	Beijing	Multi-National Instrumentation Conference and Exhibition
18 April 1986	Beijing	International Electronic Production Conference

Opening Date	City	Title
16 May 1986	Shanghai	3rd International Exhibition of Construction Equipment and Material
5 June 1986	Beijing	International Trade Fair for Education Equipment
10 June 1986	Beijing	International Exhibition of Rubber and Plastics Industries
3 July 1986	Beijing	International Exhibition on Automotive Industry
16 October 1986	Beijing	International Telecommunications/Computer Exhibition and Conference
18 October 1986	Beijing	International Foundry Conference and Exhibition
4 November 1986	Beijing	Asian Defence Technology Exposition
10 November 1986	Beijing	Railway, Urban Transport and Subway Expo/China '86
27 November 1986	Guangzhou	International Agrotechnology and Food Processing Exhibition and Conference
9 December 1986	Guangzhou	1st Onshore Oil Exhibition and Conference
10 March 1987	Beijing	2nd Electric Power and Water Expo
1987-88		
24 April 1987	Shanghai	Semiconductor International
7 May 1987	Beijing	China Coal
17 June 1987	Shanghai	3rd International Exhibition on Automotive Industry
24 June 1987	Beijing	3rd Environmental Pollution and Control, Measuring and Testing Equipment Exhibition
12 September 1987	Beijing	2nd International Exhibition on Medical Equipment and Supplies
14 October 1987	Beijing	Aviation Expo/China
24 November 1987	Guangzhou	2nd International Packaging Conference and Exhibition
24 November 1987	Beijing	4th International Exhibition on Rubber and Plastic Industries "Chinaplas"
4 March 1988	Beijing	International Exhibition Machine Tools, Metalworking and Allied Industries

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what discussions he has had with the Chinese Government about the problems of unauthorised publication of British books in China.

Mr. Alan Clark: Chinese law does not extend copyright protection to foreign works and such works may therefore be published in that country. Contact on the subject of copyright has been made over a number of years with the Chinese Government, both at ministerial and official level. Recently, the Chinese Government have made good progress in drawing up a comprehensive law for the protection of both domestic and foreign works. In doing this, they have consulted widely with international experts. We understand that they hope to have the new law in force by 1990 and that they intend to join one of the international copyright conventions. We will continue to encourage the Chinese Government in this process.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Butcher: My Department's expenditure on consultants employed to improve the efficiency of the Department in the financial year 1987-88 is estimated to be £6,463,000, of which £5,280,000 is for computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Expenditure on management consultants is not recorded separately from other consultancy spend.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total amount spent by the Office of Fair Trading in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Butcher: This is a matter for the Director-General of Fair Trading, and I will ask him to write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what was the total amount spent by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Maude: Nil.

Disabled People (Inner Cities)

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what steps are being taken to ensure that, in Government plans to rehabilitate and revitalise the inner cities, provision will be made to meet the needs of disabled people.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Several Government inner city programmes include schemes specifically targeted on the disabled, such as the urban programme, skills and training initiatives and support for arts and sports. I have invited comments from the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation on the action for cities proposals.

Magistrates

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what information he has concerning the decision of the Oldham magistrates' bench interviewing committee that no one who is an elected member of the Oldham metropolitan borough council will be considered for appointment as a magistrate.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: I have advisory committees to assist me with the selection of persons for appointment as

magistrates. In doing so they follow certain guidelines, of which the main criterion is suitability for office. Subject to this, I desire my committees to balance the bench so that it broadly reflects the make-up of the community of the area. For example, it would be wrong to have an overlarge proportion of persons on the bench involved in the work of local government.

My committee at Oldham selects candidates for appointment on merit, follows the guidelines and does not bar elected members of the local authority from appointment.

Advertising Standards Authority

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Advertising Standards Authority to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Butcher: Yes. Arrangements have been made for such an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall to take place from Monday 25 April to Friday 29 April 1988.

Internal Market

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if the invitation list to the EC internal market conference in Lancaster house on 18 April includes trade union representatives or Opposition hon. and right hon. Members of the House.

Mr. Alan Clark *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The Lancaster house conference is primarily for senior business people. The general secretary of the Trades Union Congress has also received an invitation. My right hon. and noble Friend has invited all right hon. and hon. Members to a separate briefing at Lancaster house on the afternoon of 18 April.

Investment Intermediaries

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what submissions he has made to the European Commission on the proposed directive on the authorisation of investment intermediaries.

Mr. Maude *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* The Commission has put forward no proposals for a directive dealing specifically with investment intermediaries. The Commission is considering a possible directive on investment services, but this has not yet been submitted to the Council of Ministers.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Fire Inspectorate

124. **Ms. Ruddock:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the remaining inspectors at the fire inspectorate will be replaced when they retire.

Mr. John Patten: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire Services. A number of serving members of the inspectorate will be retiring in the near future and it is intended that each will be replaced.

Prisoners (Ethnic Origins)

Mr. Boateng: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will update his Department's 1968 statistical bulletin on the ethnic origins of the prison population; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no plans to update the detailed analyses of the ethnic origin of prisoners contained in Home Office statistical bulletin 17/86. Information on the ethnic origin of the population in prison department establishments by type of prisoner and by offence group for sentenced prisoners is now published annually in "Prison Statistics, England and Wales" (tables 1.11 to 1.13 of the 1986 issue, Cm. 210) copies of which are in the Library. The latest available information for 1987 is given in my reply to the question from the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott) on 3 December 1987 at column *681*.

Operational Emergency Centres

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those *(a)* district, *(b)* London borough and *(c)* metropolitan district authorities which have an operational emergency centre.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is as follows. It is based on local authorities' returns due by 1 October 1987 under the Government's planned programme for implementation of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983.

(a) Districts with an operational emergency centre

Avon:
Bath City; Wansdyke

Bedfordshire:
Luton; Mid Bedfordshire; North Bedfordshire; South Bedfordshire

Berkshire:
Bracknell; Windsor and Maidenhead

Buckinghamshire:
South Bucks (Beaconsfield); Chiltern; Milton Keynes

Cambridgeshire:
East Cambridgeshire; South Cambridgeshire

Cleveland:
Hartlepool; Middlesbrough; Stockton on Tees

Clwyd:
Colwyn; Glyndwr

Cornwall:
Caradon; North Cornwall; Penwith

Cumbria:
Allerdale

Devon:
East Devon; Exeter; Plymouth; Mid-Devon (Tiverton)

Dorset:
Bournemouth; Poole; Weymouth and Portland; Wimborne

Durham:
Chester-le-Street; Darlington; Derwentside; Durham; Easington; Teesdale

Dyfed:
Carmarthen.

Essex:
Chelmsford; Colchester; Epping Forest; Maldon; Tendring.

Gloucestershire:
Cheltenham; Cotswold; Forest of Dean; Gloucester.

Gwynedd:
Aberconwy; Meirionnydd.

Hampshire:
Basingstoke; Eastleigh; East Hampshire; Fareham; Gosport; Hart; New Forest; Portsmouth; Rushmoor; Southampton; Winchester.

Hereford and Worcester:
Leominster.

Hertfordshire:
East Hertfordshire

Humberside:
Beverley; Cleethorpes; East Yorkshire.
Kent:
Dartford; Gillingham; Sevenoaks; Shepway; Swale; Tonbridge and Malling; Tonbridge Wells.
Lancashire:
Chorley; Clyde; South Ribble.
Leicestershire:
Blaby; Harborough; Hinckley and Bosworth; Melton; Rutland.
Lincolnshire:
Boston; North Kesteven; South Kesteven.
Norfolk:
Breckland; Great Yarmouth.
Northamptonshire:
Daventry; Kettering; Wellingborough.
Nottinghamshire:
Broxtowe; Mansfield; Nottingham City.
Powys:
Radnor.
Salop:
Bridgnorth; Shrewsbury and Atcham.
Somerset:
Sedgemoor; Taunton Deane.
Staffordshire:
Lichfield; Staffordshire Moorlands.
Suffolk:
Ipswich; St. Edmundsbury; Mid Suffolk.
Surrey:
Mole Valley; Surrey Heath; Waverley; Woking.
East Sussex:
Hove; Lewes; Rother; Wealden.
West Sussex:
Arun; Mid Sussex.
Warwickshire:
Rugby; Stratford on Avon.
Wiltshire:
Kennet; North Wiltshire; Salisbury.
North Yorkshire:
Hambleton; Harrogate; Selby.

(b) London boroughs with an operational centre
North West Group
Hammersmith; Hillingdon
North East Group
Waltham Forest
South East Group
Bexley; Bromley; Lewisham; Southwark
South West Group
Kingston-upon-Thames; Lambeth; Merton; Richmond-upon-Thames

(c) Fire and civil defence authority districts with an operational emergency centre
Greater Manchester:
Bury; Trafford
Merseyside:
Wirral
West Yorkshire:
Calderdale

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those *(a)* county and *(b)* fire and civil defence authorities that have (i) an operational county main emergency centre and (ii) an operational county standby emergency centre; and if he will list those London group emergency centres that are currently operational.

Mr. John Patten: The information requested is as follows. It is based on local authorities' returns due by 1 October 1987 under the Government's planned programme for implementation of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983.

(a) County authorities with operational emergency centres
The County authorities with both main and standby centres operational are:
Cleveland; Clwyd; Durham; Essex; West Glamorgan; Gwent; Gwynedd; Hampshire; Isle of Wight; Leicestershire; Nottinghamshire; Suffolk; Surrey; Warwickshire; Wiltshire; North Yorkshire.

The County authorities with main centres only operational are:
Bedfordshire; Cambridgeshire; Cheshire; Cumbria; Devon; Kent; Lancashire; Norfolk; Oxfordshire; Powys; Salop; Somerset.

The County authorities with standby centres only operational are:
Avon; Berkshire; Buckinghamshire; Gloucestershire; Lincolnshire; Northamptonshire.

(b) Fire and civil defence authorities (FCDAs) with operational emergency centres
Merseyside and West Yorkshire have main and standby centres operational.

Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire have main centres only operational.

(c) London group operational emergency centres
The London groups with operational centres are:
North East; South West and South East.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will identify those local authorities that will receive civil defence grant towards the construction or conversion of emergency centres during each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91; and if he will indicate the likely scale of the provision involved in each year.

Mr. John Patten: We expect grant-eligible expenditure on emergency centres to total about £3·5 million for each of the financial years mentioned but details will not be available until relevant expenditure for each authority has been approved.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will identify those local authorities that have received civil defence grant towards the construction or conversion of emergency centres during each of the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will indicate the scale of the expenditure involved in each year.

Mr. John Patten: The local authorities concerned are listed as follows. Expenditure attracting grant at the rate of 75 per cent. totalled £1·7 million in 1984-85, £2·1 million in 1985-86 and £3·3 million in 1986-87. The expected figure for 1987-88 is £3·5 million.

County authorities in receipt of grant in all years stated
Avon; Bedfordshire; Berkshire; Buckinghamshire; Cambridgeshire; Cleveland; Cornwall; Derbyshire; Devon; Dorset; Durham; East Sussex; Essex; Gloucestershire; Gwent; Gwynedd; Hampshire; Hereford and Worcestershire; Hertfordshire; Humberside; Isle of Wight; Kent; Lincolnshire; London; Norfolk; Northumberland; North Yorkshire; Nottinghamshire; Oxfordshire; Somerset; Suffolk; Surrey; Wiltshire.

County authorities in receipt of grant in some of the years stated
Cheshire: 1986-87; 1987-88
Clwyd: 1984-85; 1987-88
Cumbria: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1987-88
Dyfed: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1987-88
Greater Manchester: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1986-87
Lancashire: 1985-86; 1986-87; 1987-88
Leicestershire: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1987-88
Merseyside: 1987-88
Powys: 1984-85; 1986-87; 1987-88
Salop: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1987-88
South Glamorgan: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1986-87
Staffordshire: 1985-86; 1986-87; 1987-88

Warwickshire: 1984-85; 1985-86; 1986-87
West Glamorgan:: 1985-86; 1987-88
West Sussex: 1986-87; 1987-88

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many local authority emergency centres have been inspected by officials from his Department; and if he is satisfied with the facilities provided by local authorities for emergency communications and control.

Mr. John Patten: Visits by officials to local authority emergency centres occur in support of detailed consideration of a number of issues, including the installation of new communications equipment, but no comprehensive record is kept of the instances. Progress made by local authorities in meeting their statutory responsibilities to establish, equip and maintain emergency centres is monitored under the Government's planned programme for implementation of the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1983.

Crime Prevention

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in the light of recent evidence, including opinion polls, showing a higher than average incidence of the fear of crime in inner cities, he will take further steps to improve his crime prevention measures through the urban programme or other means.

Mr. John Patten: In reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Derby, North (Mr. Knight) on 7 March 1988, at columns *3-4*, my right hon. Friend reported the launch of the Government's safer cities programme which is specifically designed to tackle crime and the fear of crime in inner city areas with high crime levels. The programme will comprise safer city projects in 20 areas, to be established over the next three years. these will aim to complement and strengthen a range of initiatives, funded both from Government funds (including the urban programme) and the private sector.

Police (Subject Access Requests)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many subject access requests under the terms of the Data Protection Act each police force has received to date; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is not at present available centrally. It is being sought from forces and I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as it is available.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total amount spend by the Metropolitan police in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Metroplitan police spent £1,673,923 on management and computer consultancy contracts in 1987.

Iranian Refugees

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons of Iranian nationality claiming to be refugees have arrived in the United Kingdom from Turkey in each of the past four years; how many were given asylum in the United Kingdom; how many were returned to Turkey; and what representations he has received regarding the Turkish practice of returning such people to Iran.

Mr. Tim Renton: As applicants for asylum are recorded by nationality and not by country of embarkation, the figures requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Whilst we have received representations on individual cases of Iranian asylum-seekers from Turkey, I am unaware of any case of an Iranian refugee being sent back to Iran following return to Turkey from this country. Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 UN convention on refugees. There is a UNHCR presence in Turkey to which any Iranian may look for assistance.

Firearms Certificates

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action he intends to take in relation to the letter ref. MLB.JD dated 19 January 1985 from the prosecuting solicitors' office Gwent police authority to an applicant for a firearms certificate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Responsibility for the administration of the Firearms Act 1968 is vested with chief officers of police. My right hon. Friend has no authority to intervene in individual cases.

Police

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a table depicting police force strength in numbers of officers for all regions of the United Kingdom and the percentage increases or decreases these figures represent from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: My right hon. Friend has responsibility only for England and Wales, for which the information is as follows:

Police officer strength

Region and force	*May 1979*	*January 1988*	*Increase*	*Per cent.*
Midlands				
Derbyshire	1,587	1,788	+201	12·7
Leicestershire	1,701	1,760	+59	3·5
Northamptonshire	909	1,069	+160	17·6
Nottinghamshire	2,120	2,253	+133	6·3
Staffordshire	1,980	2,147	+167	8·4
Warwickshire	843	980	+137	16·3

Region and force	*May 1979*	*January 1988*	*Increase*	*Per cent.*
West Mercia	1,752	1,948	+196	11·2
West Midlands	6,031	6,675	+644	10·7
North East				
Cleveland	1,347	1,465	+118	8·8
Durham	1,312	1,335	+23	1·8
Humberside	1,861	1,955	+94	5·1
Lincolnshire	1,175	1,174	−1	(0·1)
Northumbria	3,285	3,473	+188	5·7
North Yorkshire	1,337	1,379	+42	3·1
South Yorkshire	2,560	2,930	+370	14·5
West Yorkshire	4,739	5,188	+449	9·5
South West				
Avon and Somerset	2,829	3,009	+180	6·4
Devon and Cornwall	2,667	2,804	+137	5·1
Dorset	1,140	1,243	+103	9·0
Gloucestershire	1,081	1,158	+77	7·1
Wiltshire	1,001	1,093	+92	9·2
South East				
Bedfordshire	900	997	+97	10·8
Cambridgeshire	1,071	1,160	+89	8·3
City of London	832	784	−48	(5·8)
Essex	2,490	2,719	+229	9·2
Hampshire	2,955	3,099	+144	4·9
Hertfordshire	1,455	1,607	+152	10·4
Kent	2,730	2,901	+171	6·3
Metropolitan	22,225	27,449	+5,224	23·5
Norfolk	1,229	1,302	+73	5·9
Suffolk	1,077	1,187	+110	10·2
Surrey	1,442	1,640	+198	13·7
Sussex	2,759	2,871	+112	4·1
Thames Valley	2,653	3,478	+825	31·1
North West				
Cheshire	1,787	1,839	+52	2·9
Cumbria	1,064	1,150	+86	8·1
Greater Manchester	6,440	6,991	+551	8·6
Lancashire	3,093	3,149	+56	1·8
Merseyside	4,441	4,660	+219	4·9
Wales				
Dyfed Powys	913	925	+12	1·3
Gwent	971	975	+4	0·4
North Wales	1,269	1,303	+34	2·7
South Wales	2,945	3,119	+174	5·9
England and Wales	109,998	122,131	+12,133	11·0

Visas

Mr. Wheeler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what effects the imposition of a visa requirement on the nationals of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ghana and Nigeria have had at ports of entry to the United Kingdom particularly with regard to the delays which were experienced on immigration control during 1985 and 1986.

Mr. Tim Renton: Visa requirements were introduced in October 1986 for nationals of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Ghana and on 1 February 1987 for Nigeria. Since introduction there have been very substantial improvements at the Heathrow and Gatwick terminals in easing congestion, reducing delays at peak periods and improving conditions for passengers, their friends and relatives meeting them, and for the staff at the immigration service.

In 1986 a total of about 24,000 persons were refused entry and removed; in 1987 the figures had dropped to just over 19,000. Because of the pressure on the control in 1986 many of those who arrived before October were not refused entry and removed until the following year. The fall in the refusal rate is therefore even greater than the apparent 20 per cent.

The figures for Heathrow terminal 3 given in the table are illustrative of the reduction in casework at the major terminals dealing with passengers from the five countries.

At terminal 4, which also handles intercontinental traffic, the position was very similar. Summer 1986 saw a steady increase in the volume of difficult casework. Some 466 passengers were referred for further examination in June swelling to 847 in the first two weeks in October. By contrast the same figures for the second half of 1987 remained relatively constant varying between extremes of 270 and 316 cases per month. A random sample of passengers arriving on Saturdays during last September revealed that only five passengers from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan were referred to the further examination area whereas 241 such passengers were set aside for further examination on the corresponding four days of September 1986.

Without the visa imposition, and with a 13 per cent. increase in passenger traffic in 1987, pressure on the control at terminal 4 last year would have been intolerable notwithstanding an additional allocation of staff.

Similar improvements were experienced at Heathrow terminal 2 and Gatwick. Of the major ports only Heathrow terminal 1 and Dover did not experience any substantial change in 1987 because nationals of the five countries involved do not use these in substantial number.

Terminal 3

	June-July-August 1986	*June-July-August 1987*	*Per cent.*
Total passengers	898,259	1,048,791	+17·5
Average number of immigration officers available	222	195	−12
Passengers refused admission	2,179	1,041	−52
Passengers referred for secondary examination	4,485	1,876	−58
Members' of Parliament representations	945	82	−91
Passengers with entry clearance who were refused admission	37	68	+83

WALES

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Peter Walker: The Department's expenditure on such centrally managed consultancy contracts in 1987 was £70,938·21. It is not possible to identify without disproportionate costs fees paid on management and computer consultancy contracts in respect of projects not centrally managed.

Factory Closures

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many plants in Wales which employed more than 500 persons in 1983 have since been closed down; and how many of these were foreign-owned.

Mr. Peter Walker: Four manufacturing plants with more than 500 employees in 1983 have since closed, including one which had been British-owned but had been acquired by a German company in 1980.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what, assuming the full replacement of rates by the community charge and the implementation of the proposals in the Local Government Finance Bill for non-domestic rates and the grant system, in 1988-89 *(a)* for Wales, *(b)* for each class of local authority and *(c)* for each local authority, showing precepting authorities separately the following items in pounds per adult would be: (i) the community charge without safety net, (ii) the safety net, (iii) needs grant, (iv) redistributed non-domestic rate revenue, showing also the corresponding 1988-89 domestic rate poundage and in pounds per adult the average rate bill and local authority expenditure.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* Illustrative figures are given in the following table. These figures are provisional and will be updated as better information is received from local authorities. Calculations have been based on present needs assessments which are under review. The expenditure of individual community councils is not available and has been included with the appropriate district council's expenditure. The Government no longer propose to pay separate needs and standard grants to authorities. These have been replaced by a single revenue support grant as shown in column 3 of the table. Average rate bills per adult are on a basis comparable with the community charge figures and exclude any use of balances.

Summary of impact of Local Government Finance Bill proposals for non-domestic rates and the grant system in Wales 1988-89

	Community Charge per adult	*Revenue Support Grant per adult*	*Non-domestic Rate Revenue per adult*	*Domestic Rate Poundage*	*Safety Net (County and District) per adult*	*Average Rate Bill per adult*	*Expenditure per adult*
	£	£	£	*Pence*	£	£	£
Alyn and Deeside	19	57	29	226·58	−35	176	104
Colwyn	26	61	29	239·60	−50	198	115
Delyn	27	67	29	228·45	−26	176	122
Glyndwr	27	47	29	232·20	−6	155	102
Rhuddlan	15	91	29	227·42	−33	170	135
Wrexham Maelor	30	64	29	233·69	−9	162	123
Carmarthen	19	54	29	236·67	28	123	102
Ceredigion	9	60	29	229·55	4	136	97
Dinefwr	4	54	29	227·66	25	110	87
Llanelli	29	74	29	252·44	23	137	131
Preseli Pembrokeshire	5	61	29	226·84	10	126	95
South Pembrokeshire	7	81	29	233·08	−13	152	117
Blaenau Gwent	36	97	29	239·89	40	116	161
Islwyn	34	86	29	233·00	27	127	149
Monmouth	25	45	29	235·86	−22	167	98
Newport	30	79	29	232·01	−35	185	138
Torfaen	32	67	29	241·58	−2	154	127
Aberconwy	31	63	29	238·32	−36	173	122
Arfon	29	74	29	231·38	6	129	132
Dwyfor	30	90	29	234·79	−24	160	149
Meirionnydd	34	82	29	228·77	−18	158	145

	Community Charge per adult	Revenue Support Grant per adult	Non-domestic Rate Revenue per adult	Domestic Rate Poundage	Safety Net (County and District) per adult	Average Rate Bill per adult	Expenditure per adult
	£	£	£	Pence	£	£	£
Ynys Mon	24	72	29	227·82	−24	154	125
Cynon Valley	18	98	29	246·73	48	108	145
Merthyr Tydfil	30	112	29	254·76	44	124	171
Ogwr	27	62	29	260·55	13	151	118
Rhondda	19	125	29	258·50	71	85	173
Rhymney Valley	34	72	29	258·97	33	139	135
Taff Ely	26	62	29	255·83	18	145	116
Brecknock	21	57	29	225·45	2	131	107
Montgomeryshire	5	52	29	205·82	−11	128	86
Radnor	11	51	29	213·42	−11	135	91
Cardiff	0	93	29	207·05	−69	179	117
Vale of Glamorgan	11	57	29	213·48	−45	166	96
Port Talbot	42	80	29	283·82	51	154	150
Lliw Valley	22	56	29	285·83	43	142	107
Neath	12	63	29	287·87	21	154	104
Swansea	36	91	29	295·43	7	192	156
Clwyd	123	363	152	231·33	—	—	637
Dyfed	131	391	152	235·29	—	—	674
Gwent	120	383	152	235·83	—	—	655
Gwynedd	105	411	152	232·13	—	—	668
Mid Glamorgan	137	407	152	257·05	—	—	696
Powys	112	482	152	214·23	—	—	746
South Glamorgan	110	376	152	208·80	—	—	638
West Glamorgan	164	377	152	291·35	—	—	692
Districts	22	74	29	238·77	—	—	125
Total counties	128	390	152	238·77	—	—	670
Total Wales	150	465	180	238·77	—	—	794

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ratu Mara and Penaia Ganilau

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what details he has about the proposed visit of Ratu Mara and Penaia Ganilau to Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: The Prime Minister of Fiji, Ratu Mara, is visiting Britain from 27 to 31 March and will have talks today, 29 March, with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. and learned Friend. The President of Fiji, Ratu Penaia Ganilau, is not with him.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Eggar: Foreign and Commonwealth Office expenditure to date for the financial year 1987-88 on management and computer consultancy is as shown. The figures include expenditure for both the diplomatic and aid wings of the office:

	£
Management consultancy	257,272
Computer consultancy	1,171,347

China (Town Twinning)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on which British towns and cities are twinned with towns or cities in China.

Mr. Eggar: Twinning activity in the United Kingdom is co-ordinated by the secretariat of the Joint Twinning Committee of Local Authority Associations of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The secretariat keeps a record of all United Kingdom twinnings, including ones with China. Such information is held in the Library of the House.

Iranian Refugees

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Turkey regarding the Turkish practice of sending Iranian refugees, who have come to the United Kingdom from Turkey and been returned to Turkey, back to Iran.

Mrs. Chalker: None. Neither we, nor the representative in Turkey of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, have any specific evidence of Iranian refugees returned to Turkey from this country being sent back to Iran.

Agricultural Produce (Radioactivity)

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about cases of companies within the European Community seeking to sell to Third world countries agricultural produce heavily contaminated with radioactivity; and if he will make a statement as to what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to prevent this.

Mrs. Chalker: None. In the light of a rigorous national monitoring programme instituted following the Chernobyl accident, we are satisfied about the safety of all United Kingdom foodstuffs placed on the domestic market or exported.

EC (Information)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has as to how much money is being paid to United Kingdom political parties by the European Parliament for information purposes relating to the European Community and its institutions; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: The draft budget for 1988 now under discussion contains 27·7 million ecu which is for information work by the European Parliament. Under EP rules this money is distributed to the political groups in the European Parliament. It is up to each political group itself to decide how to disburse its allocation among its members in the different member states.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Higher Education (Engineering)

122. **Miss Widdecombe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many representations he has received following the publication of the Engineering Council's proposals on the restructuring of engineering higher education; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: None. The Government await the outcome of responses to the Engineering Council's discussion document with interest.

Education Reform

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how he intends to ensure that the new national tests contain no inherent bias against *(a)* children from different cultural backgrounds and *(b)* multi-lingual children whose first language is not English.

Mrs. Rumbold: The task group on assessment and testing has recommended that assessment instruments should be reviewed regularly by statistical and other means for any evidence of bias, particularly in respect of gender and race. The group also suggested that children whose first language is not English might be exempted if their language problems made tests unworkable; and that assessment in other skills, particularly at age seven, should wherever practicable and necessary, be conducted in the pupil's first language.

Open University (Exhibition)

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the Open University to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee, arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from Monday 18 April to Friday 22 April.

Chinese Universities (British Students)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish a table showing the number of British students who have studied at universities in China in each of the last five years; and what subjects such students have been studying.

Mr. Jackson: The readily available information is drawn mainly from the UNESCO statistical yearbook; subject of study is not recorded in this source.

Year	*Number of Students*
1981	54
1982	45
[1]1983	60
[1]1984	72
[1]1985	65

[1] Data refer to full-time students.

Chinese Students

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he will publish a table showing how many students from China have studied at British *(a)* universities and *(b)* polytechnics in each of the last five years; and what subjects such students have been studying.

Mr. Jackson: The number of students from China studying at institutions in Great Britain is provided in the following table. Information on the subjects such students studied is not available.

Students from China at institutions in Great Britain

Academic year beginning in	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
University	182	212	362	594	711
Polytechnics and Colleges	41	27	48	77	117

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mrs. Rumbold: A total of £364,152 was spent on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases, in the calendar year 1987. In addition, the Department spent some £535,030 on costs associated with the privatisation of the Plant Breeding Institute.

School Population (Suffolk)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations Suffolk county council has made on the increase in its school population while the Sizewell B power station is being built; and what responses he has given.

Mr. Dunn: None.

Medical Research (Charges)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received seeking

legislation to prevent universities from imposing charges for medical research funded by charities; what specific representations he has received about the charges imposed in respect of research into Freidreich's Ataxia disease; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Jackson: The Government much appreciate the substantial sums which charities provide for research in universities — in 1986-87 they contributed about £66 million to medical research. In general, charitable moneys cover only part of the cost of the specific research projects which they support, with a substantial part of the costs — for academic staff time, premises, equipment, materials and overheads — being met from general university funds.

In the light of advice from the Advisory Board for the Research Councils, we are currently reviewing the balance of funding responsibilities between universities and the research councils for projects which the latter support. This may have implications for charitable funding of medical research which in most cases is treated analogously with research councils' grants. I discussed this matter on 10 March with the Association of Medical Research Charities.

My right hon. Friend has not received any representations seeking legislation on these matters. We have received 47 representations from members of the Friedreich's Ataxia Group about the possibility of their having to meet a larger proportion of the costs of the research which the group supports in universities. These representations will be taken into account in our consideration of the wider issues.

Computer Services (Skill Shortages)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to the reply of 1 March, *Official Report*, column *539*, what resources have been made available under the engineering, science and technology initiative to increase relevant higher education opportunities; and what proposals he has to meet skill shortages in the computer services sector.

Mr. Jackson: The Government have made available a total of £43 million between 1985 and 1988 to fund additional higher education places under the engineering and technology programme. Future expenditure plans support the additional places in the longer term beyond this period.

To secure the skills they want employers in the computer services and other sectors must provide proper incentives for people to acquire those skills, develop internal recruitment, and make the vital investment needed in training and in the upgrading of skills.

The Government have given the lead through their investment in the engineering and technology programme, which is one of a number of initiatives already being taken to increase output in particular areas where it is clear that demand outstrips supply.

THE ARTS

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Minister for the Arts what was the total amount spent by his office in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Luce: In 1987, £2,300 was spent by my office to meet in part the cost of a computer consultancy contract for the Government art collection. No money was spent on management consultancy.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Taxation

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will provide the Treasury model estimate of the full year impact of the cuts in the higher rates of income tax announced in the Budget; and if he will provide a similar estimate of the impact of an additional annual £2 billion of current public expenditure;

(2) if he will estimate the full year impact on the current account of the balance of payments of the cuts in the basic and higher rates of income tax announced in the Budget.

Mr. Major: It has not been the practice to publish estimates of the economic effects of changes in tax rates or public expenditure.

Interest Rates

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about interest rates since the Budget; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lilley: My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations on this subject.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the total amount spent by Her Majesty's Treasury in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases;

(2) what was the total amount spent by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Brooke: In 1987 total Treasury expenditure was some £5·6 million (including some £5·3 million by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency).

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total amount spent by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Brooke: £336,000.

British Rail (Customs Controls)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will detail the facilities and procedures required of British Rail by the Board of Customs and Excise to allow for the performance of effective on-train customs controls.

Mr. Lilley: Discussions are at present taking place between Customs and British Rail about the facilities that would be required on the through trains travelling via Olympia. These include adequate space for baggage examination and interviews. Back-up facilities will also be required at Olympia for the more protracted investigations where serious offences are detected or suspected, for the

detention of offenders and suspects and for communications and administrative support. Discussions with BR on the Olympia requirements will begin shortly.

EC (Own Resources)

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the European Commission has paid to member states the 400 mecu traditional own resources refunds deferred from 1987 under Council regulation 3952/87.

Mr. Brooke: Yes. The Commission paid to member states on 24 March the refunds of traditional own resources deferred from 1987. These refunds are set at 10 per cent. of traditional own resources (levies and duties) paid over to the Commission by member states and are intended to cover costs of collection.

As I reported to the House on 3 July last year, at column *175*, the Budget Council decided on 2 July to defer 400 mecu of these refunds until early 1988 to help deal with the Community's budgetary problems last year. The Commission accordingly deferred most of the refunds due to member states in respect of the traditional own resources established between June and October 1987. In the event, the total amount deferred (and now refunded to member states) came to 443 mecu rather than 400 mecu because these own resources were running at a higher level than expected. The United Kingdom's share of the sums now refunded is some 91 mecu (£63·1 million).

In accordance with the conclusions of the Brussels European Council in February, the existing arrangements for 10 per cent. refunds of traditional own resources are to be replaced, with effect from the beginning of 1988, by a new system whereby member states will make a 10 per cent deduction from their monthly payments of these own resources to the Commission (which relate to own resources established two months previously). In keeping with this, the Commission does not propose to pay to member states refunds in respect of own resources established from November 1987 onwards (and for which there is no budgetary provision). It proposes instead to invite member states to deduct from their first payments of traditional own resources after the 1988 budget has been adopted the total deductions due in respect of own resources established from November 1987 onwards. In this way member states will effectively receive the 10 per cent. collection costs due to them in respect of all the months concerned.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Grylls: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the proposed restriction on companies raising finance under the business expansion scheme.

Mr. Norman Lamont: My hon. Friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury announced during the Budget debates on 17 March that provided a company had issued a prospectus before Budget day and issued the shares before the end of the present tax year, the £500,000 limit would be increased to £1 million. However, there are some companies which do not offer shares to the public and do not need therefore to issue a prospectus. In order to help these companies the announced relaxation will also apply to a share issue made in pursuance of an offer for sale in writing made before Budget day, provided that the shares are issued before the end of the present tax year.

It has also been suggested that the limitation on the amount raised in any period of 12 months could prevent a company using the BES to raise finance when it needs it. So we propose to amend this rule in a way which will give companies more flexibility while retaining the principle of an annual limit. The amended limit will apply to the amount raised in a tax year, but in order to prevent companies effectively doubling the limit by making share issues both at the end of one tax year and the beginning of the next, the limit will also apply to the amount raised in any period of six months.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Small Farmers Association

Mr. Mans: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Small Farmers Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I have not met the chairman of the Small Farmers Association in my present ministerial capacity, though I have very frequent contact with all sections of the farming community.

Forestry

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will state the area of land approved for forestry grant-aid in each of the five years to 31 March 1987 and from 1 April 1987 to date in England.

Mr. Gummer: The information is as follows:

Year ended 31 March	*Area of land (hectares)*
1983	11,225
1984	16,290
1985	17,379
1986	16,002
1987	25,245

The total area of land approved for planting in the period 1 April 1987 to 31 December 1987 was 23,932 hectares. Figures are not yet available beyond 31 December 1987.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total amount spent by his Ministry in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Donald Thompson: In 1987 my Department spent £707,662 on such consultancies.

Sheep Exports (Restrictions)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what restrictions were placed on the export of sheep from the restricted areas of Cumbria from 20 June 1986 to 2 September 1986.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* All sheep in the restricted area in Cumbria were subject to movement restrictions. Movements were

authorised from 18 August under specific approvals which precluded the slaughter of marked sheep. Export of live sheep to third countries is not permitted for welfare reasons, other than for the purpose of breeding. All live sheep exported to EC member countries are subject to Ministry veterinary control.

SCOTLAND

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list the mental hospitals which are scheduled to *(a)* open and *(b)* close in Scotland in each of the next seven years;

(2) how many residential places in the community will be provided for those discharged from mental hospitals in Scotland in each of the next seven years;

(3) how many new mental hospital beds have been opened in Scotland in each of the last 10 years;

(4) how many mental hospital beds have been closed in Scotland in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: It is our general policy that mentally ill people capable of living in the community should have the opportunity of doing so, but it is important that discharges from hospital should not take place before appropriate community provision is available. It is for individual local authorities to make provision for their areas in consultation with health boards and voluntary organisations.

We accept, however, that there is a need to continue to treat certain types of mental illness in a hospital setting. Suitable hospital facilities must therefore continue to be provided with the emphasis on smaller units related to the communities they serve.

I am not able to predict the mental hospital openings or closures which may take place over the next seven years. It is up to health boards to deliver services in the light of their strategic plans which in turn reflect Government's policy for the services concerned. Boards have no plans at present to build any completely new mental hospitals. Their strategic plans propose the eventual closure of some hospitals, but this would require an application to my right hon. and learned Friend for his approval.

Details of new mental hospital beds the bulk of which are replacement beds are held centrally only from 1979. The information is as follows:

	Number
1979	120
1980	60
1981	60
1982	Nil
1983	432
1984	240
1985	600
1986	270
1987	120

Details of mental hospital beds closed in Scotland are held centrally only in relation to formal applications for closure made to the Secretary of State. The information, which is available only from 1979, is as follows:

	Number
1979	Nil
1980	Nil
1981	Nil
1982	Nil
1983	Nil
1984	Nil
1985	85
1986	58
1987	87

Forestry

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the likely geographical and topographical distribution of new tree planting over the next 10 years in the United Kingdom.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: We expect to see a higher proportion of planting than hitherto taking place on lower land of better quality. The rate of planting in Scotland is likely to continue to exceed that in England and Wales.

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many acres of land are planted with *(a)* conifers and *(b)* broadleaves; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: At 31 March 1987 the area of productive woodland in Great Britain was 1,490,000 hectares of conifers and 604,000 hectares of broadleaves.

Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many community psychiatric nurses there were in Scotland in 1979; how many there are now; and how many he estimates there will be in 1991.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 2 November 1987, at column *435*.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the amounts provided for the forthcoming year for bridging funds in Scotland for local care of patients discharged or excluded from mental hospitals; how much in each case is provided for long-term patients still to be discharged from hospitals and how much for those already discharged from hospital; what the figure per patient is in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The arrangements for the funding of community care in Scotland do not provide for bridging funds. Under NHS circular 1985(GEN)18, health boards may make lump sum or continuing payments to a local authority or voluntary agency towards the cost of projects which make it possible for people such as the mentally ill to return to, or remain in, the community. The indicative level for 1988-89 notified to health boards is £4·7 million.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what experiments in hospital hostels for discharged mental patients have been conducted in Scotland; what lessons have been learnt; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Hospital hostels are regarded as part of the psychiatric hospital provision and generally do not accommodate patients who have been discharged.

These hostels care for patients who are preparing to re-enter the community. Initiatives in these programmes are conducted and developed on a continuing basis.

Civil Defence

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list those regional and island authorities with an operational (i) main and (ii) standby emergency centre, and those district authorities that have an operational emergency centre.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On the basis of returns provided by local authorities for October 1987, information abou' operational emergency centres which meet the standards set out in the emergency planning guidance to local authorities is as follows:

Regions
- Borders Region—Main and standby
- Grampian Region—Main and standby

Districts
- Gordon[1]
- Kincardine and Deeside[1]
- Roxburgh
- Tweeddale[1]

[1] Co-ordinated with a regional emergency centre.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will identify those local authorities that will receive civil defence grant towards the construction or conversion of emergency centres during each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91; and if he will indicate the likely scale of the provision involved in each year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: Grant-eligible expenditure on civil defence capital projects, predominantly, but not exclusively, emergency centres, is expected to be £904,000 in 1988-89, £948,000 in 1989-90, and £995,000 in 1990-91. It is expected that Orkney islands council and Dumfries and Galloway regional council will receive further grant to complete their emergency centres in 1988-89. Details of other authorities receiving grant will not be available until the relevant expenditure has been approved.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will identify those local authorities that have received civil defence grant towards the construction or conversion of emergency centres during each of the years 1984-85, 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88; and if he will indicate the scale of the expenditure involved in each year.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The information is not available in this form for 1984-85 or 1985-86. In 1986-87, grant towards the construction or conversion of emergency centres was paid to Grampian and Borders regional councils and in 1987-88 to these two councils and to Dumfries and Galloway regional council and Roxburgh district council. Expenditure attracting grant was £92,064 in 1986-87 and is expected to be £433,514 in 1987-88.

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many local authority emergency centres have been inspected by officials from his Department; and if he is satisfied with the facilities provided by local authorities for emergency communications and control.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: All the operational emergency centres have been visited by Scottish Office officials. Steps have been taken to remedy deficiencies in communications facilities identified as a result of these visits.

Consulting Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Rifkind: In 1987 my Department spent £191,308 on management consultancy and £504,431 on computer consultancy.

Rating Reform

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he proposes to issue any guidance to community charge registration officers on the conduct of door-to-door canvassers, and on the information which they may legitimately request and record.

Mr. Lang: No. The training of canvassers is a matter for community charges registration officers. The information required to be supplied by responsible persons is set out in the inquiry form and supplementary inquiry form prescribed in schedules 3 and 4 respectively of the Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what provision he will make to require community charge registration officers to inform persons liable for a community charge of the identity of the responsible person who has been asked to supply information about them.

Mr. Lang: None.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether he proposes to publish, or to encourage community charge registration officers to publish, any advice to members of the public who may be considering appealing against designation as responsible persons in terms of section 17(6) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 1987, including advice about the evidence which might be considered relevant to such an appeal;

(2) whether he proposes to publish any further guidance to community charge registration officers on the consideration which they should take into account in determining whom it would be appropriate to designate as the responsible person in relation to any premises.

Mr. Lang: Under section 17(6) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 the responsible person will be either the owner-occupier or tenant-occupier of the premises. In the small number of cases where this might give rise to difficulties, the registration officer may designate any other person to be the responsible person. The provisions of the Act are flexible enough to allow registration officers to arrive at sensible decisions in these cases and it is therefore unlikely that there will be many appeals against designation as a responsible person.

The considerations which registration officers will take into account in making any designation, and the evidence which may be relevant to any appeals, will vary according

to the circumstances of individual cases. My right hon. and learned Friend does not, therefore, intend to publish any advice or guidance on these matters.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he proposes that the amounts of interest payments and surcharges owed in connection with a liability to pay community charge for a back-dated period should be eligible for rebate under the community charge rebate scheme.

Mr. Lang: No.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will take steps to require community charge registration officers not to impose interest charges or surcharges on persons who have arrears or back-dated liability for payment of community charge as a result of release from prison following trial, after a period on remand.

Mr. Lang: The arrangements for interest to be charged on backdated community charges and for the imposition of surcharges in certain circumstances are laid down in Section 18 of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987. My right hon. and learned Friend is considering whether prisoners on remand should be exempt from the personal community charge.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what powers a non-resident or institutional owner or tenant of premises designated as a responsible person for the provision of information on the occupiers of those premises in terms of section 17(6)*(b)* of the Abolition of Domestic Rates (Scotland) Act 1987 will have to obtain information required by the registration officer; and what penalties the occupiers will incur if they refuse to supply the responsible person with information.

Mr. Lang: Under section 17(6)*(b)* of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, either the owner of the premises, the tenant-occupier or, any non-occupancy tenant with a lease for 12 months or more will be the responsible person. Only in the few cases where this might give rise to difficulty will the registration officer designate another person to be the responsible person.

A responsible person has no specific powers to require another person resident in the premises to provide information for community charge registration purposes. There are no penalties for refusing to provide the responsible person with information. The information required is however straightforward and it is unlikely that responsible persons will be unable to supply it.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what guidelines his Department will issue to community charge registration officers on the information which they will be able to require the police force to supply them with; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: The Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 gives community charges registration officers no powers to require the police to supply them with information.

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether community charge registration officers will be able to delegate their powers to door-to-door canvassers employed by local authorities to obtain information from members of the public.

Mr. Lang: Members of the registration officer's staff may assist with the handling of inquiry forms, but do not have the powers of registration officers. Such powers may be exercised only by the registration officer himself or by any depute registration officer appointed by a regional or islands council under section 12(3) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987.

Free School Meals

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many children currently receive free school meals in *(a)* Greenock, *(b)* Port Glasgow and *(c)* Strathclyde region.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Details relating to free school meals in Strathclyde region are collected centrally on an education division basis and the latest information available, taken from the 1987 annual census, is set out in the table.

Division	*Number of children receiving free school meals*
Argyll & Bute	1,560
Ayr	13,266
Dumbarton	9,340
Glasgow (city)	34,671
Lanark	16,823
Renfrew	11,702
Total (Strathclyde Region)	87,362

European Year of the Environment

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what contribution his Department has made to the European Year of the Environment.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: My Department made a contribution of £30,000 in support of the work of the EYE Scottish sub-committee. The secretariat of the sub-committee was provided by the Countryside Commission for Scotland. In addition, EYE activity in Scotland attracted financial support from the Countryside Commission for Scotland under its normal grant scheme arrangements, and a further sum of £50,000 was allocated from the United Kingdom EYE fund.

AIDS and Drug Misuse

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on AIDS and drug misuse in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The Government take the problem of AIDS and drug misuse in Scotland very seriously. Of those who have chosen to be tested for HIV infection, over 50 per cent. are intravenous drug misusers, whereas the corresponding proportion for the United Kingdom as a whole is only 7 per cent.; and over 20 per cent. of those found to be infected in Scotland are women, the great majority of whom are intravenous drug misusers. We have taken a number of measures, and further measures are in hand, to tackle the related problems of AIDS and drug misuse in Scotland.

We have devoted considerable resources to our public education campaign on AIDS and drug misuse. One of the main themes of the AIDS campaign has been the dangers

of transmission of HIV infection by the sharing of injecting equipment, and the phase of the campaign running from September to December 1987 stressed this. Furture phases of the campaign will seek to reinforce this important message. In February, we launched a further stage of the information and education campaign against drug misuse in Scotland. Since its inception in 1985 about £1·4 million has been spent on the campaign which seeks to discourage young people from any involvement with drugs and to promote a healthier lifestyle. We shall continue to give a high priority to the campaign, an essential element of which is aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of professionals who work with young people.

The incidence of drug misuse in Scotland increased rapidly in the 1980s and services for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug misusers have had to develop from a low base in response to the this problem. A wide range of mainly community-based services has developed quickly in the last three or four years, many of them with the support of central Government funds earmarked for the purpose. Over £1 million was made available in 1987-88 specifically for the support of drug misuse services and a similar sum will be made available in 1988-89. This includes an additional £300,000 in each of these two years specifically to take account of the extra demand on services caused by the spread of HIV infection.

We have also promoted the setting up of needle exchange arrangements on an experimental basis. Three schemes were set up last year in Scotland — in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee—to provide counselling for drug misusers and clean equipment on an exchange basis in appropriate cases. The scheme in Dundee has been closed because of various difficulties, including trouble with clients, and the scheme in Glasgow has encountered local opposition and low take-up. The scheme in Edinburgh has been more successful. In the course of monitoring the experimental schemes, however, it has become clear that another possible approach to needle exchange is through sales by community pharmacists, a number of whom already sell equipment to drug misusers. Accordingly, I propose to approach the Scottish department of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain in the near future to discuss with them the contribution which sales by pharmacists might make towards the wider availability of clean equipment. In pursuing this approach, we shall be bearing in mind the importance to pharmacists of having the support of health boards, both in relation to the medical and counselling support facilities for drug misusers, and in relation to disposal arrangements for used equipment.

As regards the two needle exchange schemes which are still in operation—those in Edinburgh and Glasgow—Lothian and Greater Glasgow health boards have been informed that, although central funding of the schemes will not continue beyond 31 March when the formal period of monitoring and assessment is due to end, they may continue to operate the schemes if they consider this to be appropriate in local circumstances. So far as further needle exchange arrangements by health boards are concerned, we are not yet in a position to reach general conclusions on whether any extension of the existing arrangements would be appropriate. However, if any health board considers that, notwithstanding possible developments in the pharmacy-based field, there is a need for such facilities in their area, we shall be prepared to consider specific proposals.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for Health has set out today the Government's response to the main issues raised by the report on AIDS and drug misuse by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

The report expresses particular concern about the position in Scotland and makes a number of criticisms and recommendations about the provision of services for drug misusers and the measures needed to prevent the spread of HIV infection among and from this group. In my view the chapter of the report on Scotland does not give an entirely balanced assessment of the situation in Scotland nor does it take into account the different historical background to the drugs problem here. In particular, the report fails to acknowledge that many drug misuse services in Scotland have already adapted their approach in response to the problems presented by the spread of HIV infection among drug misusers. I am however sending copies of the report to health boards and local authorities and to various representative bodies. I also propose to hold early discussions with the Scottish division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists about the report including its recommendation on the need for increased input to the management and treatment of drug misuse by the psychiatric services in Scotland. A working group of the National Medical Consultative Committee is currently exploring the medical role in the prevention and management of drug misuse and is expected to report later this year.

I shall keep the position in Scotland under close review and, taking into account the advisory council's detailed recommendations, I shall consider what further action it may be appropriate for the Government to take.

Superglass Insulations Company

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the nature and extent of the Scottish Development Agency involvement in the Superglass Insulations Company in Clydebank and Stirling.

Mr. Lang: The Scottish Development Agency has been involved with the Superglass Insulations Company Ltd *(a)* as owner of the premises occupied by the company in Clydebank, and *(b)* in the provision of assistance towards training associated with an investment project in Stirling.

Attraction of Industry

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate the amount of expenditure to be paid out by his Department or agencies responsible to his Department in attracting industry to Scotland in each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 March 1988]:* Locate in Scotland is the Government organisation staffed jointly by the Scottish Development Agency and the industry department for Scotland, which has responsibility for the attraction of industry to Scotland. The estimated expenditure for Locate in Scotland at current prices in each of the years 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91 is as follows:

£ million

Year	Estimated expenditure
1988-89	4·26
1989-90	4·26
1990-91	4·26

Figures for 1989-90 and 1990-91 are provisional.

Mr. McLeish: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money has been spent in each of the last 10 years by his Department or agencies responsible to his Department in attracting industry to Scotland, in both cash and real terms.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 10 March 1988]:* Locate in Scotland is the Government organisation staffed jointly by the Scottish Development Agency and the industry department for Scotland, which has responsibility for the attraction of industry to Scotland. The cost of running LIS for the last four years in terms of salaries, administration expenses, travel, marketing and advertising are shown in actual cash terms and by conversion to a constant base of 1987-88 price levels in the table.

Year	Cash	1987-88 price base
1984-85	3,268,804	3,723,822
1985-86	3,484,781	3,747,882
1986-87	3,768,716	3,930,394
[1] 1987-88	3,594,033	3,594,033

[1] To 29 February 1988.

Before 1984-85 costs were not held in such a format that those attributable to LIS could be isolated.

DEFENCE

Trident (Lost Parts)

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Linlithgow of 4 March 1988 on the loss of Trident parts in the Mull of Galloway.

Mr. Sainsbury: I responded to the points raised in the hon. Member's letter of 4 March in a letter dated 24 March.

Port of London

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* the details which are available of specific visits by ships and submarines of the United States navy to the port of London in each year since 1983 giving location of their moorings.

Mr. Ian Stewart: There have been no visits to the port of London by ships and submarines of the United States navy since 1983.

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of Royal Navy vessels which have visited the Port of London since January 1986, giving the location of their moorings.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Since January 1986, the following Royal Navy vessels have visited the port of London:

Vessel	Mooring
1986	
HMS Charybdis	HMS Belfast
HMS Sandpiper	Tower Pier
HMS Brazen	HMS Belfast
HMS Yarmouth	HMS Belfast
HMS Leeds Castle	HMS Belfast
HMS Orkney	HMS Belfast
HMS Guernsey	HMS Belfast
HMS Stubbington	HMS Belfast
HMS Hodgeston	Tower Pier
HMS Ribble	HMS Belfast
HMS Dovey	HMS Belfast
HMS Blackwater	HMS Belfast
HMS Roebuck	HMS Belfast
HMS Hunter	Greenwich Pier
HMS Brave	HMS Belfast
HMS Hunter	Tower Pier
HMS Iveston	Tower Pier
1987	
HMS Ark Royal	Greenwich Pier
HMS Chiddingfold	HMS Belfast
HMS Cleopatra	HMS Belfast
HMS York	HMS Belfast
HMS Bossington	Tower Pier
HMS Fife	HMS Belfast
HMS Naiad	HMS Belfast
HMS Edinburgh	HMS Belfast
HMS London	HMS Belfast
HMS Lindisfarne	HMS Belfast
HMS Rothesay	HMS Belfast
HMS Chaser	HMS Belfast
HMS Chiddingfold	HMS Belfast
HMS Manchester	HMS Belfast
HMS Leeds Castle	HMS Belfast
HMS Birmingham	Greenwich Pier
1988	
HMS Sandpiper	Tower Pier
HMS Peterel	Tower Pier
HMS Jersey	HMS Belfast

Scorriton Down

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what inquiries are being undertaken into allegations of malpractice among bomb disposal teams operating at Scorriton Down.

Mr. Freeman: My Department is not aware of any such allegations and neither the Ministry of Defence police nor the military authorities are conducting an inquiry in relation to personnel at Scorriton Down.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his answer of 9 March to the hon. Member for South Hams, *Official Report*, columns *214-15*, if he can give an expected date for the recommencement of clearance operations at Scorriton Down.

Mr. Freeman: It is not generally our practice to give advance details of such operations.

US Army Tactical Missile System

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United States army tactical missile system or a version of it has been offered to United Kingdom forces; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No.

RAF Greenham Common

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations have taken place between the Ministry of Defence police and the police forces of Wiltshire, Hampshire and Thames Valley on the use of Ministry of Defence police officers in the policing of protests against cruise missile training exercises from RAF Greenham Common; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Frequent meetings and consultations take place between the MOD police and the police forces named on these and other operational policing requirements.

RAF Catering Services

Mr. Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to privatise the catering services at Royal Air Force establishments in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Contract catering was introduced at RAF Turnhouse and RAF Pitreavie Castle in 1986; there are at present no plans to extend it to other RAF stations in Scotland.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Ministry of Defence spent approximately £16 million on management and computer consultancies during 1987.

Namibia (Uranium)

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is, for each year since 1976, the total amount of uranium mined in Namibia which has been imported into Britain.

Mr. Sainsbury: None for my Department.

Ex-gratia Payments

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate of the likely cost of the ex-gratia payments that will now be made to service people who may have been disabled by negligence between 8 December 1986 and the coming into force of the Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Act 1987; from which departmental budget this money is coming; and under what authority these payments are made.

Mr. Freeman: It is not possible, at this stage, to estimate the likely cost of ex-gratia payments to service personnel injured or disabled as a result of incidents between 8 December 1986 and the coming into force of the Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Act 1987. This is primarily because we cannot know what the eventual level and incidence of claims will be, but also because negotiations on the majority of those claims received so far are still at a relatively early stage. The cost of such ex-gratia payments, which are made in accordance with the answer given by my right hon. Friend on 8 December 1986, will be met from Defence votes.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria are used to determine eligibility for ex-gratia payments that can now be paid to those disabled or injured through possible negligence between 8 December 1986 and the coming into force of the Crown Proceedings (Armed Forces) Act 1987; how many applications for these payments have been made; and how many payments have been made.

Mr. Freeman: Such payments will be determined in a way comparable to the settlement out of court of common law claims for damages, each one being considered and assessed to establish whether death or injury occurred in circumstances involving some degree of negligence on the part of the Crown. To date 85 claims have been received, the majority of which remain under negotiation. Five payments have so far been made, including an interim settlement.

Service Personnel (Accidents)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has as to the cause of the increase in 1985 in the number of service people invalided out of the forces following an accident.

Mr. Freeman: There was no prominent cause for the increase in the number of cases invalided from the services in 1985 other than injuries sustained during sporting activities and falls and so on. The corresponding figure for 1986 is now available and is 169, showing a slight decrease.

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his replies of 10 March 1987 *Official Report*, columns *173-74*, to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, how many of those service men who *(a)* were invalided out and *(b)* died, were involved in accidents or misadventures of such a nature that disciplinary action was taken after an inquiry.

Mr. Freeman: I regret that records are not kept in a way that would enable the information to be provided without disproportionate cost.

AWACS Aircraft

Mr. Wray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many jobs have been created in Britain as a result of the deal to buy AWACS aircraft from Boeing.

Mr. Sainsbury: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 28 March 1988.

Devonport Dockyard

Mr. O'Neill: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimates were available to him before 11 June 1987 of the number of redundancies at Devonport dockyard which would follow the introduction of Devonport Management; and when he was first informed that the final number would be 3,400.

Mr. Sainsbury: The primary responsibility for manning levels in the royal dockyards rests with the contractors. For costing purposes, we had assumed 3,300 redundancies at Devonport over the seven years of the contract. However, as indicated by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 February 1987, the only firm information available to my Department before

11 June 1987 was that Devonport Management Ltd. expected some 2,300 job losses by about 1990. At that stage, DML thought there would be little effect during the first year or so. It was not until August 1987, following a review of programme adjustments, that DML made known its revised assessment of 3,400 job losses over a similar period, including some 2,000 in 1987-88. I understand that in its first year the company now expects to have reduced the work force by 1,850, all but 48 of these job losses being achieved by voluntary redundancy or natural wastage.

EMPLOYMENT

Safety at Work (Brown Book)

16. **Mr. Harry Barnes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will provide the Health and Safety Commission with additional funding to enable it to make more easily available copies of the Brown Book guide to "Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations".

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission has been given a gross provision of £109·2 million for 1988-89. This is a substanital increase of £6·7 million over the previously planned provision for that year. It is for the commission and its executive to decide how best to allocate their resouces. The booklet on safety representatives and safety committees is available, price £2.

Specialist Inspectors

17. **Mr. Galbraith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the number of specialist inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 April 1979 there were 224 specialist inspectors employed in the Health and Safety Executive. On 1 March 1988 there were 218.

Suffolk

18. **Mr. Yeo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is the level of employment in Suffolk.

Mr. Lee: At September 1984, the latest date for which county estimates are available, there were 221,000 employees in employment in Suffolk.

Non-Statutory Training Organisations

19. **Mr. McFall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how much Government money is received by non-statutory training organisations in the current year.

Mr. Nicholls: It is not possible to give total figures for Government support to non-statutory training organisations. Government funds made available to non-statutory training organisations through the Manpower Services Commission in 1987-88 included some £5·8 million for the improvement of the training infrastructure in their sectors. They also received substantial funds as YTS managing agents, including about £6 million from the MSC's large companies unit. details of funds allocated through MSC area offices are not available.

113. **Mr. Sheerman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps are being taking in the light of recent reports to change non-statutory training organisations.

Mr. Nicholls: A recent report commissioned by the Manpower Services Commission concluded that the majority of non-statutory training organisations are effective, but made certain recommendations about how the performance of all the organisations might be improved. The Confederation of British Industry is currently consulting non-statutory training organisations about these recommendations. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will consider further steps in the light of the outcome of these consultations, and the advice of the Manpower Services Commission.

Job Vacancies

20. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish an analysis of known job vacancies by skill category required.

Mr. Lee: I will arrange for a table showing the number of unfilled vacancies at jobcentres in Great Britain on 8 January 1988, analysed by occupation, to be published in the *Official Report*. Vacancies have risen by nearly 20 per cent. over the last year with increases for most occupations.

Unfilled vacancies in Great Britain—8 January 1988

Occupation description	*Number of vacancies*
Managerial	10,699
Nursing	4,482
Typing and Secretarial	5,956
Clerical and Machine Operators	33,967
Selling-Distribution	22,493
Selling-Others	9,705
Security and Protective Services	5,122
Catering	29,665
Cleaning and Personal Services	30,288
Farming and Fishing	1,959
Materials Processing-Textiles/Cloth	562
Materials Processing-Food	2,226
Metal Processing	463
Metal Processing-Others	383
Making/Repairing-Textiles/Cloth	5,442
Making/Repairing-Others	5,226
Machine Operator (Engineering)-Skilled	3,401
Machine Operator (Engineering)-Unskilled	404
Toolmakers/Fitters	1,192
Installation/Maintenance	4,892
Electricians	3,088
Electronic Technicians	1,218
Welding/Fabrication	4,625
Painting	1,724
Assembling/Packaging/Inspecting	5,611
Construction-Skilled	5,203
Construction-Unskilled	1,855
Mining and Quarrying	119
Transport Operators-HGV and PSV	2,622
Transport Operators-Others	9,962
Miscellaneous	8,580

Adult Training

21. **Mr. Wall:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy not to designate the adult training scheme under clause 26 of the Employment Bill in the lifetime of the current Parliament.

61. **Dr. Moonie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy not to designate the adult training scheme under clause 26 of the Employment Bill in the lifetime of the current Parliament.

62. **Mr. Ronnie Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy not to designate the adult training scheme under clause 26 of the Employment Bill in the lifetime of the current Parliament.

91. **Mr. George Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy not to designate the adult training scheme under clause 26 of the Employment Bill in the lifetime of the current Parliament.

102. **Ms. Armstrong:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy not to designate the adult training scheme under clause 26 of the Employment Bill in the lifetime of this Parliament.

Mr. Fowler: We have made it clear that the new employment training programme will be a voluntary one, and we have no plans to designate it.

24. **Mr. McAvoy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether refusal to participate in the adult training scheme will be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

28. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether refusal to participate in the adult training scheme could be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

70. **Mr. Caborn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether refusal to participate in the adult training scheme will be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

82. **Mr. Chris Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether refusal to participate in the adult training scheme will be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

116. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether refusal to participate in the adult training scheme will be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

Mr. Nicholls: We have made it clear that, as recommended by the Manpower Services Commission, the new employment training programme will be a voluntary one, and we have no plans to designate it as "Approved Training" for the purposes of section 20 of the Social Security Act 1975. Additionally, refusal to take up a place in the programme will not by itself be grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

25. **Mrs. Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which schemes he intends to designate as approved training under clause 26 of the Employment Bill.

49. **Mr. Nellist:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which schemes he intends to designate as approved training under clause 26 of the Employment Bill.

84. **Mr. Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which schemes he intends to designate as approved training under clause 26 of the Employment Bill.

86. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which schemes he intends to designate as approved training under clause 26 of the Employment Bill.

89. **Mr. Ray Powell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment which schemes he intends to designate as approved training under clause 26 of the Employment Bill.

Mr. Cope: The Secretary of State has no plans to designate any schemes.

41. **Mr. Grocott:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to require those participating in the adult training scheme to pay the first £5 of their travel expenses.

68. **Mr. Flannery:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to require those participating in the adult training scheme to pay the first £5 of their travel expenses.

110. **Mr. Litherland:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to require those participating in the adult training scheme to pay the first £5 of their travel expenses.

Mr. Nicholls: None. It was the unanimous recommendation of the Manpower Services Commission that only participants' travel expenses in excess of £5 should be met, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has accepted this.

64. **Mr. Morley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what special arrangements are included for disabled people and those with special needs under the new adult training programme.

Mr. Nicholls: The new employment training programme will be locally planned and delivered in line with local needs, including the needs of disabled people. Where appropriate, supplementary funding will be available to assist in meeting higher costs associated with training people with special needs. There will also be special eligibility arrangements for disabled people. In addition, a range of specific help for trainees with disabilities will be available in the form of special aids to employment, adaptations to premises, a communicator service for deaf trainees and a personal reader service for blind trainees.

77. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to pay £10 per week plus benefit to those who participate in the adult training scheme.

94. **Mr. Foulkes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to pay £10 per week plus benefit to those who participate in the adult training schemes.

Mr. Nicholls: We have received a number of representations about the level of the training allowance to be paid to participants on the new employment training programme. The Government's decisions on the allowance, and on the other payments to be made to participants, implement in full the unanimous recommendations of the Manpower Services Commission. The allowance will give participants a lead of £10-£12 a week over their benefit entitlement and will ensure that they will be better off on the programme than remaining unemployed and on benefit.

111. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the chairman of the Training Commission to discuss the new integrated adult training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular contact with the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission, which is being renamed the Training Commission in the Employment Bill, to consider a number of matters, including the new employment training programme. The Manpower Services Commission is currently working on the detailed arrangements to introduce the new programme from 5 September.

Vacancies (London)

22. **Mr. Hanley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many vacancies there are in jobcentres in the London area; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: On 5 February 1988, the number of unfilled vacancies, excluding vacancies on the community programme, at jobcentres in the Greater London region was 33,800. This represents an increase of over 3 per cent. in the past year.

Labour Statistics

23. **Mr. Hunter:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest unemployment statistics for the Basingstoke-Alton travel-to-work area.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Basingstoke and Alton travel-to-work area was 2,500, or 3·3 per cent. of all employees in employment plus the unemployed.

109. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the level of unemployment in the last 12 months in Yorkshire and Humberside.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers was 245,700, a fall of 46,200 over the last 12 months.

103. **Mr. Andrew Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of employment.

Mr. Lee: By September 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, the employed labour force in Great Britain had risen for 18 consecutive quarters to 24,505,000. This represents an increase of 1,508,000 since March 1983. The figures have been adjusted for the effects of seasonal variations. The employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment, the self-employed and Her Majesty's forces.

97. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the changes in unemployment levels in the northern region in the last 12 months.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988, the number of unemployed claimants in the northern region, seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers was 187,300, a fall of 30,400 over the last 12 months.

95. **Mr. Canavan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the percentage increase in unemployment since May 1979.

Mr. Lee: Between May 1979 and February 1988, the number of adult unemployed claimants in the United Kingdom, on a consistent basis, increased by 119·7 per cent.

78. **Mr. Duffy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish the latest unemployment figures for South Yorkshire and Sheffield travel-to-work area expressed as a percentage.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988, the numbers of unemployed claimants in the county of South Yorkshire, and the Sheffield travel-to-work area expressed as a percentage of employees in employment plus the unemployed were 16·1 per cent. and 14·1 per cent. respectively.

75. **Mr. Robert G. Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current employment situation among the 18 to 25-year-old age group.

Mr. Lee: In January 1988 there were 774,000 unemployed claimants aged 18 to 24 in the United Kingdom, 197,000 fewer than in January 1987.

Analysis of the preliminary results of the labour force survey carried out in the spring of 1987 shows that there were an estimated 4,352,000 persons aged 18 to 24 in employment in Great Britain, 164,000 more than in spring 1986.

53. **Mr. Gill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are currently employed, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: In September 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 24,505,000 people in the employed labour force in Great Britain. This represents an increase of 1,508,000 since March 1983. The figures have been adjusted for the effects of seasonal variations. The employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment, the self-employed and Her Majesty's forces.

38. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of people currently employed in the north-west.

92. **Mr. Day:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of people currently employed in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: In September 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 2,550,000 people in the civilian employed labour force in the north-west region. This represents an increase of 26,000 since March 1983.

The figures have not been adjusted for the effects of seasonal variations. The civilian employed labour force is the sum of employees in employment and the self-employed.

39. **Mr. Andy Stewart:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the level of unemployment in the last 12 months in the east midlands.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the east midlands region, seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers, was 158,400, a fall of 32,900 over the last 12 months.

33. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the level of unemployment in the last 12 months in the west midlands.

Mr. Lee: On 11 February 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the west midlands region, seasonally adjusted and excluding school leavers, was 258,100—9·9 per cent. of the working population. This was the first time unemployment has fallen below 10 per cent. since April 1981 and is a fall of 61,100 over the last 12 months.

31. **Mr. Latham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make a statement on the current trend in unemployment.

46. **Mr. Bowis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the current levels of unemployment in the United Kingdom.

114. **Mr. Parry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the latest unemployment figures.

Mr. Lee: The seasonally adjusted level of adult unemployment fell further by 33,400 between January and February, to 2,531,300, the lowest figure on a consistent basis since February 1982. The figure has now fallen for 19 consecutive months, by 679,000 in total since July 1986, the largest sustained fall on record.

Agricultural Inspectors

26. **Mr. Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the number of Her Majesty's agricultural inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 April 1979 there were 190 agricultural inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive. On 1 March 1988 there were 158. Recruitment to the inspectorate is at present under way.

Skillcentres

27. **Mr. Gareth Wardell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he anticipates making a statement on the future of skillcentres.

Mr. Cope: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment announced a review of the Skills Training Agency at the end of last year and has recently received an initial report which he is considering.

Strikes

29. **Mr. Roger King:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many days were lost through strikes in November 1987 and in November 1978; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given earlier by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Martin).

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

30. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of jobs that have been created through the enterprise allowance scheme since its inception.

Mr. Cope: The information is not available in the form requested. Since the inception of the enterprise allowance scheme in 1982 over 320,000 unemployed people have been helped to start their own business. Latest survey evidence shows that for every 100 businesses continuing six months after the allowance has ended, 71 people, in addition to the recipient of the allowance and any business partner, are employed at that time. Two years after the allowance has ceased, the number of additional people employed rises to 114 per 100 firms surviving.

The surveys also show that for those completing a full year on the scheme 74 per cent. were still trading six months after the allowance ended and 65 per cent. two years after the allowance has ceased.

Youth Training Scheme

32. **Mr. Vaz:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment on what business he has calculated the briding allowance provided to young people while they wait for a YTS scheme.

Mr. Cope: The proposed YTS bridging allowance is designed to provide short-term payments for young people who have to wait for a few weeks for a YTS place after leaving a job or a previous YTS place. The allowance will be paid for a maximum of eight weeks, during which time the offer of a YTS place will be made. The allowance will be set initially at £15 per week, more than twice the level of child benefit.

42. **Mr. Martlew:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of YTS leavers enter employment with employers who did not supply their training or work experience.

Mr. Cope: The latest results from the Manpower Services Commission's regular follow-up surveys of YTS leavers show that, of those young people who left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987, 30 per cent. were in full time employment with an employer who did not supply their training or work experience (or were self-employed) at the time of the surveys.

50. **Miss Lestor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will reimburse all travel costs to persons on YTS.

Mr. Cope: There are no plans to reimburse all travel costs to persons on YTS.

51. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the latest figures for YTS trainees going into work, or further education and training.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission conducts regular follow-up surveys of all YTS leavers. The latest results show that, of those who left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987, 75 per cent. were in work, further education or in training when surveyed.

66. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of young people receive their first choice option of YTS schemes.

Mr. Cope: I regret that this information is not available.

74. **Mr. Hinchliffe:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of YTS leavers enter employment with the same employer who provided their training or work experience.

Mr. Cope: The latest results from the Manpower Services Commission's regular follow-up surveys on YTS leavers show that, of those young people who left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987, 26 per cent. were full-time in employment with the employer who ran their YTS scheme or provided work experience at the time of the surveys.

81. **Ms. Quinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what are the most recent estimates of job substitution rates for YTS.

Mr. Cope: The latest estimates based on evidence from the 1985-86 YTS providers survey show a rate of job substitution of 6 per cent. This represents the proportion of training places that have replaced jobs for adults.

117. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what percentage of YTS leavers attain a recognised qualification.

Mr. Cope: The latest results from the 100 per cent. follow-up survey of YTS leavers in the period April 1986 to September 1987 show that 20 per cent. of leavers gained a qualification. However, during this period 90 per cent. of leavers from YTS were early leavers who had not completed their training course and, therefore, were not representative of all trainees. Most young people will not complete their two-year training programme until after March 1988. A national survey of those trainees who have stayed into their second year shows that 54 per cent. had already gained a qualification.

121. **Mr. Robert B. Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the progress of the YTS scheme.

Mr. Cope: The beginning of April marks the second anniversary of the two-year YTS. During the past two years, very important progress has been made. At any one time there are on average more than 400,000 young people in training, compared with 285,000 in 1985; and of course YTS now offers two years of training. In addition, of those young people who left YTS schemes between April 1986 and September 1987, a total of 75 per cent. went into work or futher education and training.

We are continuing to improve further the high quality of training on offer. Over 50 per cent. of trainees entering their second year on YTS had already gained a vocational qualification, and all YTS managing agents have to secure approved training organisations status if they are to continue to work with YTS.

Overall, YTS is making a major contribution to meeting the needs of employers and the wishes of young people. The task now is the ensure that YTS provides the opportunity for all young people who enter the labour market to gain the skills and qualifications which will enhance their job prospects and meet the demands of the labour market.

Professional and Executive Register

34. **Mr. Ian Bruce:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the privatisation of Professional and Executive Recruitment.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) on 9 March at column *220*.

Skilled Labour

35. **Sir Anthony Grant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proposals he has to encourage more skilled labour to become available in East Anglia and the south-east generally; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: To secure the skills they need employers must provide proper incentives for people to acquire those skills, develop internal recruitment and make the necessary investment in training and upgrading of skills.

The Government have given a lead by more than doubling their investment in vocational education and training since 1979, especially through YTS for the 16 and 17-year-old age group, and now the new £1·4 billion employment training programme for unemployed adults, announced in the White Paper "Training for Employment" (Cm 316).

In East Anglia and the south-east generally more than 51,000 young people are expected to receive training under YTS during this financial year with expenditure planned at £117 million. In addition, 47,000 unemployed adults will have received skills training during the same period at a cost of £31 million. Training under YTS and the forthcoming employment training programme responds to the skill needs of local labour markets.

Literacy Tuition

36. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many pilot projects offering intensive literacy tuition to unemployed people are being set up; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: There are currently seven pilot projects operating which offer intense literacy tuition to unemployed adults. These have been set up under the wider opportunities training programme. They will assist the development of literacy training with the employment training programme for unemployed people that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has announced for September.

Factory Inspectors

40. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many factory inspectors the Health and Safety Executive had in place on 1 March.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 March 1988 there were 598 factory inspectors in post in the Health and Safety Executive.

55. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the number of Her Majesty's factory inspectors since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: On 1 April 1979 there were 742 factory inspectors in post in the Health and Safety Executive. On 1 March 1988 there were 598. Recruitment to the inspectorate is at present under way.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the numbers of Health and Safety Executive factory inspectors in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom in each year since the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act.

Mr. Nicholls: The numbers are as follows:

Year (1 January)	*Factory Inspectors in Scotland*	*Factory Inspectors in Great Britain*[1]
1976	53	568
1977	55	664
1978	61	691
1979	61	709
1980	68	756
1981	65	743
1982	61	690
1983	56	662
1984	51	634
1985	51	638
1986	50	614
1987	46	626
1988[2]	43	598

[1] The Health and Safety Executive does not enforce health and safety legislation in Northern Ireland. Figures provided cover England, Scotland and Wales.
[2] 1st March 1988.

Construction Industry

43. **Mr. Bill Michie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he last met the Chief Inspector of Factories to consider ways of improving safety in the construction industry.

Mr. Nicholls: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met the Chief Inspector of Factories on 2 December 1987, when one of the subjects discussed was the initiative being taken by the Health and Safety's to encourage the construction industry to improve its safety record.

Tourism

44. **Mr. Ken Hargreaves:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of people employed in tourism and tourism-related industry in the county of Lancashire.

Mr. Lee: There were an estimated 37,000 employees in employment in tourism-related industries in the county of Lancashire in September 1984, the latest date for which information is available. This figure does not include the self-employed, for whom a comparable estimate is not available.

120. **Mr. Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he is satisfied with the workings of section 4 tourist grants; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: A recent study by Department of Employment economists showed that the section 4 scheme has a significant effect in supporting local and regional employment, and makes a contribution to helping the tourism industry operate more efficiently and effectively. We continue to keep the scheme under review.

93. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has on the rate per week at which jobs are being created in the tourism sector.

Mr. Lee: No information is available on the rate per week at which jobs in the tourism sector are created. However, there has been a net increase of 43,000 in the estimated number of employees in employment in tourism-related industries over the year to September 1987. These figures exclude the self-employed, for whom comparable estimates are not available.

Availability for Work Test

54. **Mr. Heffer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list the grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

79. **Mr. Morgan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will list the grounds for withdrawal of benefit under the availability for work test.

Mr. Lee: The requirement that a person be available for work is a fundamental condition for the receipt of unemployment benefits. It was re-enacted most recently in the Social Security Act 1975.

The condition means that a person must be available for work with an employer and must not restrict their job-seeking, in terms of the hours, days, pay, location or type of employment they are willing to accept, to such an extent that they effectively have no reasonable prospect of securing work within those restrictions.

88. **Mr. Meacher:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to extend the application of the availability for work test.

Mr. Lee: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, North-West (Mr. Stern). *Official Report*, Monday 14 December, at columns *337-38*. This is an area which I shall continue to keep under review.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps have been taken to improve morale in the Health and Safety Executive.

Mr. Nicholls: While the Director General of the Health and Safety Executive accepts that there are some problems arising from the pay and promotion prospects of certain groups of staff, he does not take the view that there is anything generally wrong with morale in the executive.

Health and Safety

59. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what priority he accords to reliance on self-regulation in maintaining health and safety at the workplace.

Mr. Nicholls: Self-regulation is fundamental to the operation of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Health and Safety Commission itself includes representatives of employers and employees as well as local authorities, and its proposals for regulations and codes are based on extensive consultation with those affected by them. Employers are responsible under the Act for applying its general provisions to their work force and for preparing written health and safety policies, and are subject to such inspection as the commission considers generally appropriate.

85. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will make available the research study on the Health and Safety Executive carried out by the socio-legal studies department at Wolfson college, Oxford.

Mr. Nicholls: The research study by the centre for socio-legal studies at Wolfson college into aspects of policy and enforcement is not yet complete. A decision on its eventual publication is a matter for the centre.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the location, address and staff complement of each Health and Safety Executive office in the United Kingdom in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: The location, address and staff complement since 1978 for the Health and Safety Executive's headquarters, each area and for each research and laboratory services division site is as follows. It is not possible to show separately those staff located in sub-offices or outstationed. These staff are included in the appropriate area office total.

1. Location and address of HSE HQs, area offices and research and laboratory services division sites

Location	*Address*
Headquarters	
London	Baynards House, 1 Chepstow Place, London, W2
Merseyside	Stanley Precinct, Bootle, Merseyside
Area offices	
01 South West	Inter City House, Mitchell Lane, Victoria Street, Bristol
02 South	Priestley House, Priestley Road, Basingstoke
03 South East	3 East Grinstead House, London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex
04[1] South East	Chancel House, Neasden Lane, London, NW10
05[1] London North	Maritime House, 1 Linton Road, Barking, Essex
06[1] London South	1 Long Lane, London SE1
07 East Anglia	39 Baddow Road, Chelmsford, Essex
08 North Home Counties	14 Cardiff Road, Luton, Bedfordshire
09 East Midlands	Belgrave House, 1 Greyfriars, Northampton
10 West Midlands	McLaren Building, 2 Masshose Circus, Queensway, Birmingham
11 Wales	Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff
12 Marches	The Marches House, Midway, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire
13 North Midlands	Birkbeck House, Trinity Square, Nottingham
14 South Yorkshire	Sovereign House, 40 Silver Street, Sheffield
15 West and North Yorkshire	8 St. Pauls Street, Leeds
16 Greater Manchester	Quay House, Quay Street, Manchester
17 Merseyside	The Triad, Stanley Road, Bootle
18 North West	Victoria House, Ormskirk Road, Preston
19 North East	Arden House, Regent Centre, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
20 Scotland East	Belford House, 59 Belford Road, Edinburgh
21 Scotland West	314 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow
Research and Laboratory Services Division	
London	403-405 Edgware Road, London, NW2
Buxton	Harpur Hill, Buxton, Derbyshire
Sheffield	Broad Lane, Sheffield

[1] Areas 04, 05 and 06 under command of Senior Area Director in Area 06. Inspectors and support staff cover all three locations.

Posts in the health and safety executive

Location	*1 January in each year*										
	1978	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*
Headquarters	1,340	1,362	1,349	1,305	1,266	1,316	1,341	1,369	1,382	1,409	1,369
Areas											
01	128	128	130	122	105	101	100	95	93	91	91
02	68	67	79	66	59	63	65	76	74	76	71
03	87	104	109	115	106	101	104	99	92	95	91
04	72	57	70	56	50	47	46	51	29	27	23
05	57	50	49	64	59	57	74	50	66	64	58
06	103	107	93	85	82	79	72	70	74	75	
07	70	68	69	67	61	57	59	73	76	73	61
08	108	135	134	129	120	108	108	96	93	101	92

Location	1 January in each year										
	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
09	104	103	106	103	97	90	94	85	83	87	87
10	185	173	176	163	148	135	127	117	108	103	97
11	169	166	174	169	146	130	129	123	118	120	109
12	109	109	110	103	98	92	91	87	82	85	85
13	83	87	87	96	82	76	72	88	82	87	81
14	101	94	88	87	79	76	79	85	82	81	75
15	168	195	202	188	167	159	152	134	131	137	122
16	149	144	139	134	126	120	120	101	92	95	92
17	65	69	67	68	59	57	61	66	69	70	62
18	70	69	64	70	66	64	65	74	73	71	64
19	126	116	116	116	111	105	97	94	91	93	77
20	128	152	155	151	140	138	134	114	107	106	106
21	104	78	76	74	68	62	59	73	69	70	71
Field total	2,254	2,271	2,294	2,226	2,029	1,917	1,888	1,852	1,780	1,806	1,690
Research and laboratory services	576	593	575	535	544	503	489	490	477	482	442
Posts in house	4,170	4,226	4,218	4,066	3,839	3,736	3,718	3,711	3,639	3,697	3,501

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* for *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom the number of prosecutions for alleged breaches of the Health and safety at Work etc. Act, and the number of custodial sentences imposed as a result of those prosecutions in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: *(a)* The table shows the available information for Scotland.

Number of prosecutions: informations laid by Factory and Agricultural Inspectors

Year	Number
1981	183
1982	243
1983	259
1984	218
1985	298
1986-87[1]	251

[1] Provisional data for the 12 month period April 1986 to March 1987.

(b) The table shows the available information for Great Britain.

Number of prosecutions: informations laid

Year	[2] [3]	[4]	[5]
1978	—	—	2,603
1979	—	2,427	—
1980	—	2,624	—
1981	—	1,892	—
1982	—	2,342	—
1983	2,238	2,230	—
1984	2,207	2,196	—
1985	2,313	2,196	—
1986-87	2,175	2,140	—

[2] Data include prosecutions taken by Factory and Agricultural Inspectorate, Explosives Inspectorate, Her Majesty's Mines and Quarries Inspectorate, Railway Inspectorate and the Petroleum Engineering Division of the Department of Energy, but exclude the Pollution Inspectorate (formerly the Industrial Air Pollution Inspectorate).

[3] Figures in both tables exclude the results of prosecutions taken by Local Authorities. The latest information for Local authorities (LAs) relates to 1985, for which we know of about 250 informations laid under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and 200 under other associated legislation in Great Britain as a whole.

[4] Factory and Agricultural Inspectorate only.

[5] Factory Inspectorate only.

(c) In 1985, one person was given a suspended prison sentence of one month, and in 1987 one person was given two suspended prison sentences of nine months (to run consecutively). These sentences related to offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act and associated legislation. None of them occurred in Scotland.

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the average fine handed out for offences under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act for *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: The average fine for prosecutions taken by the Health and Safety Executive's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorate for breach of health and safety laws in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Great Britain since 1978 is as follows:

Year	Average fine (£)	
	(a) Scotland	*(b)* Great Britain
1978	+	[1]134
1979	+	184
1980	+	180
1981	154	189
1982	168	233
1983	182	252
1984	301	304
1985	316	426
[2]1986-87	354	427

Notes:
+ Not Available.
[1] Factory Inspectorate only.
[2] Provisional.

Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Caravan and Holiday Parks

48. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the development of the caravan and holiday park industry.

Mr. Lee: The caravan and holiday park industry makes a major contribution to tourism in this country. It is estimated to produce an annual turnover in excess of £800 million and to provide over 200,000 jobs. I welcome the industry's efforts to improve its training and to provide higher standards by introducing codes of practice, and a

grading scheme, produced by the British Holiday and Home Parks Association and the National Caravan Council in conjunction with the English Tourist Board. I was also pleased to learn of the industry's plans to invest £3 million in a national campaign to raise the profile of caravan holidays.

Equal Opportunities

52. **Mr. Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what rights against sex discrimination a woman will have under the Government's proposed new training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: It is unlawful under section 14 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 for the Manpower Services Commission to discriminate against a woman in the provision of training for employment. Furthermore, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be designating the new adult training programme under section 14(2)*(d)* of the Act. This will render unlawful discrimination by persons providing training on behalf of the Manpower Services Commission.

67. **Ms. Mowlam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he expects to announce the findings of the consultative document on the restrictions on the employment of young people and the removal of sex discrimination in legislation.

Mr. Nicholls: I am at present considering with my colleagues the responses we have received to the consultative document. I hope to bring forward appropriate legislation in due course.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

37. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the progress of the enterprise allowance scheme.

Mr. Cope: Since the enterprise allowance scheme began in 1982, over 320,000 unemployed people have been helped to start their own business: 102,500 places are available this year, although this figure is likely to be exceeded; 110,000 places will be available next year.

School Leavers

54. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of school leavers within the metropolitan borough of Rotherham secured full-time employment apart from Government schemes in 1987.

Mr. Nicholls: Records maintained by the metropolitan borough of Rotherham careers service show that at 10 March 1988, 545 (18.6 per cent.) of the 16-year-old pupils who left school in Rotherham in 1987 were in employment outside YTS. Separate figures for full and part-time employment are not available.

Enterprise in Higher Education Initiative

56. **Mr. Carrington:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the progress of the Training Commission's enterprise in higher education initiative.

Mr. Nicholls: Since the launch of the initiative on 9 December 1987 there has been a most pleasing level of institutional interest Four one-day workshops were held for institutions in early February. The total attendance was in excess of 300 with 143 institutions represented. Outline bids for first round funding have been received from 85 institutions. Each institution will be notified shortly about the outcome of its bid.

Local Employer Networks

57. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many local employer networks have been established; and what has been the cost to his Department.

Mr. Nicholls: Eighty Seven employer networks had been contracted by 18 March with a further five applications under consideration.

Some £3·7 million has been allocated to the project, which is a collaborative venture between the CBI, Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the Manpower Services Commission.

Channel Tunnel

58. **Mr. Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when representatives of the Health and Safety Executive last visited the Channel tunnel construction site to assess safety levels.

Mr. Nicholls: Inspectors of the Health and Safety Executive last visited the Channel tunnel construction site at Shakespeare cliff, Dover, on 24 March 1988, and a further visit is planned for today.

Schools-Employers (Compacts)

60. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to introduce compacts between schools and employers; and if he will make a statement.

65. **Mr. John Browne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what resources he is making available to schools and local employers who wish to form a compact; and if he will make a statement.

72. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to promote the development of compacts between schools and employers in inner city areas; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: I refer my hon. Friends to the reply I gave earlier to my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, North-East (Mrs. Hicks).

Unemployment

69. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when he will next be meeting his EEC counterparts to discuss unemployment throughout Europe; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I met European Commission colleagues on 14-15 March at an informal meeting of Labour Ministers. The meeting discussed a number of EC developments touching on unemployment, notably the future role of the European social fund and employment in the steel industry. I took the opportunity to draw attention to the continuing high level of unemployment across Europe. The next formal meeting will be on 9 June. I will, in the usual way, make a statement following that meeting.

Job Clubs

71. **Mr. Hayward:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the development of job clubs.

Mr. Lee: Since my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Mr. Sackville), on 15 December 1987, at column *476*, a further 51 job clubs have opened.

There are now 1,184 job clubs in operation. Some changes in eligibility rules were made early in March 1988 to reinforce help available to unemployed people at a disadvantage in the labour market. In particular, entry to job clubs was made easier for (i) people with disabilities, (ii) ex-offenders, (iii) clients of Manpower Services Commission's adult programmes, if they leave the programme unplaced.

In addition, the employment service is developing the job club programme in inner cities so as better to meet special needs.

100. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people are attending job clubs in the northern region.

Mr. Lee: At 26 February, 1,682 people were attending job clubs in the northern region.

Vacancies (East Anglia)

73. **Mr. Patrick Thompson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of vacancies registered at jobcentres in East Anglia.

Mr. Lee: On 5 February 1988, the number of unfilled vacancies, excluding vacancies on the community programme, at jobcentres in the East Anglia region was 7,764. This represents an increase of 29·6 per cent. since February 1987.

Disabled People

76. **Mr. Ashley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether, in reviewing employment assistance for disabled people, his Department will be consulting interested groups.

Mr. Lee: This is an internal review which will take account of information and advice available already, including the study of the Tomlinson principles recently completed by the National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People. I would expect that conclusions that emerge from the review will be subject to the normal processes of consultation.

Enterprise Agencies

80. **Mr. Jacques Arnold:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a further statement on the development of enterprise agencies.

Mr. Cope: Local enterprise agencies are independent private sector-led organisations and their future development must rest primarily with their boards and private sector sponsors. Through the local enterprise agency grant scheme, this Department is encouraging the development in England of a network of viable LEAs capable after five years (the scheme's duration) of surviving without specific Government funding. I set out in a reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Sherwood (Mr. Stewart) *Official Report*, 8 March, at column *117*, certain modifications which have been made recently to increase the scheme's effectiveness in achieving its original objectives.

Small Businesses

83. **Mr. Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what recent evidence he has about the impact on levels of employment in small businesses of the various obligations discussed in "Building Businesses . . . not Barriers".

Mr. Cope: Removal of burdens on business is part of the Government's overall policy to encourage enterprise. The report "Encouraging Enterprise", presented to Parliament in May 1987 sets out progress made since the publication of "Building Businesses . . . not Barriers". It is not possible to quantify the impact of this single factor on employment in small business, but the overall success of Government policy is clear with the continuing growth in the number of small businesses and the self-employed.

Maternity Leave

87. **Ms. Richardson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he has any plans to introduce legislation concerning the rights of women to maternity leave, in the light of the Court of Appeal decision on Ms. Dowuona *v.* John Lewis.

Mr. Nicholls: I have no such plans.

Mines and Quarries Inspectors

90. **Mr. Patchett:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what has been the change in the number of Her Majesty's mines and quarries inspectors in the Health and Safety Executive since 1979.

Mr. Nicholls: The number of mines and quarries inspectors has fallen from 116 in 1979 to 76 on 1 March 1988. This closely reflects the changes that have taken place, primarily in the mining industry, in size and structure over the same period.

"Training for Employment"

96. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many representations he has received on the proposals contained in the White Paper "Training for Employment"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: We have received some 150 representations on the proposals contained in the White Paper "Training for Employment". The White Paper sets out the Goverment's plans for securing continuing reductions in unemployment and for sustaining jobs growth. It calls on employers, individuals and trade unions to play their part, in particular to equip longer-term unemployed people for the jobs which the economy is generating. We believe that the soundness of the approach set out in the White Paper is widely recognised.

Training Programme (Allowances)

98. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to meet the general secretary of the Trades Union Congress to discuss the training allowance payable to trainees on the new unified training programme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: No. As announced in the recent White Paper "Training for Employment", the training allowances to be paid to trainees on the new employment training programme will be those unanimously recommended by the Manpower Services Commission, which includes three commissioners nominated by the Trades Union Congress.

Small Firms Service

99. **Mr. Janman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many inquiries were handled by the Small Firms Service in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: During the calendar year 1987, the small firms service in England dealt with 259,638 inquiries.

Holiday Accommodation

101. **Mr. Butterfill:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what is being done to ensure that self-catering holiday accommodation is maintained at a high standard.

Mr. Lee: The English Tourist Board offered a total of nearly £1 million in the 1986-87 financial year towards the costs of developing and upgrading self-catering accommodation. At the beginning of 1988, the board introduced the holiday homes approval scheme. Accommodation approved under this voluntary scheme will have met minimum standards of cleanliness and quality.

Contracts (Small Firms)

104. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many representations he has received, following the publication of "Tendering for Government Contracts," from small firms, and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) on Tuesday 2 February 1988, *Official Report*, column *558*.

Vacancies (South-West)

105. **Mr. Hannam:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on the number of job vacancies registered at jobcentres in the south-west.

Mr. Lee: On 5 February 1988, the number of unfilled vacancies, excluding vacancies on the community programme, at jobcentres in the south-west region was 16,758. This represents an increase of 8·7 per cent. since February 1987.

Catering Industry

106. **Dr. Twinn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what he is doing to promote the image of the catering industry among tourists.

Mr. Lee: We are assisting the industry to maintain and improve standards of professionalism and service through the tourism training initiative, the work of the Manpower Services Commission and the work of the statutory training and tourist bodies.

Agriculture Industry

107. **Mr. Nigel Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what additional funding was made available for the Health and Safety Executive's recent campaign to reduce the number of accidents in the agriculture industry.

Mr. Nicholls: The costs of this campaign were met from within the overall provision made to the Health and Safety Commission and Executive for 1987-88, which was increased by £1 million during the year.

American Visitors

108. **Mr. Sackville:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many American visitors came to Britain in 1987; and how much they spent.

Mr. Lee: The information requested is not yet available for the whole of 1987. However, in the 12 months to September 1987, residents of the United States of America made 2,705,000 visits to the United Kingdom and spent £1,431 million. Comparable figures for 1986 are 2,342,000 and £1,253 million for visits and spending respectively.

Trade Unions (Postal Ballots)

112. **Mr. Riddick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received concerning the proposals, embodied in the Employment Bill, to compel trade unions to hold the elections of their principal executive officers by secret postal ballot; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: In addition to comments on the proposal contained in chapter 5 of the Green Paper "Trade Unions and Their Members", my Department continues to receive letters and requests for meetings about the Employment Bill provision to require fully postal voting for the election of all general secretaries, presidents and members of union principal executive committees.

Restart Programme

115. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many long-term unemployed have been offered help to date under the restart programme.

Mr. Lee: Since 1 July 1986, some 3·2 million interviews have taken place under the restart programme, of which just under 90 per cent. have resulted in an offer of positive help being made.

Nuclear Installations Inspectors

118. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what plans he has to increase the numbers of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectors.

Mr. Nicholls: The staffing of the nuclear installations inspectorate is a matter for the Health and Safety Commission and Executive. Their current plans provide for a total of 121 nuclear installations inspectors in 1988-89. A decision has yet to be taken on further increases.

Industrial Tourism

119. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what he is doing to stimulate industrial tourism.

Mr. Lee: I shall continue to take every opportunity to promote the potential benefits to be gained by companies exploiting their potential as tourist attractions. The CBI is demonstrating support by organising a conference on this subject on 15 September this year at which I shall be speaking. In addition, the English tourist board is to work with the CBI to produce a booklet designed to provide encouragement, advice and information to companies considering entering this field.

Accidents at Work

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* the number of people killed and *(b)* the number of people injured in accidents at work (i) in Scotland and (ii) in the United Kingdom, in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: The available information for accidents reported to Her Majesty's Factory and Agricultural Inspectorates and to the local authorities in Scotland and Great Britain as a whole is as follows.

Numbers of reported occupational injuries to employees in Scotland

Year	[1]*Death*	[2]*Major injury*	[3]*Abscence from work of over three days*
1978[6]	59	—	25,999
1979[6]	72	—	24,157
1980[6]	49	—	21,732
1981	57	1,209	38,080
1982	57	1,228	34,181
1983	55	1,160	—
1984	47	1,154	—
1985	37	1,159	—
1986-87 (p)[4]	39	[5]1,793	13,550
Numbers of reported occupational injuries to employees in Great Britain			
1978[7]	433	—	269,123
1979[7]	433	—	250,465
1980[7]	411	—	210.290
1981	355	11,079	359,251
1982	368	11,084	327,806
1983	366	11,270	—
1984	361	11,853	—
1985	321	12,112	—
1986-87 (p)[4]	314	[5]18,567	141,225

— not available.
p provisional.
[1] Includes fatal injuries to members of the public arising from work activity, only for those fatal injuries reported to Local Authorities in 1981-1985.
[2] As defined in the Notification of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1980. (NADOR).
[3] For 1981-82, injuries resulting in claims for industrial injury benefit. From 1983 to 1985 figures are not available as Industrial Injury Benefit ceased in 1983.
From April 1986 injuries reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (RIDDOR). These figures are not comparable with previous figures.
[4] Year commencing 1 April 1986 when RIDDOR came into force.
[5] The definition of major injury for 1986-87 is given in the RIDDO Regulations and is wider that that specified under NADOR.
[6] For Scotland, injuries in 1978-80 are those reported to Factory Inspectorate only.
[7] For Great Britain, injuries reported in 1978-80 are those to Factory and Agricultural Inspectorate only.

Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Industrial Diseases

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of people who have died from industrial diseases in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: The available statistics are as shown. The numbers have been obtained by combining figures for death benefit awards under the industrial injuries and pneumoconiosis, byssinosis and miscellaneous diseases benefit schemes with figures of certifications that death was due to pneumoconiosis made under the workers' compensation scheme.

Deaths in the United Kingdom which can be attributed to recognised industrial diseases

Year	*Number*
1978	888
1979	931
1980	920
1981	905
1982	897
1983	913
1984	806
1985	1,033
1986	930

I regret that separate figures for Scotland are not available.

Lost Working Days

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of working days lost in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the United Kingdom as a result of (i) accidents and illness at work and (ii) strike action in each year since 1978.

Mr. Nicholls: Table 1 shows the available information for the estimated number of days of certified incapacity resulting from compensated industrial accidents and prescribed diseases in Scotland and in Great Britain. This information is available only up to April 1983 when industrial injury benefit was effectively abolished.

Table 1

Year (June to May)	*Number of Days (millions)*	
	Scotland	*Great Britain*
1977-78	1·8	15·6
1978-79	1·7	15·5
1979-80	1·5	13·0
1980-81	1·3	10·9
1981-82	1·2	10·8
[1]1982-83	1·0	9·5

[1] Year ending 31 March 1983

Table 2 shows the number of working days lost due to industrial disputes in Scotland and Great Britain.

Table 2

Year	*Number of Days (thousands)*	
	Scotland	*Great Britain*
1978	886	9,141
1979	3,268	28,744
1980	1,447	11,915
1981	599	4,197
1982	634	5,216

Year	Number of Days (thousands) Scotland	Great Britain
1983	308	3,675
1984	2,333	27,083
1985	681	6,362
1986	312	1,890

Notes:

[1] The statistics relate to stoppages of work due to industrial disputes connected with terms and conditions of employment. Stoppages involving fewer than ten workers or lasting less than one day are excluded unless the total number of working days lost in the dispute is greater than 100.

[2] The information is regularly published in the Department of Employment Gazette.

Figures for Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Small Businesses (Health and Safety)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he has any plans to introduce health and safety advice centres to assist knowledge of and resource capacity to tackle health and safety at work problems among small businesses; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: I have no such plans. Area offices of the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities with responsibilities for health and safety enforcement already offer help and advice to small businesses throughout the country.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Lee: Payments made by the Department of Employment Group, excluding the Manpower Services Commission, in 1987 on management and computer consultancy amounted to £904,000.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what was the total amount spent by the Manpower Services Commission in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Lee: The Manpower Services Commission spent a total of £1·6 million during the calendar year 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Health and Safety Executive (Dundee)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make a statement on his Department's decision to close the Health and Safety Executive office in Dundee as from 1 April.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive are responsible for the deployment of their staff. Their decision to close the Dundee office was taken because it no longer presents a viable base for the efficient organisation of inspection. The planned redeployment of staff will not reduce the present service in Dundee or the rest of HSE's Scotland east area.

Tourism (China)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many British tourists have visited China in each of the last five years.

Mr. Lee: Estimates of the number of visits to China by United Kingdom residents in the five years 1982 to 1986 are as follows.

	Visits
1982	5,200
1983	8,900
1984	10,400
1985	18,500
1986	19,300

NORTHERN IRELAND

Maghaberry Prison

Mr. A. Cecil Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give a detailed breakdown of operating costs for Maghaberry prison for the financial year 1986-87.

Mr. Stanley: The information requested is as follows:

	£
Security and control	3,246,405
Inmate care	715,042
Inmate occupation	231,155
Accommodation services (this includes supplies and services)	1,488,711
Other costs (this includes administration, staff amenities and training)	1,341,745
Total	7,023,058

British Soldiers (Murders)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as to how many persons identified from pictures of the attack on two members of her Majesty's forces on Saturday 19 March have served prison sentences; and for what offences.

Mr. Stanley: No. The Chief Constable is currently carrying out a full and thorough investigation into these barbaric murders. It would not be appropriate for me to comment at this stage of the inquiries.

Terrorist Killings

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the British subjects murdered by terrorists when they were *(a)* living in and *(b)* visiting the Irish Republic since 1 January 1969, and in how many of those cases he has information on (i) whether persons were charged and brought before the courts in the Irish Republic and (ii) how many of those cases resulted in a guilty verdict and prison sentence.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* This information in respect of British subjects normally resident in Northern Ireland is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. This information in respect of other British subjects is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to on how many occasions during the last 15 years, when persons were murdered by terrorists in Northern Ireland and the killers were known to have left the scene of the murder and crossed the land frontier into the Irish Republic, an assistant commissioner of the Garda was put in charge of inquiries made in the Irish Republic as to the identity of the murderers.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* I understand that in all murders with a cross-border dimension the Garda carry out their own investigations. I have no information regarding the rank of the Garda officer in charge of each investigation.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by name, date and place the persons killed by terrorists since 1969 where the victims were in Northern Ireland and the killers were in the Irish Republic when the incident leading to each death took place; whether in each case any persons were *(a)* charged, *(b)* brought before the courts, *(c)* sentenced to a term of imprisonment and *(d)* acquitted or otherwise released; and if he will also indicate whether the method used to commit the crime was shooting, remote-controlled explosion, radio-detonated bomb, or other method.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, since the beginning of 1987, the only person killed in Northern Ireland by a terrorist operating in the Republic of Ireland was lance Corporal Thomas Hewitt who was murdered by the Provisional IRA on 19 July whilst on patrol in Belleek, Co Fermanagh. The gunman carried out the murder from a firing point within the Republic of Ireland. On 31 July 1987 Michael Joseph Heron was charged in the Republic of Ireland with possession of a firearm with intent in relation to this murder. He was subsequently convicted at Dublin special criminal court in February 1988 and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

Lord Justice Gibson

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has as to the rank of the Garda officer who was appointed to take charge of inquiries into the murder of Lord Justice Gibson.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* None.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mental Hospitals (Staff)

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the proportion of qualified to unqualified staff in mental hospitals at present and in each of the last 10 years.

Mr. Newton: Information about staff employed in mental hospitals, other than nursing staff, is not collected centrally. The information requested for nursing staff employed at September 1981 to September 1986 is shown in the table. Comparable information is not available prior to 1981.

Nursing and midwifery staff in mentall illness area[1] of work England at 30 September

Whole-time equivalents[2]

Year	*Total*	*Qualified staff*	*Unqualified staff[3]*	*Ratio of qualified to unqualified staff[4]*
1981	54,480	29,200	25,270	1·16:1
1982	56,560	30,500	26,060	1·17:1
1983	57,160	31,230	25,940	1·20:1
1984	57,690	32,190	25,500	1·26:1
1985	58,470	33,140	25,330	1·31:1
1986	59,480	33,760	25,720	1·31:1

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes staff who work in psychiatric wards of non-psychiatric hospitals.

[2] Figures have been independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole time equivalents.

[3] Including learners.

[4] Ratios calculated on unrounded figures.

Health Services (Staff)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any information as to the total number of managerial and administrative staff employed in patient care in the public and private health services in the United States of America; and what is the total number of administrative and clerical staff employed in patient care in the United Kingdom Health Service.

Mr. Newton: I regret that information on the United States of America is not available.

The administrative and clerical staff employed in patient care, in England, are shown in the table. (30 September 1986 is latest available to this level of detail). Information for other parts of the United Kingdom are a matter for the respective Secretaries of State.

Clinically related administrative and clerical staff[1] in England at 30 September 1986—Whole time equivalents[2]—35,900

Source: DHSS annual census of non NHS medical manpower.

[1] Includes staff employed in the following areas of work: Medical Records, Voluntary Help, Medical Secretaries, Patient Services, Clinical Research Support, Health Education, Ward Clerks, Blood Transfusion Services, Mass Radiography, Ambulance Support, Family Planning, Mental Handicap and Mental Illness Care, Professions Allied to Medicine (PAMs) support and Occupational Health.

[2] Figure is rounded to nearest one hundred (100) whole time equivalents.

Child Benefit

Mr. Haynes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if any decision has yet been taken about the future uprating of child benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if any decision has yet been taken about the future uprating of child benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: The level of child benefit is reviewed each year as part of the annual review of benefits.

Severely Disabled People

Mr. Frank Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services by what criteria applications for assistance from the special fund to help the severely disabled are to be judged; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Scott: I hope to make an announcement shortly.

Griffiths Report

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration he is giving to implementing the recommendations made in the Griffiths report; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We are considering Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations, taking account of the report of the committee chaired by Lady Wagner on residential care, and of reactions to both reports. The Government will bring forward their own proposals in due course.

Retirement Pensions

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many married women are in receipt of category B retirement pensions; and what is the average weekly amount.

Mr. Scott: Some 1·9 million married women were receiving category B retirement pension in Great Britain at 30 September 1987. 98 per cent. were entitled to the full basic pension of £23·75; about one half received more than a basic pension by way of earnings-related pension or other increases.

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many mental hospital beds have been closed in each health region in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows the number of beds provided by mental handicap and mental illness hospitals in England that were approved for closure between 1979 and December 1986 (the latest date for which figures are available) by region and year. Information on hospitals in Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Region	*Year*								*Total*
	1979	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	
Northern	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	69	69
Yorkshire	—	—	130	—	—	—	492	—	622
Trent	79	73	106	—	42	429	—	133	862
East Anglian	—	—	—	—	—	120	—	—	120
North West Thames	—	—	18	20	85	67	134	713	1,037
North East Thames	—	—	—	—	154	—	—	41	195
South East Thames	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	—	48
South West Thames	—	—	—	—	—	216	—	—	216
Wessex	—	—	—	—	77	80	25	—	182
Oxford	—	—	—	—	—	30	24	—	54
South Western	—	—	—	—	133	—	259	24	416
West Midlands	84	—	—	—	173	340	301	—	898
Mersey	—	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	34
Total									4,753

Mentally-ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychosis have been discharged from mental hospitals in each health region in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: The table shows the numbers of discharges from mental illness hospitals and units in England for the years 1980-86. Data for earlier years could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. It should be noted that some patients are admitted for a hospital stay more than once during the year. The information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Discharges of persons from NHS mental illness hospitals and units in England with a primary diagnosis of Schizophrenic psychoses, 1980-86.

Region	*Numbers*						
	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
England	25,240	25,992	24,594	25,336	25,934	26,225	26,077
Northern	1,844	1,802	1,750	1,808	1,858	1,799	1,767
Yorkshire	2,214	2,258	2,005	2,216	2,294	2,199	2,282
Trent	2,191	2,253	2,183	2,202	2,156	2,112	2,064
East Anglia	648	846	771	753	772	765	791
North West Thames	2,287	2,490	2,281	2,414	2,373	2,397	2,469
North East Thames	2,378	2,588	2,472	2,526	2,562	2,596	2,663
South East Thames	1,949	2,054	1,842	1,977	1,983	2,052	1,927
South West Thames	1,833	1,714	1,651	1,649	1,713	1,685	1,615
Wessex	1,418	1,499	1,437	1,393	1,452	1,443	1,551
Oxford	655	643	643	670	707	781	845
South Western	1,324	1,288	1,234	1,310	1,280	1,304	1,264
West Midlands	2,664	2,514	2,520	2,534	2,485	2,458	2,478
Mersey	1,217	1,279	1,266	1,325	1,377	1,488	1,412

Region	Numbers						
	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
North Western	2,424	2,564	2,348	2,331	2,683	2,875	2,621
Special Health Authority	194	200	191	228	239	271	328

Government Data Network

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if Electronic Data Service has advised his Department on any matters concerning the Government data network.

Mr. Portillo: Electronic Data Systems Ltd (EDS) was a member of one of the consortia originally interested in the Government data network project. During 1986 they had discussions with the DHSS and other Government Departments. It withdrew itself from consideration in January 1987.

Community Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many community psychiatric nurses there were in each health region in England and Wales in 1979; how many there are at present; and how many he estimates there will be in 1991.

Mr. Newton: Information in the exact form requested is not collected centrally. The number of nursing staff employed in the community psychiatric service in each region in England at September 1981 and September 1986 is shown in the table. Comparable information is not available for 1979.

It is for indiviual health authorities to plan the future number of community psychiatic nursing staff they require in the light of their needs and the resources which can be devoted to meet those needs.

The information for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

NHS Community Psychiatric Nursing Staff (Mental Illness) at 30 September: whole time equivalents: England

Region	1981	1986	Percentage change 1981-86
Northern	60	158	163
Yorkshire	68	199	194
Trent	100	260	160
East Anglian	50	106	112
NW Thames	69	168	143
NE Thames	97	137	41
SE Thames	36	208	478
SW Thames	134	209	56
Wessex	83	176	112
Oxford	71	122	72
South Western	95	147	55
West Midlands	53	255	384
Mersey	90	156	73
North Western	78	228	194
London Post Graduate SHA	1	2	100
England	1,083	2,532	134

Source: DHSS annual census of NHS non-medical manpower.
Note: All figures independently rounded to the nearest whole-time equivalent.

Social Security Appeals

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received on the case for guidance and direction to be given to preserve a separation of function and interest between social security appeal tribunals and departmental officers presenting cases before them in the last three years.

Mr. Portillo: In 1986 a central management support team examined the procedures for handling appeals in DHSS offices. A copy of the final report has been placed in the Library. The report included a recommendation that adjudication officers needed to be made more aware of the exact function of the presenting officer at an appeal and that the recommendation should be brought to the attention of the training branches responsible for appeals courses. This recommendation has already been implemented.

Moreover the adjudication officers' guide, Vol. 1 paras. 05289 et seq. also gives guidance as to the conduct of the adjudication officer when presenting an appeal. The adjudication officers' guide will be published on 30 March and copies will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions in the last three years *(a)* internal disciplinary action or *(b)* prosecutions have been taken relating to cases where social security appeals have been compromised by demonstrated collusion between departmental officers presenting cases and the appeal tribunals.

Mr. Portillo: I am not aware of any such incidents, but if the hon. Member has a specific case in mind I will have the matter investigated.

Mental Patients

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many new mental hospital beds have been opened in each health authority in England and Wales in each of the last 10 years.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not collected centrally.

Alcohol and Art (Exhibition)

Mr. Carrington: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to alcohol and art to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mrs. Currie: I understand that, under procedures agreed by the Services Committee arrangements have been made with the authorities of the House for the exhibition to be held in the Upper Waiting Hall from 6 to 10 June.

Circulars

Mr. Michael Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many circulars have been issued by the Health Service Management Board in the last 12 months; and on what topics.

Mrs. Currie: The Department issued 63 health circulars and health notices on issues concerning hospital and community health services to health authorities in the period from 1 March 1987 to 1 March 1988. Other guidance and information was issued by letter and through bulletins. Following is a list of the circulars and notices:

Health Circulars Sent to Health Authorities

HC(87)7	Resource Assumptions and Planning Guidelines
HC(87)8	Services for drug misusers — curbing the spread of AIDS and HIV infection
HC(87)9	Finance—NHS Internal Audit
HC(87)10	Drug Misuse and AIDS
HC(87)11	Male Midwives
HC(87)12	Mental Health Act 1983
HC(87)13	Charging for the supply of information about patients engaged in legal proceedings
HC(87)14	Data Protection Act 1984: Modified Access to Personal Health Information
HC(87)15	Data Protection Act 1984: Social Work Orders: Individuals' Right of Access
HC(87)16	Decisions of the Professional Conduct Committee of the GMC
HC(87)17	Revised cost allowance for Health Buildings
HC(87)18	Fluoridation of Water Supplies
HC(87)19	Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
HC(87)21	Pay and Conditions of Service: General Managers' Pay Rates
HC(87)22	Pay and Conditions of Service: Health Authority Senior Managers: arrangements for remuneration and conditions of service
HC(87)23	Primary Health Care Services
HC(87)24	Fire Precautions in NHS Premises
HC(87)25	Hospital Medical Staffing: Achieving a Balance
HC(87)26	Data Protection Act 1984: Modified Access to Personal Health Information
HC(87)28	Revised rates of pay for part time hospital chaplains
HC(87)29	Community Nursing Services and Primary Health Care Teams
HC(87)30	Hospital Laundry arrangements for used and infected linen
HC(87)32	Revised salaries for staff in ad hoc classes
HC(87)33	Demand for Elective Admission: Statistical Returns KHO6, KHO7, KHO7A
HC(87)34	Taxation of Staff Benefits and Allowances
HC(87)35	Voluntary Hospital Fire Brigade duties: payment of allowances
HC(87)37	Resource Distribution for 1988-89
HC(88)1	Cervical Cancer Screening
HC(88)2	Revises rates of pay for Psychological Technicians
HC(88)3	Radio frequency spectrum de-regulation
HC(88)4	NHS Treatment of overseas visitors
HC(88)5	Health Building Procedures: Works Consultants Commission: Revision to Fee Competition
HC(88)6	Arrangements for Locally Organised and Clinical Research in the NHS
HC(88)7	EEC Thresholds for Public Works Contracts
HC(88)8	NHS Tribunal
HC(88)9	Protection of Children: Disclosure of criminal background of those with access to children
HC(88)10	Korner statistical returns
HC(88)11	Determination of Private Patients Charges

Health Notices sent to Health Authorities

HC(88)12	Taxation of Staff Benefits and Allowances
HN(87)6	Social Security Payments for Hospital In-Patients
HN(87)7	Road Traffic Act Charges
HN(87)8	Capital Schemes shared with UGC-universities

Health Circulars Sent to Health Authorities

HN(87)9	Review of Artificial Limb and Appliance Centre
HN(87)12	Social Fund—Maternity Payment Integrated Leaflet
HN(87)13	NHS charges to overseas visitors
HN(87)14	Health Building Procedures: Terms and Conditions of Service of Works Consultants
HN(87)15	Handling Charges for Blood Derivates to Non NHS Hospitals
HN(87)16	Legionnaires' Disease: Engineering Guidance Note 4
HN(87)17	Legionnaires' Disease: Engineering Guidance Note 5
HN(87)18	Health Building Procedures
HN(87)19	Changes to the list of drugs available under the NHS
HN(87)20	Parliamentary and Health Services Commissioners Act 1987
HN(87)21	Changes in the Secretary of State's List for Dental Prescribing
HN(87)22	Decontamination of Health Care Equipment
HN(87)23	Circularised Communications Between the DHSS and Health Authorities
HN(87)25	Building Guidelines
HN(87)26	Promoting Better Health White Paper on Primary Health Care
HN(88)1	Graduated Compression Hosiery
HN(88)2	Social Fund—Maternity Benefits
HN(88)3	Product Liability
HN(88)4	Charges for Drugs, oxygen concentrators and wigs and fabric supports

Note. These lists exclude Circulars and Notices sent by the Department to Family Practitioner Committees and Local Authorities.

Contaminated Foodstuffs (Imports)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what further steps he intends to take to prevent the import of contaminated foodstuffs.

Mrs. Currie: No further steps are required. The powers available under the Imported Food Regulations 1984 relating to the importation of food for human consumption which is unfit, unsound or unwholesome together with those in the Food Act 1984 give the responsible authorities adequate control.

Clinical Physicists

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the reasons why clinical physicists are not included in the pay review body structure.

Mr. Newton: The claims of hospital physicists to be included in the pay review body structure were fully considered by Ministers in 1984 and 1985. It was decided that their pay should remain a matter for the Whitley council. That position is unchanged.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Moore: £19·425 million.

Pharmaceuticals (Adverse Reactions)

Mr. Ashley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South, *Official Report*, 26 February, column *364*, if he will name the two pharmaceutical

companies being investigated for failing to report serious adverse reactions to their products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: The investigations referred to in my reply of 26 February are into allegations of failure to report serious adverse reactions. It is not the policy of the Department to divulge names simply on the basis of allegations since this could cause unjustifiable damage to public confidence in a medicinal product and to the reputation of the licence holder. However in one case allegations naming the company were made publicly and the right hon. Member is already aware that we are investigating these. Inquiries are continuing in both cases.

Disabled People

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if a report is available on achievements under the United Nations world programme of action concerning disabled persons.

Mr. Scott: The Secretary-General of the United Nations has produced two reports: one on the implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons and the United Nations decade of disabled persons (A/45/551) and another report on the evaluation of the implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons during the first half of the United Nations decade of disabled persons (A/42/561). Copies of both of these reports have been deposited in the Library.

Access Committee for England

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the work of the Access Committee for England and its plans for its next period of office.

Mr. Scott: The Access Committee for England has performed much valuable work to promote the interests of disabled people. I expect this to continue in the light of the terms of reference being prepared by the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped, the body asked by the Government to run the Access Committee for England, and the prospective appointment of a new access director.

Income Support

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made an estimate of the number of people who will be on income support in *(a)* Greenock, *(b)* Port Glasgow, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland as a whole in April.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that no reliable estimates are available.

Family Credit

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made an estimate of the number of people who will be eligible for family credit in *(a)* Greenock, *(b)* Port Glasgow, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland as a whole in April.

Mr. Portillo: No. I regret that estimates are possible only on a national basis. However, if the proportion of the Great Britain total were to remain the same as in family income supplement, around 54,000 families in Scotland could be expected to receive family credit.

Housing Benefit

Dr. Godman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has made an estimate of the number of people who will lose their entitlement to housing benefit in *(a)* Greenock, *(b)* Port Glasgow, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Scotland as a whole from 11 April.

Mr. Portillo: I regret that information is not available in the form requested. The estimates made relate to Great Britain as a whole.

Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will include medical laboratory scientific officers in the remit of the special bodies considering other salaries within the National Health Service.

Mr. Newton: The salaries of medical laboratory scientific officers are a matter for negotiation in the professional and technical staffs B Whitley council.

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many principal medical laboratory scientific officers there are in England and Wales in the National Health Service; and whether he has any plans to alter that number.

Mr. Newton: The number of principal medical laboratory scientific officers in post in England on 30 September 1986 was 90 (whole-time equivalents). The number is dependent upon the requirements of individual health authorities; grading is determined according to criteria laid down in the agreements of the professional and technical staffs B Whitley council. Figures for Wales are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the grades of medical laboratory scientific officers; what is the maximum salary for each grade; and after what length of service such maximum is achieved.

Mr. Newton: The information in respect of qualified medical laboratory scientific officer grades is as follows:

Grade	*Salary maximum* £	*Annual incremental points*
Medical laboratory scientific officer	9,435	10
Senior medical laboratory scientific officer	11,577	10
Chief medical laboratory scientific officer	12,663	6
Senior chief medical laboratory scientific officer	14,963	6
Principal medical laboratory scientific officer	17,201	2

Note: The salary scale point to which an officer may be appointed or promoted is determined by Whitley council agreement.

Mr. John: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the rate of turnover of medical laboratory scientific officers in the National Health Service for each of the last three years.

Mr. Newton: This information is not available centrally. The number of qualified medical laboratory scientific officers in post in England for each of the last three years for which figures are available is as follows:

NHS Medical Laboratory Scientific Officers
(at 30 September each year)

Year	Staff in Post Whole Time Equivalents (England) Staff
1984	10,650
1985	10,930
1986	11,060

Tooth Decay

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any proposals for making parents more aware of methods of fighting tooth decay in children; and if he will make fluoride tablets available free of charge on prescription for children where supplies are not fluoridated.

Mrs. Currie: The White Paper on primary care "Promoting Better Health" indicated that the Government proposed to launch further incentives to promote dental awareness and regular attendance at the dentist. Discussions are taking place with the dental profession and the Health Education Authority on the implementation of this proposal. Fluoride tablets are available on prescription free of charge to children under the age of 16.

Skoal Bandits

Mr. Ingram: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department was consulted before the commencement of the manufacture of Skoal Bandits in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Department was consulted.

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 26 February, *Official Report*, column *362*, for what reason he proposes to use section 11 rather than section 13 of the Consumer Protection Act to ban Skoal Bandits; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Government are proposing to ban the supply of certain oral tobacco products. Section 13 would not be appropriate as it allows only for action to be taken against named individuals or companies. Section 11 allows action to be taken against products.

Low-income Families

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish the low-income families tables derived from the family expenditure survey for 1985.

Mr. Portillo: Following publication of the last edition in 1986, a technical review of the tables was announced and carried out by a team of the Department's officials with representation from the Central Statistical Office. I have now considered the report of the review and have placed copies in the Library. Copies are also available from the Department.

The report identifies a number of methodological weaknesses in the current tables, particularly in the use of the supplementary benefit scale rates as the yardstick for the measurement of low income. One problem is that there are two scale rates, so that two families each shown as having income at the scale rate level may have significantly different incomes. A second problem is that any increase in the value of the scale rate tends to increase the numbers appearing to be on "low income". The tables give no indication of whether those in the lower income groups were becoming better or worse off in real terms.

In view of these and other weaknesses, and the imminent end of the supplementary benefit scheme itself, the report recommends the introduction of a number of new analyses based on income measures which would be broadly independent of the social security rules and rates, and which could therefore continue unaffected by the forthcoming benefit changes. The report includes detailed proposals for these new tables, which would include data on changes in real living standards and new analyses of the contribution of benefits to income in the lower ranges. Overall, the proposed new tables — which would be entitled "Households below average income: a statistical analysis" — would be significantly more extensive than the current series.

The next edition of tables is due to cover the years 1981, 1983 and 1985, and, to ensure a proper overlap between the existing and the new series, the report recommends that data on both bases should be published for all three years. In addition, to facilitate analysis of longer-term trends, the report proposes that a later edition should include data for a much earlier year — probably 1971.

I welcome the report's proposals which would put the series on a more robust footing and extend the range of data published on a regular basis. Accordingly, I intend to publish within the next few weeks a final edition of the previous tables, covering 1981, 1983 and 1985, together with the first edition of the new tables for the same years.

Mr. Squire: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish a table showing the numbers of lower paid families, with and without children, whose marginal tax rates including benefit withdrawal will be *(a)* 90 to 100 per cent., *(b)* 80 to 90 per cent., *(c)* 70 to 80 per cent., *(d)* 60 to 70 per cent., *(e)* 50 to 60 per cent. and *(f)* 40 to 50 per cent. after the implementation of the Social Security Act 1986 and taking into account the Budget tax changes for 1988-89.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) on 25 March 1988 at column *243-44*.

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has received any proposals from Yorkshire regional health authority for the merger of existing district health authorities; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: We have not received any such merger proposals from Yorkshire regional health authority. Proposals for the merger of Leeds Eastern and Leeds Western; Bradford and Airedale; and East Yorkshire and Hull health authorities were discussed by the authority at its meeting on 28 January 1988, but were rejected.

Leeds Western Health Authority

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to be in a position to announce the appointment of a new chairman for Leeds western health authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: In due course. The current chairman's resignation does not take effect until 31 August 1988.

Abortion

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the percentage of total abortions carried out on women normally resident outside the United Kingdom and where pregnancy was of 18 weeks or more gestation carried out by the 11 consultant gynaecologists in the private sector who undertook the largest number of such operations in each year since 1968.

Mr. Newton: No, for reasons of maintaining confidentiality.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list by place of residence for each year since 1968 the number of women usually resident outside the United Kingdom where pregnancy was of 18 weeks or more gestation who had an abortion in a National Health Service hospital, and the grounds under which the operations were carried out;

(2) if he will list by place of residence for each year since 1968 the number of women usually resident outside the United Kingdom where pregnancy was of 18 weeks or more gestation who had an abortion in a non-National Health Service hospital or clinic, and the grounds under which the operations were carried out.

Mr. Newton: I regret that the full information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the table shows readily available data for 1986 which may be of interest to my hon. Friend.

Notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967. Non-residents of England and Wales by country of usual residence and grounds. Gestation 18 completed weeks and over. England and Wales 1986.

Country of Usual Residence	*Statutory Grounds*			
	Total	*2 Alone*	*3 With or Without 2*	*Other*[1]
British Isles	445	418	26	1
Scotland	123	106	17	—
Northern Ireland	72	70	2	—
Irish Republic	224	218	5	1
Channel Islands and Isle of Man	26	24	2	
Other European	3,101	3,056	35	10
Belgium, Luxembourg and Netherlands	54	54	—	—
France and Monaco	1,716	1,692	21	3
German Federal Republic and Austria	101	100	1	—
Italy and Malta	342	335	3	4
Spain and Portugal	845	832	10	3
Rest of World	142	140	1	1

[1] Mentioning principally grounds 4

Statutory Grounds:

1 The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.

2 The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.

3 The continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk or injury to the physical or mental health of any existing child(ren) in the family of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.

4 There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped, or in emergency, certified by the operating practitioner as immediately necessary—

5 To save the life of the pregnant woman, or

6 To prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or

7 mental health of the pregnant woman.

Benefits

Mr. Wall: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people each year serve two periods of waiting days as a result of transferring from statutory sick pay to unemployment benefit;

(2) if he will estimate the costs of introducing a linking rule between statutory sick pay and unemployment benefit; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: Information is not available of the number of people claiming unemployment benefit within eight weeks of receiving statutory sick pay. However, a rough estimate is that there may be approximately 50,000 a year. Based on this assumption the cost of a linking rule between these benefits would be about £850,000 a year.

New Hospital, Oldham

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of the current levels of waiting lists, he will take steps to ensure that sufficient funds are made urgently available to Oldham health authority in 1986 to 1989 to ensure that the new hospital will be fully opened in the next financial year.

Mr. Newton: Decisions on the allocation of resources at local level is a matter for Oldham health authority in conjunction with the regional health authority.

Pensions

Mr. Madden: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services on what date in 1987 the basic pension was increased; and on what date in 1988 the basic pension will be increased.

Mr. Scott: Under section 63 of the Social Security Act 1986, the uprating of retirement pension takes place each year in the week beginning with the first Monday in the tax year. In 1987 this was 6 April. In 1988, the first Monday in the tax year is 11 April.

Northern General Hospital, Sheffield

Mr. Blunkett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services for how long and why admissions were stopped to the Northern general hospital, Sheffield, on the evening of Monday 21 March; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Responsibility for the management of local health services rests with the district health authority (in this case Sheffield). May I suggest the hon. Member should contact the chairman of that authority for the information he seeks.

Ritalin

Mr. Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 18 March, *Official Report*, column *712*, whether the drug Ritalin is still available on National Health Service prescription from general practitioners as a treatment for narcolepsy.

Mr. Newton: No. Ritalin is no longer licensed under the Medicines Act and has been withdrawn from the market. However, I understand that it is available direct from the manufacturer at the request of a doctor in respect of an individual patient.

Northern Regional Health Authority

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the costs to public funds of the administration of Northern regional health authority and Sunderland district health authority in each year since 1979.

Mr. Newton: Tables showing each health authority's expenditure on headquarters administration for the years 1979-80 to 1986-87 (the latest available) are in the Library.

General Practice Finance Corporation

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement about the future of the General Practice Finance Corporation.

Mr. Newton: The Government's plans for the future of the General Practice Finance Corporation were announced in the White Paper "Promoting Better Health" (Cm. 249), published last November. Subject to Parliament's approval for the Health and Medicines Bill the constitution of the corporation will be changed to facilitate maximum use of private sector funds. In the meantime, the existing arrangement for borrowing from public sector funds is continuing.

To lead the corporation during this important period of change, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Derek Hughes, the current deputy chairman, to fill the chairman vacancy, and Dr. Alistair Riddell to replace Mr. Hughes as deputy chairman.

We look forward to further discussion with the corporation and representatives of the profession as we carry our proposals forward. The corporation's annual report for 1986-87 is presented to Parliament today.

Family Practitioner Committees

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has for appointing chairmen and members of family practitioner committees to the vacancies occurring in 1989.

Mr. Newton: The term of office of 54 chairmen and of about half the total membership of family practitioner committees ends on 31 March 1989. If hon. Members wish to recommend any individuals as chairmen or as members, I invite them to write to me by 3 May. Reappointments and changes will be announced in due course.

AIDS and Drug Misuse

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to publish the first report on AIDS and drug misuse by the Advisory Committee on the Misuse of Drugs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have today published the first report on AIDS and drug misuse from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). The Government welcome the ACMD's advice on a subject which has serious and wide-ranging public health implications. The spread of the AIDS virus through shared injecting equipment adds a new dimension to drug misuse. It presents a grave threat, not only to drug misusers themselves, but to the babies of infected mothers, to the sexual partners of drug misusers and from them to a wider population.

The report is concerned with measures to prevent the spread of infection. As it makes clear, the prevention of drug misuse is now more important than ever before. It is self-evident that if people do not start using drugs in the first place they do not put themselves at risk of infection through this route. We remain, therefore, determined to prevent the misuse of drugs, both through tough law enforcement measures to reduce the supply of illicit drugs, and through effective education and information to make it less likely that young people will be tempted to try them. Our strategy will continue to be taken forward through the ministerial group on the misuse of drugs.

But we must recognise that there is a population currently at risk of acquiring the AIDS virus through their injecting drug misuse, and I accept the ACMD's advice that services should be developed in order to make contact with as many of that population as possible. In recent years we have invested in a significant expansion of drug misuse services, and emphasised the need for the community-based response which the report endorses.

The report makes a number of recommendations on ways in which services might seek to attract drug misusers, to keep them in contact, and to change their behaviour away from practices which might result in their becoming infected, or passing on infection. Services should be prepared as necessary to advise and encourage drug misusers to reduce the health risks associated with their drug misuse — to themselves and to others — as an intermediate goal in getting them to stop drug misuse altogether. Some of the recommendations will require detailed consultation with interested agencies, but in the meantime I am making copies of the report available to health and local authorities in England. My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales will be taking parallel action for health and local authorities in those countries.

The ACMD recommends that sterile injecting equipment should be widely available, through an expansion of syringe exchange schemes, and sales through pharmacies. We have considered this recommendation carefully in conjunction with the preliminary findings of an evaluation of 15 "pilot" syringe exchange schemes around the country. While the evaluation points to some promising features of such schemes, we do not consider that we yet have sufficient evidence to recommend an expansion of schemes in England. I accept however that some local agencies in England and Wales have already decided to set up their own exchange schemes, and that more may do so. In order that such schemes should operate as effectively and responsibly as possible, I intend to make available guidance based upon the principles underlying the pilot schemes and drawing on the early lessons of the evaluation. Similar action will be taken in Wales, and further consideration will be given there to the

place of needle exchange in broader projects of treatment, counselling and rehabilitation with appropriate professional support.

The report also deal with the treatment of drug misusers in prison, and welcomes the policy statement issued to prison medical officers and others concerned in September 1987. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary and my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland have considered the ACMD's recommendation concerning the availability of condoms in prison, but believe that it fails to take account of all the relevant factors, including the effect which a resulting increase in homosexual activities would have in terms of risk of HIV infection and otherwise. They do not intend to make any change in present policy in this respect.

We endorse the ACMD's view that there will be a continuing need for national and local publicity about the link between AIDS and drug misuse. Last year we launched two parallel campaigns designed to deter young people from starting to use drugs, and to warn of the particular dangers—of which AIDS is the most serious—of injecting drug misuse. We are evaluating those campaigns and will be considering future information needs in the light of the evaluation findings.

The measures advocated by the report will require that all professionals and other staff in contact with drug misusers are adequately trained to deal with the new demands made upon them. We will be discussing with the relevant training bodies how best to ensure this. In Wales, the Welsh Committee on Drug Misuse will be consulted on the way ahead as regards both training and publicity aspects.

Finally, we intend to monitor carefully the measures we are taking, to assess their effectiveness.

Health Authority Staff

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each district health authority and special health authority for 1986 the total number of staff expressed as the total number of staff and as whole time equivalents in the following categories *(a)* medical and dental, *(b)* nursing and midwifery, *(c)* professional and technical, *(d)* administration and clerical, *(e)* ancillary and *(f)* total non-medical staff.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 7 December 1987]:* The information the hon. Member requested has now been placed in the Library.

Geriatric Care

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what evaluation has been made by his Department of the contribution of qualified geriatric nurses to the success of community care initiatives relating to geriatric people and the use of such qualified nurses by local services in these initiatives.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* There is no current research or evaluation of the specific contribution of qualified nurses with geriatric training to the success of community care initiatives. However research is being undertaken by the centre of policy research and development at the university of North Wales which is looking at "Old Age, Health and Formal Domiciliary Support", which includes interviews with community nurses as part of an overall study of the working of care in the community.

There will be training in meeting the needs of elderly people during both district nurse and health visitor training, as well as the opportunity to attend the English National Board course in nursing elderly people. Elderly people requiring nursing care will be assessed by the trained nurse.

TRANSPORT

Tourism

123. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is being done to ensure that consideration is given to tourism before any decisions on motorway and trunk road developments and improvements are made.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) on Thursday 26 November at columns *252-53*.

Road Accidents

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road accidents in each of the last five years involving heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles have been caused by the driver suffering a heart attack.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The STATS 19 road accident reporting system does not collect data on the causes of road accidents. The number of road accidents involving heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches during the past three years are given in the table:

Accidents involving HGVs, buses and coaches: 1984-86
Number of accidents

	1984	*1985*	*1986*
Heavy goods vehicles	12,950	13,073	13,429
Bus or coach	12,647	12,313	11,988

Lorry Drivers (Health Checks)

Mr. McTaggart: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to introduce mandatory health checks on heavy goods vehicle and public service vehicle drivers over the age of 50 years, especially those in high risk categories.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Proposals have recently been presented for drivers of heavy goods vehicles to have medical checks every five years from the age of 45 and annually from 65. This is in line with the present requirements for drivers of public service vehicles. We are now considering the results of public consultation on this issue.

Departmental Sponsorship

Ms. Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for which industries his Department is the general sponsor; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department exercises regulatory and other functions towards the civil aviation, shipping, ports, railways, public transport including taxi and hire car, and road haulage industries.

Rail Services (Overcrowding)

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to which rail lines are currently subject to particular overcrowding.

Mr. David Mitchell: I monitor carefully the performance of lines in those sectors for which loading standards have been agreed. The Government have approved record levels of investment on infrastructure and rolling stock to enable the board to relieve congestion and meet these quality standards. In addition, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport announced on 25 March a joint study with LRT and BR to develop a strategy to cater for projected growth in demand for rail services in central London.

British Rail (Lost Revenue)

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the total revenue lost to British Rail per annum as a result of *(a)* fraud by passengers travelling without paying, *(b)* the effects of unmanned stations, *(c)* rolling stock problems and *(d)* staff shortages.

Mr. David Mitchell: The cost-effective and efficient operation of the railway is a matter for the board's commercial judgment in the light of its objectives and financial targets. The board estimates that about £34 million a year is lost through fraudulent travel, which is why the Government are supporting BR's private Bill to provide for the introduction of a system of penalty fares.

Driving Test Centre, Bristol

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the present service and staffing of his Department's driving test centre in Bristol, in view of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's statement in a letter to the hon. Member for Taunton on 15 February that the computerised system will be fully operational in March and there should then be a significant improvement in the service to the public.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Driving test bookings in the western traffic area will be fully computerised from 28 March.

The computer system is working satisfactorily. The associated telephone system is not. This is under urgent review within the Department. In the meantime public access has been limited to 10 am to noon and 2 pm to 4 pm daily.

Air Misses

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what criteria he used to determine whether an air miss falls into category A, B, or C, and who makes the determination;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* showing *(a)* the total number of air misses involving commercial aircraft, *(b)* the number of category A air misses, *(c)* the number of category B air misses and *(d)* the number of category C air misses for each of the last 20 years.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Air misses are assessed by the joint air miss working group (JAWG) an independent group composed of nominees from aviation bodies. JAWG follows International Civil Aviation Organisation guidelines in assessing an air miss as one of:

A: Definite Risk
B.: Possible Risk
C.: No Risk

The Civil Aviation Authority, which is wholly responsible for aviation safety regulation, publishes United Kingdom air miss statistics covering the last 10 years three times a year together with explanatory notes and copies are placed in the Library. The figures requested for commercial air transport aircraft involved in air misses over the last 20 years are as follows:

Commercial air transport aircraft involved in airmisses[1]

Year	*Definitive risk (A)*	*Possible risk (B)*	*Total*[3] *(A and B)*	*No risk (C)*	*Total*[4] *(A, B and C)*
1968	5	19	24	53	77
1969	4	31	35	57	92
1970	10	31	41	58	99
1971	5	27	32	64	96
1972	10	22	32	57	89
1973	12	28	40	46	86
1974	8	12	20	36	56
1975	3	20	23	53	76
1976	10	25	35	53	88
1977	12	33	45	56	101
1978	6	34	40	66	106
1979	5	24	29	61	90
1980	5	26	31	69	100
1981	3	18	21	74	95
1982	6	5	11	50	61
1983	5	21	26	48	74
1984	0	14	14	60	74
1985	1	15	16	44	60
1986	7	9	16	—	75
1987	[2]TBD	[2]TBD	[2]TBD	[2]TBD	[2]56

[1] An 'airmiss' is said to have occurred when a pilot considers that his aircraft may have been endangered by the proximity of another aircraft.
[2] Assessment for 1987 is not yet complete.
[3] Total risk bearing.
[4] Total commercial transport aircraft in airmisses.

Traffic (Sizewell)

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has had on increased traffic on trunk roads serving the Sizewell area in Suffolk; and what responses he has made.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Representations have been received from local authorities and others calling for early progress on the proposed A12 Farnham and Stratford St. Andrews bypass, and asking that the scheme should be extended to include other nearby villages on the trunk road. We have indicated that we hope to make an announcement about design arrangements for the scheme shortly. Further improvements will be considered for the programme when they can be justified.

Transport Ministers (Meeting)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he last met his counterparts from the other European Community countries; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Channon: At a formal meeting of European Community Transport Ministers on 14 March, we discussed the width of refrigerated vehicles; road haulage tariffs; procedures for checking recording equipment used in road haulage vehicles, and road haulage drivers' hours and related matters; charging transport infrastructure costs to heavy goods vehicles; access to the market for the carriage of goods by road between member states; and the weights and dimensions of commercial vehicles. I also took the opportunity to press for progress on shipping cabotage.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which organisations have made representations supporting his Department's proposals on motor cycle leg protection.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The following organisations, replying to our limited consultation on a specification for leg protectors, supported the proposals:

The Medical Commission on Accident Prevention.
The Automobile Association.
The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety.

Personalised Car Registration Numbers

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will widen the choice of personalised car registration numbers open to the motorist by putting unissued numbers on to the market.

Mr. Channon: I would like to be able to offer for sale a choice of the attractive registration numbers not currently in circulation. This would, I think, be a welcome addition to the existing arrangements for the private transfer and sale of numbers. As a first step I am today issuing a public consultation paper which sets out and invites comments on proposals for a scheme for selling numbers. In the light of the responses to it we shall decide whether, and if so how, to proceed with such a scheme, for which legislation would be required. I am placing copies of the consultation paper in the Library of the House.

A46/A17 Newark Relief Road

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will be able to announce the result of the tender for the A46/A17 Newark relief road.

Mr. Channon: I am pleased to announce that a contract has been awarded to A. F. Budge (Contractors) Ltd. of Retford for £31·5 million. This represents a saving of £3·5 million (10 per cent.) over the original tenders received in September 1987.

Work is planned to start on 18 April and take about two and a half years.

Transport-related Incidents

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many injuries have occurred in transport-related incidents in the United Kingdom in the last year.

Mrs. Currie: I have been asked to reply.

The number of injuries occurring in transport-related incidents is not collected centrally. However, there were 6,094 deaths registered in the United Kingdom in 1986 with an underlying cause of death assigned to transport accidents (International Classification of Diseases 9th revision E800-E848).

Portsmouth City Transport

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many different tenders have been made available to him in his consideration of applications for the sale of Portsmouth City Transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: Details of tenders from nine bidders in two rounds of bidding were made available.

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the highest tender for Portsmouth City Transport accepted on 8 March was higher than, lower than, or the same as the highest bid made in the first round of tendering; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: The tender accepted by Portsmouth city council was lower than the highest bid made in the first round of tendering. It was, however, the highest bid made in the second round.

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what basis he gave dispensation under section 74 of the Transport Act 1985, for Councillors F. Warner, F. Worley, A. Dann and S. Rapson, of Portsmouth city council, to speak and vote in the council on matters concerned with the sale of Portsmouth City Transport; on what date he received requests for such dispensation; and for what meetings and when he agreed to the requests.

Mr. David Mitchell: A request to give a dispensation under section 74 of the Transport Act 1985 to four Portsmouth city councillors who are also directors of Portsmouth City Transport was received on 11 March 1988 to enable the councillors directors to discuss and vote on company matters at the extraordinary meeting of the council convened for 16 March 1988. The Secretary of State granted the dispensation on 15 March 1988. The basis of his decision was that the dispensation would retain the existing political balance of the council; the extraordinary meeting had been called at very short notice;

full attendance of all councillors was considered problematical; and it was therefore reasonable to provide a dispensation.

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to how many different tenders were made available to Portsmouth city councillors in their consideration of applications for Portsmouth City Transport.

Mr. David Mitchell: What information was made available to Portsmouth city councillors is a question for the council itself. I understand, however, that information about tenders from nine bidders was made available to councillors.

Transport Act 1985 (Dispensations)

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the number of dispensations made under section 74 of the Transport Act 1985, stating the number of councils for which dispensation has been agreed, and the number of individuals for whom dispensation has been agreed, in each month since the Royal Assent to the Act.

Mr. David Mitchell: Dispensations have been given by the Secretary of State on five occasions to local authority councillors who were also directors of the public transport company owned by their authority. The dispensations enable councillors to discuss and vote on certain matters concerning the company. The details are as follows:

Authorities given dispensations	*Date*	*Number of councillors involved*
(a) Stockton on Tees, Langbaurgh and Middlesbrough borough councils (joint application)	9 May 1986	[1]7
(b) Portsmouth city council	16 February 1987	4
(c) Portsmouth city council	3 March 1987	4
(d) Nottingham city council	1 October 1987	4
(e) Portsmouth city council	15 March 1988	4

[1] Three from Stockton on Tees, one from Langbaurgh and three from Middlesbrough.

M6 (Thelwall)

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present traffic flow on the M6 at Thelwall; what was the design capacity; and what are the Department's projections for traffic flow at this point in the year 2000.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: At present the average traffic flow across the viaduct throughout the year is about 103,000 vehicles per day. This includes traffic diverting on to the M6 to avoid long-term roadworks on the M63 at Barton Bridge.

The current assumed design capacity for a dual three-lane motorway with hard shoulders (not provided on Thelwall viaduct) is up to 79,000 vehicles per day.

The predicted average daily flow for the year 2000 is in the range 94,000 to 111,000 vehicles per day. This forecast is based on the average daily flow of 81,000 vehicles in 1984, before the Barton Bridge roadworks started.

I announced in January our plans to widen this part of the M6, including the viaduct, to dual four lanes with hard shoulders throughout.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 30 March 1988

DEFENCE

NATO-Warsaw Pact (Weapons)

67. **Mr. Harry Greenway:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the comparative nuclear, conventional and chemical weapons' levels of NATO and the Warsaw pact.

Mr. Ian Stewart: Comparisons of NATO and Warsaw pact nuclear and conventional forces are published annually in the "Statement on the Defence Estimates".

While there is broad parity at the strategic level of nuclear forces, the Warsaw pact continues to enjoy a significant advantage in the intermediate and short-range categories.

The Soviet Union also commands the world's largest, most comprehensive and advanced capability for chemical and toxic agent warfare. The United Kingdom abandoned its chemical weapons capability in the 1950s and the United States produced no chemical weapons between 1969 and 1987. However, this unilateral restraint by the West has not been matched by the Soviet Union. It was against this background that the United States began its modernisation programme to replace its own aging stocks with binary weapons stationed on United States territory.

As regards conventional forces, the Warsaw pact enjoys massive numerical superiority, and these forces are deployed so as to enable them to initiate surprise attack and large scale offensive action. They also have the potential to bring forward massive land-based reinforcements across relatively short distances. By contrast, NATO is faced with the need for many of its reinforcements to cross the Atlantic.

Pay Awards

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will give the number of his Department's staff at grade 2 and grade 3 who have received discretionary pay awards, the proportion of staff in receipt of the awards with the average amount by grade, and the total expenditure; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: The Department made three awards at grade 2 level and 11 awards at grade 3 level in October 1987 representing 25 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively of the total numbers in each grade. Payments were made in the form of increments of £2,500 to grade 2 and £2,000 to grade 3. Expenditure on the basis described would be £29,500 in a full year.

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if executive officers, higher executive officers and senior executive grades in his Department are being considered for a pay increase similar to the discretionary awards paid to grades 2 and 3 in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Pay for these grades is negotiated centrally by Her Majesty's Treasury.

Strategic Defence Initiative

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the results to date in terms of *(a)* contracts and *(b)* jobs of the memoranda of understanding between the United States and the United Kingdom in connection with the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Sainsbury: The value of SDI research awards so far won by British organisations is about US $60 million, spread over 65 contracts. It is not known what results this business has led to in terms of jobs.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will summarise such details as he is able to provide of the memoranda of understanding between the United States and the United Kingdom in connection with the strategic defence initiative.

Mr. Sainsbury: The information requested is set out in "UK Participation in the US SDI Research Programme — Guidelines", issued by the Ministry of Defence in May 1986. A copy was placed in the Library of the House at that time.

Equipment Budget

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was *(a)* the percentage and *(b)* the amount by which his Department's equipment budget was not foreseen (i) when projects started and (ii) when projects entered full development; and if he will supply this information for current projects and for the past five years.

Mr. Sainsbury: Reliable information is not available in the form requested. Some attempts have been made to establish the degree of cost and time increase between earliest and current estimates for selected major projects, but no simple unarguable correlation exists between these figures and the total equipment budget.

Detective Chief Inspector Broome (Lecture)

Mr. Alan W. Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether prior approval was given for the text of the lecture given by Detective Chief Inspector Robert Broome of the Ministry of Defence police, at the faculty of law, university of Southampton on 9 December 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: Detective Chief Inspector Broome took part in an informal, in-house discussion held in the university by members and students of the faculty. There was no script. However, before accepting such an invitation he should have obtained the prior approval of the chief constable. He did not do so, and accordingly has been seen by the chief constable to be given formal advice in accordance with force standing orders, as to his future conduct.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Sainsbury: Details of management and computer consultancy contracts awarded by the Ministry of Defence during 1987 are as follows:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
Arthur Young	Study into Vacant Married Quarters and Disposals
Arthur Young	Review of Ex-Works Transport
Arthur Young	Consultancy Assistance on Transport Matters
Colebrook Evans and McKenzie	Machinery Valuation at the Director of Military Survey, Feltham
College of Maritime Studies	Manpower Utilisation Study, Consultancy Assistance with the Royal Fleet Auxiliary
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Study into the Functions and Activities of the Stores and Clothing Development Establishments.
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Study into Asset Management in the Chief of Fleet Support Area
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Consultancy Assistance for IT Effectiveness and IT Technical Audits
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Study into Spares Procurement for the Master General of the Ordnance and the Quartermaster General
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Study into Spares Procurement for Director General of Supplies and Transport (Naval)
Harold Whitehead and Partners	Productivity Scheme Review at Royal Ordnance Factory, Cardiff
Harold Whitehead and Partners	Productivity Scheme Review at RAF St. Altham
Harold Whitehead and Partners	Review of the Senior Management Structure of the Royal Navy Stores
Harold Whitehead and Partners	Assistance with the Review of the RAF Maintenane Executive
Harold Whitehead and Partners	Productivity Schemes Review of Central Ordnance Depot, Bicester
Hunting Engineering Ltd.	Consultancy to Study the Relationship between Aircraft Fleet Size and Availability
John Brown Tourism	Study into the Future. Presentation of HMS Victory
N. M. Rothschild and Sons Ltd.	Merchant Bank Advisor for the Royal Ordnance Factories
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Study into Tri-Star Long Term Support
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Assistance with the Quarter Master General's Equipment Maintenance Study
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Study to Review Consumable Stores Management—Director General Aircraft (Navy)
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Feasibility of a Science Park at Royal Signals and Research Establishment
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Phase 2 of the Rotables Study—Director General Aircraft (Navy)
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Consultancy Study to Define a Repair Policy Analysis Methodology—Director General Aircraft (Navy)
PA Consulting Services Ltd.	Rosyth Dockyard Commercial Material Systems
PIRA	Study into the Replacement of Internal Survey Equipment at the Director of Military Survey Feltham
Price Waterhouse	Consultancy Support for Director General Ship Refitting Corporate Development
Price Waterhouse	Resource Management in United Kingdom Land Forces
Price Waterhouse	Business Systems Support to Subships at Devonport
Publishing Resources Ltd.	Recruitment Strategy Study for Engineers
Steve Mercer Associates	Consultancy Assistance for Director of Naval Manpower Audit
Touche Ross and Company	DGDA Efficiency Audit—Cash Management Study
Touche Ross and Company	Commercialisation of the Royal Dockyards

Computer Consultancy Contracts

Arthur Andersen and Co.	Study to develop MOD systems Architecture for Non-operational IT
Arthur Andersen and Co.	Study to develop a MOD wide Information Architecture for Non-operational IT
Arthur Young	Implementation Support for the Fleet Maintenance and Repair Organisation's Management Accounting System
D. E. Barnard Systems	Support to IT Strategy Unit
CAP Industry	Study for MOD wide connexion Architecture for Non-operational IT
Computer Sciences	Study of computing requirements of Royal Aircraft Establishment
Computer Sciences	Study into Army Supply Computer Systems
Computer Sciences	Advice on replacement of Royal Aircraft Establishment Management Information System
Computer Sciences	Consultancy requirement for Management and Technical advice for Corporate HQ Office Technology System
Computer Sciences	Provision of Consultancy Services for Corporate HQ Office Technology System
EASAMS Ltd.	Modelling requirements for Army Logistics
EASAMS Ltd.	Project Management System for Procurement Executive (Master General of the Ordnance)
EASAMS Ltd.	Study into systems calibrations for laboratories
Honeywell Bull Ltd.	Operations Management Development Consultancy on RAF Stations
LOGICA UK Ltd.	Study into replacement communications system for Navy Suppliers
LOGICA UK Ltd.	Consultancy support for Training Army Commanders (Simulation)
LOGSYS Ltd.	Systems design study into Royal Signals and Radar Establishment Personal Information Systems.
Norton Computer Services	Maintenance of New Range COBOL Programs
Peat Marwick McLintock	Computer consultancy to validate 10 year plan for computing needs at RMSC Shrivenham
Peat Marwick McLintock	Consultancy Support to IT Strategy Unit
PIRA	Study into the Future of Printing Technology
PRAXIS SYSTEMS	Consultancy for MOD Library
Price Waterhouse	Consultancy Support for Implementation of Director General Ship Refitting Information Technology Strategy
Price Waterhouse	Study into computerisation of handling Civilian Travel Claims
Rex Thompson and Partners	Implementation of the Army Planning model

Firm	Subject of Assignment
TRI-PLAN Ltd.	Consultancy assistance with Data planning for Project Management Systems
Touche Ross and Co.	Study to define Information Technology for Director General Aircraft (Navy)

Rescue Helicopters

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions have taken place between his Department and the Civil Aviation Authority in relation to the replacement of the Sea King helicopters by a squadron of Wessex helicopters at the air sea rescue base at RAF Coltishall, with particular reference to the mechanical aspects of the different capabilities of the Wessex and the Sea King in their air sea rescue role; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: None. There is no requirement for military aircraft to be licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the poor weather flying and long-range operation capability of the Wessex helicopter in relation to air-sea rescue duties in the North sea; what is the equivalent capability of the Sea King helicopter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Freeman: The Sea King's more sophisticated avionics and flight control system, longer range and extra capacity makes it a more capable all-weather aircraft than the Wessex. However, the Wessex remains capable of performing rescue operations in most weather conditions, including at night, where there is sufficient visibility.

NHS Patients

Sir Michael Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made towards achieving a formal financial agreement between his Department and the Department of Health and Social Security Service for the treatment of National Health Service patients in United Kingdom hospitals.

Mr. Freeman: A financial arrangement between the two Departments has just been concluded. Essentially, the MOD will continue to treat NHS patients in service hospitals up to a specified baseline, broadly equating to the defence training requirement and accept the cost as a charge to Defence Votes. Any spare capacity above that baseline will be identified and offered to health authorities on a marginal extra cost basis to relieve NHS waiting lists and maximise the contribution of service hospitals to civilian health care. The national arrangement is a framework which sets out guidelines within which local contracts and planning agreements between service hospitals and health authorities will be promoted. Its implementation will depend on the active co-operation of health authorities and service hospitals. Both my right hon. Friend the Minister for Health and I will do all that we can to encourage this.

Defence Procurement

Mr. David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the scrutiny report "Defence Procurement, Learning from Experience"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: My noble Friend has decided that this report need no longer carry a privacy marking restricting its circulation. Accordingly, copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of the House, together with a paper indicating how its recommendations are to be implemented.

The report's recommendations, in the words of its authors, represent

"a necessary extension and complement to current initiatives; they are not an attempt to push off in some totally new direction".

The principal initiatives taken so far to secure better value for money are given in the answer at volume 130, column 107. The measures now planned will build on these by improving further the assessment of technical risks, the tailoring of the Procurement Executive's organisation to meet its evolving tasks, the monitoring of performance and the dissemination of lessons learnt.

PRIME MINISTER

Biwaters

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Prime Minister whether, pursuant to her answer of 21 March, *Official Report*, column *20*, she was aware in assessing Biwaters reputation as worthy of her support in Malaysia, that Biwaters had not by then successfully completed a major water project anywhere and had twice appeared in Nigerian courts for alleged poor performance; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The support given to Biwater, in relation to the Malaysian rural water supply project reflected our assessment that the company was fully capable of implementing the contract. Completion of the project in Niger state by Biwater represents the first request to come from the Nigerian Government for finance under the recently agreed Export Credits Guarantee Department package.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Cabinet Office in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

The Prime Minister: The management and computer consultancy contracts awarded by the Cabinet Office, in the calendar year 1987, are as follows:

Firm	Assignment
BGM Consultants	Identification of core skills in clerical grades
Diane Bailey Associates	Preparation of a Stress Management Training Pack
ITS Ltd	Guide to conducting Training Reviews
Systems Concepts Ltd	Training Information Communications Study—Feasibility Study
John Childs	Training Information Communications Study—Customer needs survey

Firm	Assignment
Anne Hughes Hallet	Research on undergraduate attitudes to a career in HM Tax Inspectorate
B. O'Connor	Selection procedure design (engineer recruitment)
National Foundation for Educational Research	Aptitude test analysis
PE Consulting Services	Study into future development of the Civil Service College Administrative Computer System
Centre for Training and Evaluation Studies	Evaluation of the self instruction training package for the new staff appraisal system
Richard Williams	Equal Opportunities monitoring project
Business Research Unit	Evaluation of staff attitudes to the new staff appraisal system
Crow Associates	Research on computers in personnel management
Keith Robertson	Consultancy for the 'Managing Absence' project
Diane Bailey Associates	Survey on presentation of Occupational Welfare Service to management and staff in the Civil Service
Institute of Manpower Studies	Advice on manpower planning and computers in personnel
John Rowley	Production of guidelines for managers and trade unionists on job satisfaction projects and a summary of the guidelines for staff
W. O'Keefe	Study of purchasing and stores activities (Cabinet Office)
Hay Management Consultants	A study of the feasibility of short service assignments in the Science Group
Purchasing Index (UK) Ltd[1]	Development of the Central Unit on Purchasing database
Frank Griffiths Associates[1]	Advice in connection with the Institute of Civil Engineers review of conditions of contract
R W White[1]	Review of arrangements for Purchasing and Supply function in Government
E R Farnbridge and C Evans[1]	Review of Supply and Service Agreements between departments and the Central Purchasing Agencies
D F Collins[1]	Advice on Written Guidance

[1] Costs for these studies were shared with other Government Departments.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Railway Records, Relics and Premises

Mr. Bidwell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) if he will list the documents and objects which he has specified as of sufficient interest to warrant preservation under section 144(7) of the Transport Act 1968; *(a)* generally and *(b)* relating to the former Great Western railway;

(2) what transfers of records, relics or premises have been made under section 144(1)*(a)* of the Transport Act 1968;

(3) what is his policy on the acquisition and preservation of railway records, relics and premises under section 144 of the Transport Act 1968; and what steps have been taken to identify, locate and assess such records, relics and premises.

Mr. Jackson: I am arranging for inquiries to be made and I will write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mrs. Rumbold: The Department awarded the following contracts to management and computer consultancy firms during the calendar year 1987:

Name of firm	Assignment
CMG Information Systems:	Development of a new Administrative Computer System for Her Majesty's Inspectorate.
CCTA:	Education Information study.
Research Services Limited:	Undergraduate income and expenditure survey.
Coopers and Lybrand:	Advice on financial delegation to schools.
Peat Marwick Mitchell & Co:	Review of the preparation and production of inspection reports.
Spicer and Pegler Associates:	Review of accounting procedures at one of the Department's grant-aided bodies.
Deloitte Haskins and Sells:	Financial management advice and assistance to the University Grants Committee.
Deloitte Haskins and Sells:	Review of audit controls over teachers' pensions (payments and contributions).
Loughborough Consultants Limited:	Analysis of universities' responses to the Jarratt report.
BIS Applied Systems Limited:	Office Systems Strategy—telecommunications study.

Student Grants

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now publish details of his decisions on the levels of student grants for the 1988-89 academic year.

Mr. Jackson: The main rates of student grant for the 1988-89 academic year were announced on 18 December 1987, at column 759. Reductions in assessed parental contributions to compensate for the ending of tax relief on non-charitable covenants have also been announced. In addition, I announced on 24 February, at column *213*, the Government's decision to amend the Education (Mandatory Awards) Regulations so that international degree courses will no longer require specific designation for awards purposes.

I am publishing today all the supplementary grant rates for 1988-89. Details have been placed in the Library. There will also be some further minor changes to the grant arrangements, including an increase in the disregard of orphans' trust income and a new disregard of the first £2,000 of all pension income in the calculation of student income.

Science Base

Mr. Gerald Bowden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the increase in public spending on the science base between 1987-88 and 1988-89 *(a)* after allowing for general inflation and *(b)* in cash terms.

Mr. Jackson: After allowing for general inflation, as measured by the GDP deflator, there will be an increase of about 2 per cent. in expenditure on the science base between 1987-88 and 1988-89. The increase in expenditure in cash terms between the two years is about 6 per cent. These figures should be substituted for those quoted by my right hon. Friend in the debate on British science on 29 February at column 720.

ENVIRONMENT

Guinness Trust (Exhibition)

Sir George Young: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to housing development and the Guinness Trust to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

Mr. Waldegrave: As I told Mr. Cohen, the chief executive of the Guinness Trust, in my letter to him of 13 November 1987, I am happy to give my support to the trust's proposal for such an exhibition.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Property Services Agency in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Ridley: The following consultancies were let in 1987:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
Management Consultancy	
Mr. I. J. Miller	Re-write of Clerk of Works Handbook
Arthur Young	To examine procedural and training implications of move to cost recovery and untying of major project services for civil clients
Mr. P. Hyde	Development of a methodology for addressing the management of change when moving to cost recovery and untying of major project services for civil clients
UIS Ltd	To provide assistance for audit of the Civil Estate Record Information System
Coopers and Lybrand Associates Ltd	Assistance to the IT Committee and the Project Services Project Board
Mr. D. Boylan	Efficiency Scrutiny of Project Management
Mr. J. B. G. Quinlan	To consider the findings of the special audit of London District Works Offices and make recommendations
Mr. C. F. Griffin	To consider the findings of the special audit of London District Works offices and make recommendations
Computer Consultancy	
Software Sciences Ltd.	Conversion to new computer operating system
International Computers Ltd.	Specialist support for accounting (LAFIS) software package
Rapid-Gen System Ltd	Technical advice on use of specialist software
International Computers Ltd.	Enhancement development of new accounting systems
Telfast Computer Services (London) Ltd.	Enhancement development of new accounting systems
Primary Systems Ltd.	Techincal support for PRIME computer hardware
Surrey University	Investigation into Construction Project Management System
Oracle Corporation UK Ltd.	Development of Construction Project Management System
W S Atkins Management Consultants	Project Management support for IT Strategy
Oracle Corporation UK Ltd.	Development of Measured Term Contract Ordering System
PA Computers and Telecomms Ltd.	Advice on procurement of PSA's distributed computer infrastructure for IT Strategy
PA Computers and Telecomms Ltd.	Advice on development of software for IT Strategy
PA Computers and Telecomms Ltd.	Study of PSA's finance and accounting functions to identify information systems needs
Scicon Ltd.	Support for systems analysis methodology
Peat Marwick McLintock	Study for computer aided design
Metron Technology Ltd.	Computer capacity planning study
B S Oldacres Computers Ltd.	Pilot study—extraction of data from computer aided design system
Dialatron Business Systems Ltd.	Support for installation of text processing systems
PA Computers and Telecomms Ltd.	Corporate Information Requirements
International Computers Ltd.	Support for computer communications
Oracle Corporation UK Ltd.	Software support

Firm	Subject of Assignment
International Computers Ltd.	Software support
Spicer and Peglar Associates	Support for specialist software
Metascybe Systems Ltd.	Feasibility Study for financial control computer system.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Ridley: Central records are collected annually after the end of the financial year. The latest available returns therefore cover 1986-87.

The contracts awarded to management or computing consultants by the Department of the Environment in the financial year 1986-87 were as follows:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	Subject of Assignment
DOE (Central)	
CACI Ltd.	1984 Labour Force Estimates
Coopers and Lybrand	Study of Accounting Framework
Coopers and Lybrand	Teesside UDC—headed consortium for Inter-Disciplinary Study
Coopers and Lybrand	Business Plan for Thamesmead Town
Dames and Moore International	Hazard Assessment of Landfill Operations
Deloitte Haskins and Sells	Advice on Implementation of New Financial Regimes for New Towns
Digital (DEC)	Installation of Software
Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd.	Black County UDC—headed consortium for Inter-Disciplinary Study
Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd.	Assessment of Demand for Geographic Information in the Private Sector
Frazer Williams (London) Ltd.	Training Division Administrative Computing System
Imbucon/Landuse Consultants	Hyde Park Study
I.T.R.U.	Training Needs Analysis
Landuse Consultants	Advice on Spoil Disposal
Landuse Consultants	Hampton Court Palace—Restoration of Lime Avenue
Landuse Consultants	Richmond Park Tree Planting Scheme
McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd.	Additional Support AB Application Software
MSL International	Headhunters—UDC Chief Executives
MUA Systemica	Migration Component of the Official Sub-National Population for Projection
Negus and Negus	Tower of London Signs Survey
Pactel	Capacity Planning for Romney House Computer Bureau
Peter Peregrinus	Processing information for ENRIP/ ERIB database
Pinpoint Analysis	Local Authority Planning Performance and Land-use Change Statistics
Price Waterhouse	Management Training at RTCC
Price Waterhouse	Training in Presentational Skills and Dealing with the Media
Price Waterhouse	Tyne and Wear UDC—headed consortium for Inter-Disciplinary Study
Roger Tym and Partners	Evaluation of Derelict Land Grand Systems
Roger Tym and Partners	Trafford Park UDC—headed consortium for Inter-Disciplinary Study
Russell Reynolds and Associates	Headhunters—SW Water Authority Chairmanship
Schlackmans	Royal Palaces Market Research
Schlackmans	Tower of London Market Research 'Open to View/English Heritage' Tickets
Spicer and Pegler Associates	Management Information System at BES
Stallard and Co.	Legal advice to Thamesmead on Transfer of Thamesmead from LRB

Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill

Mr. David Porter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has had on the terms of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Bill since it received Royal Assent; when he expects the new authority to be operational; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: Royal Assent to the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 was signified on 15 March. Under the Act's provisions my right hon. Friend is empowered to make an order specifying the date on which the new Broads Authority will be constituted as soon as not less than 27 of the 33 appointments required to be made (under section 1(3)(a) and (b) of the Act) by my right hon. Friend and the 12 other appointing authorities have been duly made. Those authorities have all been invited to inform the Department as soon as their appointments have been made. Consultations have also been initiated with the various interested bodies about the nine appointments which my right hon. Friend is required to make, and suggestions are now being received.

My right hon. Friend intends to make an order establishing the new authority as soon as all the necessary appointments have been made. As I informed the House on 29 February, during consideration of Lords amendments, it is intended that the "operative date", on which the new authority will assume all its executive functions, will be 1 April 1989.

Highway Maintenance

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* for each highway authority in England and Wales the amount by which it either underspent or overspent the proportion of its GRE allowed for highway maintenance in the last year for which figures are available.

Mr. Chope: Following is the information requested for highway authorities in England:

1985-86 overspend on highway maintenance for highway authorities

	£ million
City of London	2·684
Camden	1·606
Greenwich	1·154
Hackney	−0·471
Hammersmith and Fulham	1·514
Islington	−0·350
Kensington and Chelsea	1·187
Lambeth	−0·840
Lewisham	1·101
Southwark	·935
Tower Hamlets	2·808
Wandsworth	−0·087
Westminster	4·387
Barking and Dagenham	−0·250

	£ million
Barnet	·047
Bexley	−0·379
Brent	·515
Bromley	−0·163
Croydon	−1·145
Ealing	·456
Enfield	−0·487
Haringey	−1·427
Harrow	−2·083
Havering	−0·391
Hillingdon	−0·287
Hounslow	−0·486
Kingston-upon-Thames	−0·201
Merton	·674
Newham	1·401
Redbridge	−0·364
Richmond-upon-Thames	·137
Sutton	·276
Waltham Forest	·726
G.L.C.	31·435
Greater Manchester	2·032
Merseyside	−9·474
South Yorkshire	−0·417
Tyne and Wear	3·356
West Midlands	1·258
West Yorkshire	−1·311
Isles of Scilly	−0·079
Avon	−2·119
Bedfordshire	2·602
Berkshire	−2·152
Buckinghamshire	0·312
Cambridgeshire	−0·246
Cheshire	−7·911
Cleveland	1·141
Cornwall	−0·287
Cumbria	−3·979
Derbyshire	−0·366
Devon	0·807
Dorset	−0·882
Durham	−1·953
East Sussex	0·287
Essex	3·933
Gloucestershire	−1·119
Hampshire	−1·865
Hereford and Worcester	−2·275
Hertfordshire	1·339
Humberside	1·444
Isle of Wight	0·234
Kent	2·408
Lancashire	−0·717
Leicestershire	−0·209
Lincolnshire	−0·078
Norfolk	−3·624
Northamptonshire	−2·368
Northumberland	−1·811
North Yorkshire	1·760
Nottinghamshire	−2·409
Oxfordshire	−0·085
Shropshire	−2·861
Somerset	−1·044
Staffordshire	−1·648
Suffolk	−0·034
Surrey	−3·210
Warwickshire	1·804
West Sussex	1·340
Wiltshire	−0·395

Footpaths

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce a decision on the appeal made by Mr. and Mrs. John Baybutt of The Copping, Hundred End land, Hesketh Bank, Lancashire against the refusal of Lancashire county council to delete footpath 66 North Meols from the definitive map; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The decision on this appeal was issued on Tuesday 29 March.

Mr. Hind: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has following the case David Rubenstein *v.* the Secretary of State for the Environment, to seek to amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to give power to his Department to delete footpaths from the definitive map; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The implications of this judgment are receiving careful consideration and a further statement will be made as soon as possible.

Sport and Leisure

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list, by local authority area, the numbers of schoolchildren taught to swim by amateur swimming clubs in each year since 1979;

(2) if he will list by name the number of publicly owned sport and leisure facilities within each local authority area;

(3) what information he has on the percentage of publicly owned swimming pools which are open for use between 6 and 8 am *(a)* on weekdays and *(b)* at weekends;

(4) what information he has on the average charges to swimmers using publicly owned sports facilities;

(5) if he will list those local authorities which have taken positive steps to encourage the use of publicly owned sport and leisure facilities by Olympic swimmers and athletes;

(6) if he will list those local authorities who operate concessionary charging policies, in respect of publicly owned sport and leisure facilities, for *(a)* the disabled, *(b)* schoolchildren, *(c)* the unemployed and *(d)* pensioners;

(7) what information he has as to any sport and leisure facilities, formerly under private ownership, that are now controlled by local authorities and as to the reasons for the change of responsibility in each case.

Mr. Ridley: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the training facilities available to swimmers and athletes *(a)* of Olympic standard and *(b)* of national competition standard, in the light of the responses he has received to the consultation exercise on competition in the management of local authority sports and leisure facilities.

Mr. Ridley: No such information came to light in the process of the consultation exercise. However, I understand that there are a substantial number of facilities countrywide at which swimmers and athletes of all abilities can train.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will name, and list by local authority area, those publicly owned sport and leisure facilities currently under private management.

Mr. Ridley: I am not aware of any comprehensive list of such facilities.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make an announcement about the future management of publicly owned sports and leisure facilities.

Mr. Ridley: We have received more than 350 responses to the consultation paper which set out our proposal to bring compulsory competition to the management of local authority sport and leisure facilities. These are now receiving careful consideration. I expect to be able to make an announcement about our decisions before the summer recess.

As my hon. Friend's answer today to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrogate (Mr. Banks) said, if we decide to go ahead with compulsory competition for the management of sport and leisure facilities, implementation will be delayed beyond the 1 August 1989 date applicable to the other activities in the Local Government Act.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the responses he has received from amateur sporting bodies in respect of the consultation exercise on competition in the management of local authority sports and leisure facilities.

Mr. Ridley: We have written to all the respondents to the consultation exercise seeking their agreement to publish their replies. When we have confirmation that they have no objections we shall place copies of their responses in the House Library.

Race Relations

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has yet decided which questions on race relations matters should be specified for the purposes of section 18 of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. Howard: Following consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Confederation of British Industry, the local authority associations and other interested bodies, I have decided that the questions and description of evidence specified under section 18(5) of the Local Government Act 1988 should be as follows:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1988—SECTION 18(5)

Specification of questions and descriptions of evidence

1. Is it your policy as an employer to comply with your statutory obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976 and, accordingly, your practice not to treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic origins in relation to decisions to recruit, train or promote employees?

2. In the last three years, has any finding of unlawful racial discrimination been made against your organisation by any court or industrial tribunal?

3. In the last three years, has your organisation been the subject of formal investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination?

If the answer to question 2 is in the affirmative or in relation to question 3, the Commission made a finding adverse to your organisation;

4. What steps did you take in consequence of that finding?

5. Is your policy on race relations set out—

(a) in instructions to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion;

(b) in documents available to employees, recognised trade unions or other representative groups of employees;

(c) in recruitment advertisements or other literature?

6. Do you observe as far as possible the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment, as approved by Parliament in 1983, which gives practical guidance to employers and others on the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment, including the steps that can be taken to encourage members of the ethnic minorities to apply for jobs or take up training opportunities?

Description of evidence

In relation to question 5: examples of the instructions, documents, recruitment advertisements or other literature.

These questions and description of evidence will be notified to local authorities in a circular to be issued shortly.

Rating Reform

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to the answer of 13 January, *Official Report*, column *278*, he will give the total numbers of individuals gaining and losing on a regional basis from the poll tax, as derived from figures 6 and 9 of the accompanying note.

Mr. Ridley: Estimates of gainers and losers can be made only for households or tax units. Estimates on both these bases and at regional level were contained in the figures published on 13 January.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the responses to the document entitled "Appeals and Valuation and Community Charge Tribunals", published by his Department on 10 November 1987.

Mr. Chope: We have received 122 responses to the consultation document. A summary of the views expressed has been placed in the Libraries of the House, together with copies of those responses where we have the respondents' permission to publish their views.

The consultation document set out the Government's proposals for the constitution and procedures of valuation and community charge tribunals, which will replace local valuation courts and become the appellate body for both rating appeals and appeals arising from the community charge. The proposals were generally welcomed by respondents and will form the basis of regulations to be made under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Bill, following Royal Assent. These regulations will be the subject of further consultation.

In the light of the responses to the consultation document, certain changes have been made to the proposals. In relation to the president of each tribunal, it had been proposed that he or she should be appointed by the Secretary of State. But the majority of respondents pointed out that the present system, whereby the chairman of the local valuation panel is elected by the members, has worked well and that there is no justification for change. The Government accept this view.

The consultation document proposed that where two or more existing local valuation panels share a clerk and office, consideration should be given to amalgamating those panels under one president. In the light of the responses to the consultation document, the Government have accepted that such amalgamation should take place only with the agreement of the panels concerned.

The proposal for limiting the number of serving councillors on any tribunal commanded general support. A number of respondents took the view that the ceiling of 50 per cent. of the membership was too high. In the light of this, the Government propose that the percentage of serving councillors should be reduced to 30 per cent. of the membership of any tribunal. The Government recognise, however, that some local valuation panels currently have a significantly greater proportion of serving councillors

than this. There would be no benefit in terminating the appointment of a large number of experienced panel members at a time when the panels are assuming their new and expanded duties. It is proposed therefore that the 30 per cent. ceiling should be achieved over a period—as members' terms of office come to an end and new members are appointed.

Illuminated Signs

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for changing controls of illuminated signs and advertisements on business premises in conservation areas and in towns and villages generally.

Mr. Waldegrave: On 28 October last year my Department issued a consultation paper canvassing proposals for amending the Town aand Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1984 so as to provide "deemed consent" for certain types of illuminated advertisement displayed on "business premises", possibly including premises in conservation areas. The comments submitted in response to the consultation paper are being considered and my right hon. Friend hopes to make an announcement in due course.

Stockbridge Village Trust

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to publish the report prepared by Roger Tym and Partners on the work of the Stockbridge Village Trust.

Mr. Waldegrave: The report is published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office today. It is entitled "Stockbridge Village Trust: Building a Community" and covers the period 1983-85, with a brief update at the end of 1986. The report is a useful account of the early years of the trust's ambitious development programme. It records the substantial progress which the trust has made in transforming one of the worst local authority estates on Merseyside into an area where people actively want to live. During this period the trust gained tenants' confidence as a responsible and efficient landlord, turning a void rate of more than 10 per cent. into a fully occupied estate with a substantial waiting list. And the trust also succeeded in attracting private investment to an area which would have been unthinkable previously: over 200 residents had exercised the right to buy and around 100 new homes had been built for sale in the period covered by the report. Equally importantly, the report describes some of the difficulties which the trust has faced, particularly on its initial financial assumptions, and contains a number of important lessons for initiatives of this kind. We have sent copies to all local authorities in England and other interested parties, and I have placed a copy in the Library. Further copies are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office stockists, or from the Department, at £5·95 each.

Competitive Tendering

Mr. Robert Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a timetable for the implementation of competitive tendering procedures for individual local government services in the phasing programme.

Mr. Howard *[pursuant to his reply, 2 November 1987, c. 598-99]:* My right hon. Friend has now considered the responses to the consultation paper on implementation of competition for English local authority services issued on 2 November. He has decided to confirm the proposal of a phased introduction of competition by local authorities (other than parish councils), with authorities split into groups and each group taking the activities covered by the Act in a different order.

The groups of authorities will be the same as set out in the consultation paper. The date by which authorities will have had to have exposed their first activities to competition will be set at 1 August 1989, to allow adequate time for all stages of the competitive process to be completed.

Three other changes to the implementation proposals have been made which will help ensure efficient implementation of the competition process. These take account of the fact that a decision on the possibility of adding sport and leisure management to the list of defined activities has not yet been taken, and therefore, if this activity is added by order, some delay in implementing competition for it is inevitable.

My right hon. Friend has decided to confirm the £100,000 de minimis level below which authorities' services would be exempt from competition.

These decisions are described fully in a letter which is today being sent to all affected authorities, and copies of which have been placed in the Library.

A further announcement will be made shortly about implementation for the other English authorities and bodies covered by part I of the Act.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Industry Restraint Agreements

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether he will list those voluntary industry restraint agreements which have been terminated as a result of Government pressure, referred to by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs, the hon. Member for Warwickshire, North (Mr. Maude) on 18 March *Official Report*, column 1365, and those which remain.

Mr. Maude: The Government have informed the industries concerned that it sees no case for continuing inter-industry voluntary restraint arrangements (VRAs) covering the following products:

Monochrome televisions from Singapore, Republic of Korea, Taiwan and Thailand;
Colour televisions from Japan, Singapore, Republic of Korea and Taiwan;
Music centres from Japan, Republic of Korea and Taiwan;
Pottery from Japan;
Stainless steel cutlery from Japan and Republic of Korea.

Separately, restraints on imports of pottery and footwear from Taiwan have lapsed.

We are aware that voluntary arrangements at present remain for fork-lift trucks, machining centres, numerically controlled lathes, cars and commercial vehicles from Japan; and special steels from Spain. The United Kingdom industry is discussing the renewal of arrangements on footwear with the Republic of Korea.

The European Commission has negotiated a number of restraint agreements on steel and, in addition to the multi-fibre arrangement, on certain limited textile and clothing products. A number of other arrangements with Japan were brought to an end in 1985. On behalf of the United Kingdom the Commission has negotiated restraints on leather footwear from certain eastern European countries.

Illegal Broadcasting

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many prosecutions have taken place over the past 12 months in respect of illegal broadcasting by pirate radio stations.

Mr. Butcher: During 1987 there were 77 prosecutions, of which 75 resulted in conviction under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 for offences connected with unlicensed broadcasting.

South Africa (EC Code of Conduct)

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on how British companies have complied with the European Community code of conduct for companies with interests in South Africa during the 12-month period to 30 June 1987.

Mr. Alan Clark: By 18 March 1988, 128 companies had submitted reports to the DTI under the code of conduct. Copies of the reports and of the Department's analysis and summary have, as in previous years, been placed in the Library of each House. These documents may also be inspected at the Department's statistics and market intelligence library, at the British embassy in Pretoria, at the British consulate-general in Johannesburg, and at the British consulates in Cape Town and Durban.

The analysis and summary is the second since the adoption of the revised code of conduct by EC Foreign Ministers in November 1985. The period under review was again characterised by an inflation rate which was significantly higher than the average rate of wage increases. Against this background, the performance of British subsidiaries in further reducing the number of their black employees paid below the code's recommended minimum level is particularly encouraging. Companies' reports for the period under review indicated that over 97 per cent. were paid above that level. In addition, companies continued to report impressive levels of involvement in projects benefiting the wider communities from which their work forces were drawn.

The Government are grateful to companies for this year's unprecedented level of co-operation in providing reports, and urge them to maintain this performance and to comply fully with the code.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Office of Fair Trading in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Butcher: This is a matter for the Director-General of Fair Trading, and I will ask him to write to my hon. Friend.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Maude: No such contracts were awarded in 1987.

Tour Operators (Fuel Surcharges)

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will initiate an inquiry into the extent of fuel surcharges made by tour operators; what recent evidence he has received on this subject; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 March at column *360*.

Fireworks (Injuries)

Sir Hector Monro: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will publish the figures of injuries caused by fireworks in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Butcher: According to reports from hospitals in England, Wales and Scotland 960 people required treatment for injuries caused by fireworks during the three weeks leading up to 5 November 1987 and the few days after. The figures for 1987 and the preceding four years are shown in the table.

Although the figures are somewhat disappointing, they do not justify further restrictions on the retail sale of fireworks to the public.

We will be mounting a higher profile firework safety campaign again, this year urging the public to treat fireworks with care and not to misuse them. We will be asking local trading standards officers to work closely with the police in enforcing vigorously the increased penalties for selling fireworks to the under-16s and in taking action against those who let off fireworks in the streets.

For its part, the fireworks industry has agreed to stop supplying mini-rockets to the shops, since these particularly lend themselves to misuse by hooligans. It is also making a training video for organisers of displays on how to run a public display safely.

We are also drawing up a British standard for the performance, testing and labelling of fireworks, which should enable us to stop the importation of the more hazardous fireworks from the far east.

Firework injuries in Great Britain
(4-week period in October-November)

	1987	*1986*	*1985*	*1984*	*1983*
Place of accident					
1. Family or private party	260	286	255	231	311
2. Semi-public party (e.g. scouts, cricket club)	88	72	76	65	84

	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983
3. Large public display	155	119	117	108	111
4. Casual incident in street etc.	364	299	435	298	257
5. Other place	47	52	64	59	54
6. Indoors	20	18	21	17	16
Type of firework					
1. Banger	163	161	241	175	184
2. Rocket	174	159	197	115	107
3. Roman candle, coloured fire etc.	96	88	90	103	114
4. Home-made or extracted powder	24	14	27	21	15
5. Other proprietary fireworks	109	118	73	74	78
6. Sparklers	95	80	67	65	95
7. Unspecified type	299	226	273	225	240
Severity of injury					
1. Fatal injury	0	—	—	1	—
2. Detained more than one night	60	48	53	55	61
3. Sufficient to cause absence from work of equivalent	158	160	231	161	147
4. Minor injury	661	582	632	506	592
5. Unspecified injury	81	56	52	55	33
Eye injuries (included in 2-5)	312	291	341	295	293
Age group of injured persons					
1. Over 20	252	235	214	180	215
2. 16 to 20	168	145	161	109	108
3. 13 to 15	220	207	271	208	173
4. Under 13	320	259	322	281	337
Total	960	846	968	778	833

Internal Market Council

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the Internal Market Council held on 22 March.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Council, at which I represented the United Kingdom, adopted a directive to amend the existing EC directives on the rules for public sector supplies contracts. It also adopted directives on fluid fertilisers; the sound power level of lawnmowers; the provision of information in the field of technical standards and regulations; and modification of the investment rules for undertakings for collective investment in transferable securities. The Council also discussed a proposed directive on broadcasting activities, received a progress report from the Commission on completion of the internal market, and heard a Commission statement relating to the European Telecommunications Standards Institute.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Fiji

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has concerning the location of the Overseas Development Agency regional office in Fiji; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The future of the British development division in the Pacific was examined in 1984 as part of an efficiency scrutiny. The conclusion was that the division represented a cost-effective vehicle for aid delivery and that it was appropriately located. While I will continue to keep under review the cost-effectiveness and siting of all five of the ODA's development divisions overseas, I have no current plans to relocate the British development division in the Pacific.

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what has been the level of United Kingdom assistance to Fiji since the military coup in May 1987; and what information he has about the level of assistance provided by other EEC countries.

Mr. Chris Patten: United Kingdom assistance to Fiji since the military coup in May 1987 to the end of February 1988 totalled £866,303. Information about aid provided by other European Community countries for so recent a period is not available.

Central America

Mr. Macdonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what levels and types of technical assistance and bilateral aid are given to Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize and Mexico, respectively; and when was the last time a project for such aid or assistance was approved for Nicaragua.

Mr. Chris Patten: The latest available figures by level and type of British aid are for 1986:

	Financial project Aid[1]	*Technical cooperation*[2]	*Disaster relief*	*Total (£000s)*[3]
Costa Rica	11,016	522	—	11,538
Panama	—	70	—	70
Nicaragua	—	3	82	86
Guatemala	—	—	10	10
El Salvador	—	47	193	239
Belize	2,314	865	—	3,179
Mexico	—	686	117	803

[1] Includes investments made by the Commonwealth Development Corporation.
[2] Includes personnel, training and equipment but not projects co-

financed with British voluntary agencies.
[3]Totals may not exactly equal sum of individual columns as all figures are rounded.

The last bilateral Government to Government aid provided to Nicaragua was in 1987 for sheets worth £600 for the Bertha Calderon hospital in Managua.

We have responded positively to appeals from various relief organisations including the International Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for their work in Central America including Nicaragua. Since 1985-86 we have contributed over £1·5 million. We also support small development projects in Nicaragua co-financed with British voluntary agencies. Thirty such projects have been approved since 1985-86. Nicaragua also receives aid through the European Community ($9 million in 1986) of which Britain's share is around 20 per cent.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Councillor Mrs. Angela Pink

Mr. Allen: To ask the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the decision not to prosecute Councillor Mrs. Angela Pink of Nottingham city council.

The Attorney-General: I have written to the hon. Gentleman about the case to which he refers.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by Her Majesty's Land Registry in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

The Attorney-General: No new management or computer consultancy contracts were awarded by Her Majesty's Land Registry in 1987.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Attorney-General if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Lord Chancellor's Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

The Attorney-General: The following contracts were awarded to management or computer consultancy firms by the Lord Chancellor's Department in 1987:

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
Coopers and Lybrand Associates	Review of funds accountancy system —system testing.
Coopers and Lybrand Associates	Review of funds accountancy system —project plans.
CAP Industry Ltd.	Review of machine accounting system at the Public Trust Office.
Digitus	Advice on computer operating system.
Helistar Marlow	Assistance with the Crown Court Computer Project.
Peat Marwick and McLintock	Advice to the Business Efficiency Team in connection with the Claims Registry Project.

Dog Fighting

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Attorney-General (1) if he will prosecute the publication "Pit Bull News" for promoting illegal dog fights; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will prosecute those persons alleged to have been involved in illegal dog fighting who are named in the article entitled "Killer Dogs" which appeared in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* of Monday 21 March; and if he will make a statement.

The Attorney-General: No evidence has as yet been submitted by the police to the Crown Prosecution Service in respect of those matters to which the hon. Gentleman refers. I have, however, referred them to the Director of Public Prosecutions. If he thinks it appropriate, the director will invite the police to make inquiries.

Extradition

Dr. Twinn: To ask the Attorney-General when he expects to agree extradition arrangements under the new Irish legislation with the Attorney-General of the Irish Republic.

The Attorney-General: In my answer on 18 February to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) I indicated that I had notified the Attorney-General of the Irish Republic that I was entirely willing to provide him in each instance with a note from me confirming that the United Kingdom prosecuting authorities had considered the evidence, as they were required to do; that they were satisfied that it was sufficient to found a prosecution; and that there was a settled intention to prosecute accordingly. I had also agreed to his request that I provide him in each instance with a note setting out the relevant law, but I had said that the Government saw the possibility of seriously damaging consequences for the intended criminal proceedings in the United Kingdom if I were to provide him with the actual evidence supporting any warrant.

On 25 February I wrote to the Irish Attorney-General to say that I was very hopeful that we could find a way through our mutual difficulties towards the end that I knew we both desired. I believed that in the first instance it would be useful if officials were to meet as soon as possible to discuss the matter.

At the subsequent meeting of officials on 2 March an offer was made on my behalf to provide the Irish Attorney-General in each instance additionally with a statement of facts which would give a clear picture of the case against the accused.

Following requests by me for a response to this offer the Irish Attorney-General yesterday requested a further meeting of officials to be held on 7 April. I have agreed to this request.

I regard it as imperative that extradition arrangements between the two countries under the new Irish legislation be agreed as soon as possible.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Fires (Statistics)

Mr. Knox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many fires there were in *(a)* occupied dwellings, *(b)* multiple-occupied dwellings in detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, and *(c)* multiple-occupied dwellings in other buildings, in each of the three most recent years for which figures are available; and if he will analyse these data by the most likely cause of fire;

(2) how many *(a)* deaths, and *(b)* casualties there were due to fire in (i) single occupied dwellings, (ii) multiple-occupied dwellings in detached, semi-detached and terraced house, and (iii) multiple-occupied dwellings in

other buildings, analysed by the most likely cause of fire, in each of the three most recent years for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: Some information on fires attended by local authority fire brigades in dwellings in single and multiple occupation, and on the resulting casualties, is published annually in "Fire Statistics United Kingdom" (for example, tables 32, 46 and 47 of the volume for 1986) copies of which are in the Library. The following tables give the more detailed information requested, for the years 1984-86. Information for 1987 is not yet available.

Fatal casualties from fires in dwellings by type of dwelling and cause of fire

	1984	*1985*	*1986*
United Kingdom			
Dwellings in single occupation—total	436	438	462
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	40	45	47
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	35	33	34
Misuse of appliances	78	89	91
Playing with fire	20	32	42
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	139	125	118
Placing articles too close to heat	51	47	50
Other, unknown or unspecified	73	67	80
Detached semi-detached or terraced houses in multiple occupation—total	99	86	89
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	5	13	5
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	11	4	3
Misuse of appliances	14	10	20
Playing with fire	—	—	3
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	38	42	35
Placing articles too close to heat	8	10	12
Other, unknown or unspecified	23	7	11
Other dwellings in multiple occupation—total	151	169	194
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	12	16	14
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	9	21	20
Misuse of appliances	27	17	35
Playing with fire	1	13	10
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	74	66	79
Placing articles too close to heat	12	19	12
Other, unknown or unspecified	16	17	24
Dwellings in multiple occupation of unspecified type—total	—	—	—
All dwellings in multiple occupation	250	255	283

Fires in dwellings by type of dwelling and cause of fire

United Kingdom	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Dwellings in single occupation—total	34,972	36,905	37,313
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	1,837	1,908	2,065
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	7,152	7,798	7,990
Misuse of appliances	15,663	16,429	16,682
Playing with fire	1,518	1,740	1,548
Careless handing of fire or hot substances	3,354	3,386	3,441
Placing articles too close to heat	2,336	2,557	2,627
Other, unknown or unspecified	3,112	3,087	2,960
Detached, semi-detached or terraced houses in multiple occupation—total	6,616	7,242	7,343
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	678	865	870
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	930	1,050	1,065
Misuse of appliances	2,921	3,010	3,109
Playing with fire	315	316	303
Careless handing of fire or hot substances	938	1,099	1,102
Placing articles too close to heat	430	485	496
Other, unknown or unspecified	404	417	398
Other dwellings in multiple occupation—total	14,383	15,203	15,020
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	2,702	3,028	3,166
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	1,220	1,382	1,310
Misuse of appliances	5,251	5,564	5,637
Playing with fire	1,476	1,556	1,297
Careless handing of fire or hot substances	2,423	2,509	2,520
Placing articles too close to heat	609	619	682
Other, unknown or unspecified	702	545	408
Dwellings in multiple occupation of unspecified type—total	21	23	26
All dwellings in multiple occupation	21,020	22,468	22,389

Non-fatal casualties from fires in dwellings by type of dwelling and cause of fire

United Kingdom	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Dwellings in single occupation—total	4,546	4,836	5,459
Cause			
Deliberate or possible deliberate	329	337	424
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	591	671	697
Misuse of appliances	1,727	1,929	2,124
Playing with fire	363	420	408
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	897	796	1,057
Placing articles too close to heat	345	341	429
Other, unknown or unspecified	294	342	320
Detached, semi-detached or terraced houses in multiple occupation—total	1,167	1,230	1,347
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	121	170	191
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	112	117	128
Misuse of appliances	388	431	475
Playing with fire	34	31	48
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	289	283	303
Placing articles too close to heat	89	98	109
Other, unknown or unspecified	134	100	93
Other dwellings in multiple occupation—total	1,945	2,276	2,385
Cause			
Deliberate or possibly deliberate	314	367	411
Faulty appliances, leads or fuel supplies	154	193	136
Misuse of appliances	682	766	842
Playing with fire	96	154	108
Careless handling of fire or hot substances	472	514	638

United Kingdom	1984	1985	1986
Placing articles too close to heat	140	148	168
Other, unknown or unspecified	87	134	82
Dwellings in multiple occupation of unspecified type—total	—	—	4
All dwellings in multiple occupation	3,112	3,506	3,736

Mr. Knox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many rescues were made by fire brigades from fires in *(a)* single-occupied dwellings, *(b)* multiple-occupied dwellings in detached, semi-detached and terraced houses and *(c)* multiple-occupied dwellings in other buildings, in each of the three most recent years for which figures are available.

Mr. John Patten: The numbers of persons rescued, both by brigade staff and without brigade assistance, from fires attended by local authority fire brigades in dwellings and other occupied buildings in the United Kingdom are published in "Fire Statistics United Kingdom" (Table 20 of the volume for 1986, copies of which are in the Library). The following table gives the more detailed information requested for rescues by brigade staff for the years 1984-86. Information for 1987 is not yet available.

Rescues by brigades from fires in dwellings by type of occupancy United Kingdom

Type of building	Number of persons rescued 1984	1985	1986
Dwellings			
Single occupancy	897	932	1,044
Multiple occupancy			
Detached, semi-detached or terraced houses	603	693	687
Other	1,015	1,177	1,127
Of unspecified type	—	—	6
Unknown or unspecified occupancy	39	42	47
All dwellings	2,554	2,844	2,911

Mr. Knox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide a breakdown of the data for *(a)* deaths and *(b)* casualties from fires in (i) singly-occupied dwellings, (ii) multiple-occupied dwellings in detached, semi-detached and terraced houses, and (iii) multiple-occupied dwellings in other buildings according to whether the persons were (1) aged under 16 years, (2) aged between 16 and 60 years, and (3) aged over 60 years; and if he will provide information on how many of the fatalities resulted from persons being trapped.

Mr. John Patten: Information on the age, and circumstances, of casualties in fires in dwellings attended by local authority fire brigades is published in "Fire Statistics United Kingdom" (Tables 26, 46 and 47 of the volume for 1986, copies of which are in the Library). The following tables give the more detailed information requested for the years 1984-86. Information for 1987 is not yet available.

Fatal casualties from fires in dwellings by type of dwelling, age and whether trapped—United Kingdom

Number of persons

	1984		1985		1986	
	Total	Trapped	Total	Trapped	Total	Trapped
Dwellings in single occupation						
Total casualties	436	300	438	295	462	299
0-15 years	97	93	74	68	81	75
16-60 years	112	80	111	83	147	106
Over 60 years	227	127	251	143	232	116
Unspecified age	—	—	2	1	2	2
Detached, semi-detached or terrace houses in multiple occupation						
Total casualties	99	66	86	62	89	62
0-15 years	13	9	4	4	7	7
16-60 years	43	33	39	32	40	31
Over 60 years	43	24	43	26	41	23
Unspecified age	—	—	—	—	1	1
Other dwellings in multiple occupation						
Total casualties	151	113	169	113	194	120
0-15 years	11	11	28	27	29	25
16-60 years	57	47	46	30	56	33
Over 60 years	83	55	95	56	109	62
Unspecified age	—	—	—	—	—	—
Casualties in dwellings in multiple occupation of unspecified type	—	—	—	—	—	—
All casualties in dwellings in multiple occupation	250	179	255	175	283	182

[1] The figures for persons trapped exclude those who became casualties while discovering or fighting the fire but were also trapped.

Non fatal casualties from fires in dwellings by type of dwelling and age—United Kingdom

	Number of persons		
	1984	1985	1986
Dwellings in single occupation			
Total casualties	4,246	4,836	5,459
0 to 15 years	781	830	949
16 to 60 years	2,254	2,747	3,073
Over 60 years	1,125	1,176	1,303
Unspecified age	86	83	134
Detached, semi-detached or terrace houses in multiple occupation			
Total casualties	1,167	1,230	1,347
0 to 15 years	96	115	143
16 to 60 years	746	787	878
Over 60 years	308	304	285
Unspecified age	17	24	41
Other dwellings in multiple occupation			
Total casualties	1,945	2,276	2,385
0 to 15 years	282	313	295
16 to 60 years	1,106	1,289	1,423
Over 60 years	526	650	606
Unspecified age	31	24	61
Casualties in dwellings in multiple occupation of unspecified type	—	—	4
All casualties in dwellings in multiple occupation	3,112	3,506	3,736

Welford Road Prison, Leicester

Mr. Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what capacity Welford road gaol in Leicester was built; what is its current average occupancy; and what urgent steps he is taking *(a)* in order to reduce the number of people turning to crime and *(b)* to alleviate the crisis in Leicester.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The certified normal accommodation of Leicester prison is 200. On Friday 25 March, 411 prisoners were accommodated there. My right hon. Friend is today announcing measures which will provide general relief for the whole prison system which is under extreme pressure.

The Government have just launched the safer cities initiative, which, in 20 inner city areas, will lead the way in providing constructive activities for those most at risk of turning to crime. This is in addition to the major new TV publicity campaign and other crime prevention measures concerned with improving physical security and design and better management of property or services.

Irish Prisoners

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration is given the circumstances of the families of Irish category A prisoners in deciding on whether to transfer the prisoners near to where their families live; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Requests by prisoners for permanent transfer to Northern Ireland are considered in the light of criteria which have been made public. These criteria, which do not distinguish between category A and other inmates, deal with the circumstances of the inmate in question rather than those of his family, but as every application is dealt with on its merits, any exceptional family circumstances which may put forward in support of a request would be taken into account. Repatriation of prisoners to the Republic of Ireland is not at present possible since the Republic has not ratified the European convention on the transfer of sentenced prisoners.

Criminal Trials (Time Limits)

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police areas in England and Wales operate statutory time limits for the presentation of criminal trials; whether he has plans to introduce time limits in all areas of England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: From 1 April, statutory custody time limits in criminal proceedings will operate in 14 police areas covering the counties of Avon, Cheshire, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Kent, Somerset, West Midlands and Wiltshire, and the whole of Wales. We hope to extend time limits throughout England by 1990.

South Africa House (Arrests)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the number of arrests of persons outside South Africa House *(a)* so far this year and *(b)* in the last week; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the number of arrests outside South Africa House this year is six, of which three were made during the week ending 25 March.

Crime Prevention

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned or is aware of into the incidence amongst *(a)* women and *(b)* pensioners of fear of going out after dark; if he proposes to hold discussions with chief constables on the prevention of crimes against women and pensioners; if he will meet representatives of women's and pensioners' organisations to discuss the problem; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: In recent years there have been a number of Home Office studies, principally the British crime surveys of 1982 and 1984, which, among other issues, covered the fear of going out after dark. The studies revealed that such fear among women and the elderly was substantial, particularly in some locations, but that levels of fear were frequently in excess of an objective assessment of the risk. Fieldwork is currently taking place for the 1988 British crime survey which will cover this issue again.

Surveys by other organisations (for example the November 1987 poll by MORI for *Readers' Digest* and an October poll for Help the Aged) have confirmed that fear of crime is a significant problem, especially for women and the elderly.

Chief officers of police and organisations such as Help the Aged and Age Concern give special attention to the particular needs of women and elderly people in the issue of crime prevention advice and guidance. The new Home Office handbook "Practical Ways to Crack Crime", which is freely available, contains sound, practical guidance specifically addressed to both groups. In addition, Government programmes such as the community or estate action programme and our plans to improve crime prevention on public transport are of particular benefit to potentially vulnerable groups.

We are satisfied that the police pay particular attention to the concerns of women and the elderly in planning local crime prevention campaigns. We are, however, keen to work closely with responsible organisations representing the interests of women and pensioners in reducing the fear of crime; and I and colleagues have meetings, from time to time, with such groups at local and national levels.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Metropolitan police in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the following contracts were awarded in 1987:

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
PActel	Feasibility Study[1]
Geoff Ford	Work Information Management System Consultancy[1]
Hoskyns	Database Consultancy[1]
Digitus	Source Programs Advice on Manpower planning system[2]
The Instruction Set	UNIX[2]
Safe Computing	Implementing Police Payroll—setting up software
Time Manager International	Management Training for staff
Logica	Capacity Planning
McDonnell Douglas	Statistics systems—Hist. File Cleardown
Chess Valley	Maintaining data input system for Crime statistics
Carnell	PJCS Consultancy for Payrolls
ICL	Setting up Personnel 20 package
ICL	Consultancy for New Traffic Tickets System
Tom Scharff	In-line mailing-advice on whether cost effective to restore faulty equipment
Gerard Systems	ARTEMIS consultancy
S.I.A.	Rostering consultancy for Territorial Operations System
Hoskyns	Spool increase consultancy
Coopers and Lybrand	Computer management consultancy for Chief Engineer's Department
PActel; Admiral Computer Services; Marshall Computing Services	Miscellaneous computer consultancies for Chief Engineer's Department
PActel	Project Manager for Crime Report Information System
Hoskyns	Various levels of project staff for new Traffice Tickets System
Eagling; K.P.G.	Contract Operations for old Traffic Tickets System
Prolog	VME
Hoskyns	Fixed Penalty Office Contract Staff

[1] All for the Electrical and Mechanical Branch Control Information Systems.
[2] Territorial Operation Systems.

Dog Fighting

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to increase the sentences available to the courts for offences of dog fighting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The Government entirely share the public abhorrence of the barbaric practice of dog fighting. The penalties for such activities, provided under the Protection of Animals Act 1911, were recently doubled by the Protection of Animals (Penalties) Act 1987 to the maximum penalties available summarily, that is, to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale (£2,000), or six months' imprisonment, or both. We are giving full support, in which I hope the hon. Member will join us, to the proposals by my hon. Friend the Member for Winchester (Mr. Browne) in his Protection of Animals (Amendment) Bill to increase substantially the maximum penalties for attendance at animal fights or baiting.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to prevent advertisements for the sale of fighting dogs being placed in British newspapers.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We have no such plans.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for dog fighting were obtained in 1987; where the offences were committed; and what sentences were given by the courts concerned in each case.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: Information collected centrally does not distinguish offences relating to dog fights from other offences under the Protection of Animals Act 1911.

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take urgent action to prevent the importing of American pit bull dogs for use in illegal dog fighting rings; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: We do not consider that such a ban would be effective in preventing illegal fighting, given the number of dogs already in the United Kingdom which are susceptible to abuse, and the difficulty in distinguishing between dogs bred for fighting and as pets. In addition, an import ban on the whole of a particular strain of dog would be contrary to our international trading obligations unless the domestic sale and commercial breeding of dogs of the strain in question were similarly prohibited.

Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will investigate the reasons for the delay by the Charity Commission in dealing with the request for registration by Miss Monica Moreton of Great Haywood, Stafford, on behalf of the Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects.

Mr. John Patten: My right hon. Friend has asked the chief charity commissioner to look into these matters.

Immigration

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people living in the Birmingham area were waiting to be interviewed by immigration officials in connection with applications for entry clearance for members of their family to join them in the United Kingdom at 31 January.

Mr. Renton: At 31 January 1988, there were 36 outstanding entry clearance applications referred to the immigration service and awaiting interview of persons living in the Birmingham area. All have either now been completed or have appointments arranged before 31 March 1988.

Sinn Fein

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to seek to limit Sinn Fein's access to the broadcasting media; and what representations he has received on this matter.

Mr. Renton: We have no proposals at present to seek to limit Sinn Fein's access to the broadcasting media, nor have we received any representations on the matter.

Extraditions (Irish Republic)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the names of the persons for whom extradition warrants were sent from England and Wales to the Irish Republic in each of the last five years, indicating in each case in which terrorist-type activity was the reason for the warrants, whether the persons named were extradited and which warrants were held to be defective, showing in such cases the exact reasons each warrant was held to be defective.

Mr. John Patten *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Information on individual warrants sent from England and Wales to the Republic of Ireland is not held centrally. My right hon. Friend's reply of 6 November 1987 at columns 906-7 gave the available information for the years 1982-86. Figures for 1987 are not yet available. In that period, the return of Evelyn Glenholmes to face charges in connection with terrorist offences failed because the Irish court considered that information on oath that had already been laid should have been resworn on the day when the warrants were issued.

THE ARTS

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Minister for the Arts if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his office in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Luce: One computer consultancy contract was awarded by my office in 1987 to AMTEC Consulting for the Government art collection database project.

Antiquarian Books

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts (1) whether the criteria laid out in the Waverley rules cover copies of the Grolier-bound "Hypnerotomachia" (1499) or "Aesop's Fables" (1480) currently owned by the John Rylands library, Manchester;

(2) if he will seek to prevent the export of antiquarian books from British libraries.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Any book which has been in this country for more than 50 years and is over £16,000 in value requires an export licence. If such an application were made and referred to the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art the item would be assessed against the Waverley criteria. Export licences are a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Income Tax

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the revenue costs of a cut in all higher rates of income tax to (i) 40 per cent. and (ii) 35 per cent. in *(a)* 1988-89 and *(b)* 1989-90.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cost of abolishing all higher rates of income tax above 40 per cent. is estimated to be £965 million in 1988-89 and £2,070 million in 1989-90. The abolition of rates of income tax above 40 per cent. was announced in the Budget on 15 March; the costs given above are those published in table 4.1 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1988-89. The cost of further reducing the higher rate of tax to 35 per cent. is estimated to be an additional £405 million in 1988-89 and an additional £880 million in 1989-90.

Tax Allowances

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the yield in 1989-90 from reducing capital gains tax allowances to the level of personal allowances.

Mr. Norman Lamont: About £10 million. The levels of personal allowances substituted for the annual exempt amount as a basis for this reply are those proposed in chapter 4 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 1988-89 (Cm. 361).

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue effect in 1989-90 of reducing the top rate of inheritance tax to 40 per cent.; and if he will give the most recent available figures for the annual number of taxpayers paying inheritance tax at a rate above 40 per cent. and the average value of their estate.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The cost in 1989-90 is estimated at £150 million. It is estimated that for 1987-88 a total of 5,200 taxpayers will have paid IHT at rates above 40 per cent. The average value of their estates is estimated at £475,000.

Benefits in Kind

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received in favour of the introduction of legislation to treat as benefits in kind for tax purposes the official accommodation, cars, and other facilities provided for Ministers of the Crown; what reply he has given; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: None. Whether or not official accommodation, car and other facilities provided for Ministers of the Crown are treated as benefits in kind for tax purposes is determined, according to the facts of each case, under the same legislation which deals with the taxation of benefits in kind received by office holders generally.

Personal Incomes

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the weekly gain of a single person earning £150,000 a year from his Budget tax changes.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the weekly gain of a single person earning £100,000 a year from his Budget tax changes.

Mr. Norman Lamont: The weekly gain from the Budget of a single person earning £150,000 and £100,000 a year, with no other income, would be £721·92 and £464·23 respectively. The figures refer only to income tax and assume that the taxpayer is entitled to no income tax reliefs or allowances other than the single person's allowance. The calculation is made by comparing the taxpayer's income tax liability under the 1987-88 tax regime with that under the proposed regime for 1988-89.

Gross Domestic Product

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what has been the increase in gross domestic product per capita in each of the English regions, Wales and Scotland since 1979.

Mr. Major: Estimates of gross domestic product per capita were published in the November 1987 edition of *Economic Trends*, a copy of which is available in the House Library.

Increases in gross domestic product per capita between 1979 and 1986 are provided for the specified regions in the table below.

Increase in General Domestic Product[1] per capita from 1979 to 1986[2]

	£	*Per cent.*
North	2,441	90
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,461	89
East Midlands	2,538	89
East Anglia	2,865	103
South east	3,158	92
South west	2,631	96
West Midlands	2,241	79
North west	2,328	83
Wales	2,177	83
Scotland	2,405	85

[1] GDP at factors cost: current prices.
[2] 1986 figures are provisional.

Laboratory Animals

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent steps the Inland Revenue has taken to counteract tax evasion by suppliers of animals to university laboratories; and what statistics are maintained for this purpose.

Mr. Norman Lamont: No centrally co-ordinated steps have been taken or thought necessary and no statistics are maintained. If the hon. Gentleman has reason to believe there is evasion in this field, perhaps he would write to me.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Brooke: The following is the information requested:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
A. P. Computer Consultants	Feasibility study of revised publications subscription system
P. Headley Consultants	Modification of software package
Daton Systems Ltd.	Specification of micro system for forms stockholding
Printing Industries Research Association	Preparation for BS5750 quality assurance accreditation
NHMC Consulting	Warehouse organisation and efficiency review
NHMC Consulting	Forms Centre organisations and efficiency review
NHMC Consulting	Design of new warehouse
NHMC Consulting	Review of storage of departmental forms and stationery

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total amount spent by the Inland Revenue in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The amount spent by the Inland Revenue in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases was £13·9 million.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total amount spent by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* About £2·1 million in the calendar year 1987.

Petrol Duty

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total revenue yield from excise duty payable on petrol in the last year for which figures are available; and on what total quantity of petrol that duty was collected.

Mr. Lilley: Information specifically related to petrol is not available. In 1986-87 the revenue collected from the excise duty on light oil (of which petrol is the major element) was £5,755 million. This represents the duty on 29,700 million litres.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Blair: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received seeking amendment of the law to end the practice whereby fuel surcharges are not counted as income for the purposes of corporation tax.

Mr. Norman Lamont: None so far as I am aware. Under the law as it stands, fuel surcharges imposed by tour operators are in principle taxable like other trading receipts. If the hon. Member has a particular case in mind, I should be glad to look into it if he will let me have details.

General Commissioners of Income Tax

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations were received in response to the Inland Revenue's consultative documents on the General Commissioners of Income Tax; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Norman Lamont: In July 1987 the Inland Revenue published, with the authority of my right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord Chancellor, a consultative document on the possibility of setting up General Commissioners in Northern Ireland. Comments were received from professional bodies, individual firms and others, representing a wide range of interests. A clear majority of these were in favour of the introduction in Northern Ireland of local tax tribunals. Where reservations were expressed they were predominantly about the importance of appointing and training appropriate General Commissioners, and about the transitional arrangements for introducing the new system.

In view of this broad measure of support, the Finance Bill will include the legislation necessary to enable General Commissioners to be introduced in Northern Ireland. However, the system will not be brought into operation before January 1989. My right hon. Friend the Lord Chancellor will set the date for the change in the light of progress with the appointment of General Commissioners. This will also allow the Inland Revenue to inform taxpayers and their advisers in Northern Ireland how their rights to appeal to an independent tribunal will be preserved and improved by the new system.

The Board of Inland Revenue issued a separate consultative document in November 1987 on possible changes to the legislation which determines which body of General Commissioners deal with an appeal (or other proceedings). The proposal was that in some tax offices appeals by companies, trusts and large unincorporated businesses should be brought before the General Commissioners for the division in which the tax office was situated, subject to the taxpayer's right of objection. Comments from professional and representative bodies, individual firms and others recognised that the existing legislation was inflexible and caused difficulty. However, there was concern that the proposed changes to the legislation might in practice be equally inflexible, and about the lack of opportunities for taxpayers to propose a different place of hearing for their appeals.

The Inland Revenue is therefore undertaking further consultation on new proposals which will make it easier for taxpayers to agree with tax offices where their appeals should be heard. This should make it unnecessary for the Inland Revenue to make use of directions for many taxpayers.

If taxpayers and their advisers find this revised approach more acceptable the aim will be to introduce the necessary legislation in this year's Finance Bill.

Tax (Repayment)

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there is to be any change in the way that the Inland Revenue handles claims for repayment of tax by individuals during the course of a tax year.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Individuals who are not liable to tax can claim payment of the tax credit attached to dividends; they can also claim repayment of tax deducted from certain interest and other payments. Whether or not an individual is liable to tax cannot be finally settled until the end of the tax year when his or her actual income and personal allowances and reliefs for the year are known.

Nevertheless the Inland Revenue's practice has been to allow individuals to claim provisional repayment by instalments during the course of a tax year rather than waiting until the end of the year. In very many cases these involve repayment of comparatively small amounts of tax at a disproportionate cost.

With effect from 6 April 1989, therefore, there will be a change in the Inland Revenue's practice. With my approval, after that date the Inland Revenue will repay tax claimed during the course of the tax year only when the amount of tax involved exceeds a limit of £50. Where the tax repayable is less than this, the Inland Revenue will not process the claims but instead will be asking individuals to wait until either the amount exceeds the £50 limit or the end of the tax year, whichever is the earliest, before claiming repayment. This change in practice may affect the timing of repayments, but it will not affect the amount repaid.

Taxation

Mr. Rooker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will construct an index, with 1978-79 equalling 100, of the changes in the level of income tax and national insurance contributions for each subsequent year for a taxpayer on *(a)* half, *(b)* two thirds, *(c)* average, *(d)* five times average and *(e)* 10 times average earnings for households where the taxpayer is (i) single, (ii) married with no children, (iii) married with two children and (iv) married with four children, in all cases assuming the wife does not work, using a similar form to his answer of 1 May 1987, *Official Report*, columns *287-90*.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 17 March 1988]:* The table shows *(a)* income tax plus national insurance contributions less child benefit, where appropriate, as a percentage of gross earnings; and *(b)* real net income after tax, NIC and child benefit in index number form with 1978-79 equalling 100. The calculations assume that the taxpayer has no reliefs other than the appropriate personal allowance and that national insurance contributions are at the contracted-in rate. Average earnings are those for full-time males paid at adult rates whose pay was not affected by absence. Figures for 1987-88 and 1988-89 are provisional.

Multiple of average earnings

	Half		*Two-thirds*		*One*		*Five*		*Ten*	
	(a)	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*	*(a)*	*(b)*
Single										
1978-79	23·5	100·0	27·5	100·0	31·5	100·0	52·2	100·0	67·5	100·0
1979-80	22·9	102·5	26·3	103·4	29·7	100·4	42·8	121·6	51·4	151·8
1980-81	24·7	103·6	27·7	104·9	30·7	106·4	44·3	122·6	52·1	154·7

	Half		Two-thirds		One		Five		Ten	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
1981-82	26·9	100·0	29·6	101·6	32·3	103·4	46·4	117·2	53·2	150·4
1982-83	27·3	100·3	30·1	101·6	33·0	103·1	45·9	119·3	53·0	152·4
1983-84	27·0	104·6	30·0	105·8	33·0	107·2	45·1	125·7	52·5	159·6
1984-85	26·5	108·3	29·6	109·4	32·7	110·7	45·3	128·9	52·6	164·0
1985-86	26·2	110·3	29·4	111·3	32·6	112·4	45·5	130·3	52·7	165·9
1986-87	25·8	115·6	28·9	117·0	31·9	118·5	45·7	135·4	52·8	172·7
1987-88	25·0	120·8	27·8	122·8	30·5	125·0	45·9	139·4	53·0	178·1
1988-89	23·8	125·8	26·3	128·3	28·9	131·0	36·1	168·7	38·0	240·2
Married										
1978-79	16·0	100·0	21·9	100·0	27·8	100·0	50·5	100·0	66·5	100·0
1979-80	16·0	101·7	21·1	102·6	26·3	103·8	41·5	120·2	50·7	149·6
1980-81	17·9	102·8	22·6	104·2	27·3	105·8	42·9	121·2	51·5	152·4
1981-82	20·8	98·7	25·0	100·4	29·3	102·4	45·2	115·7	52·6	148·0
1982-83	20·8	99·4	25·3	100·8	29·8	102·5	44·6	117·9	52·3	150·1
1983-84	20·1	104·1	24·9	105·3	29·6	106·7	43·7	124·4	51·9	157·4
1984-85	19·3	108·3	24·2	109·3	29·2	110·5	43·9	127·8	51·9	161·7
1985-86	18·9	110·3	23·9	111·2	29·0	112·3	44·0	129·2	52·0	163·7
1986-87	18·9	115·0	23·7	116·4	28·5	118·0	44·2	134·2	52·1	170·3
1987-88	18·9	119·1	23·1	121·2	27·4	123·8	44·5	138·0	52·3	175·6
1988-89	17·9	123·3	21·9	126·1	26·0	129·3	35·1	165·3	37·6	235·2
Married with 2 children (both under 11)										
1978-79	2·4	100·0	11·5	100·0	20·9	100·0	48·8	100·0	65·6	100·0
1979-80	1·4	102·8	10·2	103·2	18·9	104·1	40·0	119·0	50·0	147·8
1980-81	4·9	102·5	12·9	103·6	20·8	105·2	41·6	119·8	50·8	150·4
1981-82	7·3	99·4	14·9	100·6	22·5	102·4	43·9	114·6	51·9	146·2
1982-83	6·9	100·6	14·9	101·4	22·8	102·8	43·2	116·8	51·6	148·4
1983-84	5·9	105·6	14·2	106·2	22·4	107·3	42·3	123·3	51·2	155·5
1984-85	5·0	109·8	13·5	110·2	22·0	111·1	42·4	126·6	51·2	159·9
1985-86	5·0	111·2	13·5	111·7	22·0	112·6	42·6	127·9	51·3	161·7
1986-87	5·7	115·2	13·8	116·1	21·9	117·7	42·9	132·7	51·5	168·2
1987-88	6·2	118·4	13·7	120·2	21·1	122·8	43·3	136·4	51·6	173·3
1988-89	6·1	121·5	13·0	124·0	20·0	127·5	33·9	162·6	37·0	231·2
Married with 4 children (two under 11, one 11-15 and one over 16)										
1978-79	−11·7	100·0	0·1	100·0	13·3	100·0	46·7	100·0	64·5	100·0
1979-80	−13·3	103·0	−0·8	102·6	11·6	103·6	38·5	117·3	49·3	145·5
1980-81	−8·1	101·7	3·1	102·0	14·3	103·9	40·3	117·8	50·2	147·8
1981-82	−6·2	99·5	4·8	99·8	15·8	101·6	42·5	112·8	51·3	143·8
1982-83	−7·0	100·9	4·5	100·9	15·9	102·2	41·8	115·1	50·9	145·9
1983-84	−8·4	106·2	3·5	105·8	15·3	106·9	40·9	121·5	50·4	153·0
1984-85	−9·3	110·3	2·7	109·8	14·8	110·7	41·0	124·8	50·5	157·3
1985-86	−8·9	111·3	3·1	110·9	15·1	111·9	41·2	126·0	50·6	159·1
1986-87	−7·5	114·7	3·9	114·7	15·2	116·4	41·6	130·6	50·8	165·3
1987-88	−6·4	117·3	4·2	118·2	14·8	121·0	42·0	134·1	51·0	170·2
1988-89	−5·8	119·4	4·2	121·1	14·1	124·9	32·7	159·2	36·4	226·4

Clearing Banks (Tax Receipts)

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he anticipates in tax receipts from the clearing banks for the year 1987-88 before any provision for sovereign country debt and after tax relief given on account of sovereign country debt.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The effect on tax receipts of these provisions by all banks for the year 1987-88 was given in the answer to the hon. Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) on 14 March 1988 at column *429*. Because of the Inland Revenue's rules of confidentiality, it is not the practice to give figures of this kind for particular parts of the banking sector.

Rail Services (Budget Document)

Mr. Buchan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department has made or intends to make any payment to British Rail for the publication and distribution on inter-city services of a document entitled "Summary of the Budget Proposals"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Brooke *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* No. I understand that a Budget summary was published by a private firm and made available to inter-city passengers at no cost to British Rail.

Building Societies

Mr. John: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the implications for the members and mortgagors of a building society which converts to a public liability company.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* It is for the investing and borrowing members of a society to decide whether conversion is in their best interests. A society cannot convert unless they vote in favour. The Building Societies Act 1986 imposes stringent voting thresholds and majorities for passing resolutions, and also provides for the members to be given all the material information they need to reach an informed judgment on which way they wish to vote. In addition a society seeking to convert must first obtain a banking licence from the Bank of England. The Government have sought to remove both artificial obstacles and artificial inducements to conversion.

SCOTLAND

Ettrick and Lauderdale (Housing Capital Allocations)

Mr. Steel: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he plans any increase in housing provisional capital allocations, 1988-89, for Ettrick and Lauderdale district council.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: On 28 March my right hon. and learned Friend announced details of the final housing capital allocations for all district and island councils. These included increased allocations of £1·8 million on the HRA block and £0·65 million on the non-HRA block for Ettrick and Lauderdale district.

Rating Reform

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether sporting organisations in Scotland will be required to pay the unified business rate; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lang: As the first stage in the reform of non-domestic rates in Scotland, increases in the non-domestic rate poundages set by local authorities will, under section 3 of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987, be subject to an index-linked ceiling from 1 April 1989. This will benefit sporting organisations and other non-domestic ratepayers in Scotland.

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many long-stay mental patients he expects there will be in hospitals in Scotland in each of the next seven years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave him on Tuesday 29 March 1988.

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to respond to the British Medical Association, Royal College of General Practitioners and Scottish General Medical Services committees' call for general practitioners to be able to give out free needles and condoms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The suggestions made by the three bodies are contained in a joint policy statement setting out a wide range of proposals on AIDS, HIV infection and drug misuse. I welcome the interest of these bodies in a matter which is of major concern to the Government, and we shall be arranging early discussions with their representatives to consider the details of their proposals.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the operation and future of the syringe exchange centres in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on Tuesday 29 March 1988.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps he is taking to prevent the spread of HIV 2 in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: HIV 2 infection in the United Kingdom has been monitored for some time. The indications are that the disease is extremely rare in the United Kingdom: the first positive among several thousand tests was found only some two weeks ago. Blood samples from high risk groups will continue to be monitored and we shall take account of the situation in Europe, where HIV 2 infection is thought to be more prevalent, to assess whether further measures are needed.

Community Care

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate for expenditure on community care in Scotland in each of the next three years.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: No such estimates are available. Community care can take a number of forms and expenditure may arise for health boards, local authorities and central Government (through the social security system).

Nurses

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the establishment figures, *(b)* the funded establishment figures and *(c)* the in-post figures of Carstairs state hospital for each nursing grade employed; and if he will publish, for each grade category, the number of employees in full-time posts, the number of part-time employees and the whole-time equivalents of those part-time employees.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The establishment figure is based on a patient population of 230. The current patient population is 210. The information is given in the following table:

Grades	*Establishment 1987-88*	*Funded establishment 1987-88*	*Staff in post at 29 February 1988*	
			Full-time	*Part-time*
Chief nursing officer	1	1	1	—
Deputy chief nursing officer	1	1	1	—
Assistant chief nursing officer	1	1	1	—
Senior nurses (including one senior tutor)	14	14	14	—
Charge nurses-ward sisters (including one clinical teacher)	56	54	56	—
Staff nurses	53	55	31	2
Senior enrolled nurses	37	37	37	—
Enrolled nurses	146	146	139	—
Nursing assistants	21	21	19	—
TOTAL	330	330	299	1/2

[1] Whole-time equivalent 1·25.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the establishment figures, *(b)* the funded establishment figures and *(c)* the in-post figures of each health board in Scotland for the following nursing grades: regional nursing officer 1 and 2, regional nurse 1 and 2, district nursing officer grades 1 to 7, director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6, senior nurse grades 1 + to 8, sister I, sister II, health visitor, deputy nursing sister, staff nurse, senior enrolled nurse, enrolled nurse, nursing auxiliary/assistant; and if he will publish, for each grade category, the number of employees in full-time posts, the number of part-time employees and the whole-time equivalent of those part-time employees.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Information is not held centrally about health boards' establishments or funded establishments for nursing staff. Table 1 sets out for each health board in Scotland at March 1987 the whole-time equivalent numbers of staff in post in the grades that correspond as closely as possible to the categories set out in the question. Some of these categories are specific to the English situation. Information about numbers of employees in full-time posts and about part-time employees in each health board at March 1987 could be made available from central records only at disproportionate cost. Table 2 sets out for Scotland as a whole and for the same grades the number of staff in full time posts, the number in part-time posts and the whole-time equivalent of those employed part time.

Table 1

	Scotland	*Argyll and Clyde*	*Ayrshire and Arran*	*Borders*	*Dumfries and Galloway*	*Fife*	*Forth Valley*	*Grampian*	*Greater Glasgow*	*Highland*	*Lanark*	*Lothian*	*Orkney*	*Shetland*	*Tayside*	*Western Isles*
CANO	15·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0	1·0
Director of Nursing Services	83·0	8·0	4·0	2·0	4·0	8·0	5·0	8·0	16·0	3·0	6·0	14·0	0·0	0·0	10·0	1·0
Senior Nurses Grades 1-8	1,343·8	101·5	80·4	29·0	43·0	78·0	83·8	116·0	370·5	64·3	111·5	192·0	4·0	5·0	60·0	6·0
Sister/Charge Nurse[1]	7,303·1	603·8	387·9	175·4	218·7	270·8	378·1	709·1	1,838·4	318·9	677·5	975·6	34·1	38·2	634·2	66·5
Staff Nurse/Midwife	13,089·3	818·1	845·8	195·1	446·7	780·0	565·4	1,125·8	2,936·5	610·5	893·3	2,271·8	21·2	47·2	1,278·8	72·2
Senior Enrolled	591·0	43·8	17·4	4·0	13·8	19·4	16·8	29·9	170·9	21·4	137·4	55·1	0·0	2·0	59·1	0·0
Enrolled	9,784·3	685·9	471·7	150·9	275·9	752·4	473·4	1,037·5	2,053·9	317·2	1,116·4	1,196·8	72·3	45·2	1,084·4	48·4
Health Visitor[2]	1,420·3	126·8	84·0	32·5	38·3	95·8	83·2	147·2	267·6	80·9	137·6	186·2	12·5	12·0	108·7	11·0
Protected Grades	178·1	10·1	5·0	0·0	3·0	1·0	2·0	10·0	4·0	2·0	29·0	15·0	0·0	0·0	97·0	0·0
Other Qualified[3]	959·0	52·3	42·9	18·0	27·0	54·5	46·9	104·6	250·7	28·0	77·5	184·5	0·0	0·0	84·0	0·0
Auxiliary/Assistant	15,592·2	1,562·6	949·5	342·2	482·4	854·8	1,200·0	1,532·6	3,837·3	545·5	1,255·5	2,349·5	36·3	44·3	1,619·9	58·9

Table 2

	Whole time	*Number Part time*	*Total*	*WTE for part time*
CANO	15	0	15	0·0
Director of Nursing Services	83	0	83	0·0
Senior Nurses Grades 1 to 8	1,336	12	1,348	7·8
Sister/Charge Nurse[1]	6,366	1,410	7,778	937·1
Staff Nurse/Midwife	9,157	7,033	16,200	3,922·3
Senior Enrolled	497	133	530	94·0
Enrolled	6,638	4,927	11,585	3,145·3
Health Visitor[1 2]	1,309	199	1,508	111·3
Protected Grades	177	2	179	1·1
Other Qualified[1 2]	941	46	987	28·0
Auxiliary/Assistant	8,397	12,308	20,705	8,295·2

[1] Includes district nurses and midwives who are on the same pay scale.
[2] Includes combined duty health visitors.
[3] Includes teaching grades.

Pupils (Behaviour)

Mr. Buchanan-Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pupils were excluded from school on account of bad behaviour in each of the past five school years; and if he will give the figures for each year for each education authority.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: This information is not available centrally.

Forestry

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his most recent estimate of the area of annual new planting of trees in the United Kingdom over the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The Government's aim is traditional planting at the rate of 33,000 hectares a year. In addition, the proposed farm woodland scheme will provide for the planting of 36,000 hectares in the period of three years from its introduction.

Students (Allowances)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he will publish full details of students allowances for session 1988-89.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: I announced the main rates of student grant for the 1988-89 academic year in response to a question from my hon. Friend on 18 December 1987, at columns *819-20*.

I am publishing today the supplementary grant rates for the 1988-89 session. The increases in these rates are

broadly in line with the 4 per cent. increase in the main rates. In addition, there are three minor changes in the terms of the students allowances scheme, namely:

(i) All student pension income will be disregarded up to a limit of £2,000;

(ii) a student who reaches the third anniversary of his or her marriage during a course will be given independent status with effect from his or her next award; and

(iii) unpaid placements will not count towards the length of a previous course for the purposes of the "previous study" requirements.

Cash Limits

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will announce any change to the 1987-88 cash limit for local authority non-housing capital expenditure.

Mr. Rifkind: The 1987-88 cash limit figure has been increased from £437·8 million to £443·8 million to reflect the £6 million in supplementary capital allocations issued in December to local authorities to assist with the capital costs of implementing the community charge.

Personal Information (Access)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when consultation will take place on the regulations to be made under section 3 of the Access to Personal Files Act 1987 in respect of access for individuals to manually maintained records containing information relating to themselves held by local authority social work departments in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Proposals for the making of these regulations were issued today and a copy of the consultative paper and a list of bodies to which it is addressed has been placed in the Library of the House. The paper has been issued to local authorities in Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and those voluntary organisations principally concerned with the interests of social work client groups whose records are likely to be held by local authorities and others representing more general consumer interests. A response has been requested by 27 May.

The right of access provided under these proposals is in line with that already available in relation to local authority records of the same type under the Data Protection Act 1984. The proposals include a safeguard that information may be withheld if access is likely to result in serious harm to the physical or mental health, or emotional condition, of the individual requesting access, or to another person.

It is proposed that local authorities will be able to charge an access fee of up to a maximum of £10.

Pollution

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he is taking to combat air and water pollution.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The Scottish Office is actively engaged in a large number of measures to deal with pollution of all kinds. For example we played a full part in the policy and administrative preparations for the North sea conference of Ministers in London in November, including the organisation of the preliminary international meeting of senior officials in Edinburgh, and we are now taking action to implement the measures agreed by Ministers at the conference; these are listed in the declaration, of which a copy is available in the Library.

We identified for the first time 23 Scottish waters in terms of the EC bathing waters directive, and these are being monitored to ensure compliance with the directive's standards.

We have tackled particular water pollution problems as necessary, for example by placing restrictions on the use of TBT anti-fouling paints on small boats and fish cages.

In the field of air pollution, we are maintaining a close watch on the implementation in Scotland of the EC directives relating to air pollution; encouraging, and paying grants to, local authorities which carry out smoke control measures under the clean air acts; and actively considering comments received on the Government's paper on the review of air pollution legislation in Great Britain. We have also commissioned research projects on specific air pollution questions in Scotland.

If the hon. Member has any particular aspect in mind, he may like to write to me or to my right hon. and learned Friend.

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the measures his Department is taking to encourage a reduction in the emission of pollutants which cause acid rain.

Mr. James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The reduction of acid-producing emissions has to be approached on a national and international basis. The reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment to my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) on 16 November 1987, at column 185, outlined the reduction in United Kingdom emissions since 1970 and the specific measures being taken by the CEGB to reduce emissions from some major power stations. These measures will be of particular benefit in reducing acidification in Scotland, which receives a major part of its acid-producing emissions from elsewhere. In relation to Scottish emissions, the use of low sulphur coal in the two major SSEB coal-fired stations, and the high level of hydro and nuclear electricity generation, considerably reduce the level of acid-forming pollutants produced in Scotland. We are, however, keeping the position under review.

Patients (Spending)

Mr. Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average annual expenditure per patient in Scotland in 1986-87.

Mr. Michael Forsyth *[holding answer 23 February 1988]:* It is not possible to provide a meaningful overall average cost per patient. However, information on the cost of in-patient and out/day-patient treatment based on the statistical information produced annually and contained in the publication "Scottish Health Service Costs" is given in the table:

Average annual cost (1986-87)

	£
In-patient case	1,177·90
Out-patient attendance	12·65
Accident and emergency attendance	17·54
Day patient[1] attendance	29·06
Day case[2] attenance	64·36

[1] Defined as a patient who attends a day hospital or day facility from outwith the hospital on a regular basis.

[2] A patient using a hospital facility during the course of a day for investigation, operative procedure or other treatment, who requires some form of preparation, period of recovery or observation and who does not remain in the facility overnight.

Comparison with other countries of the United Kingdom on the basis of these figures is difficult, as average annual expenditure per patient is influenced by the mix of cases treated, the age and sex of patients and a variety of other factors. Scotland, for example, has a higher proportion of the United Kingdom's teaching hospital places and proportionately more patient care takes place within the relatively more expensive teaching hospital environment. Average expenditure per patient also depends on the methods used to allocate hospital running costs between certain categories; for example, in-patients and day cases.

ENERGY

Electricity Industry

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are his plans for the Central Electricity Generating Board generation development and construction division, Barnwood, Gloucester, in the context of the proposed privatisation of the electricity industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Spicer: This is a matter for discussion with the industry.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Cecil Parkinson: Contracts placed with private sector firms and companies for management or computer consultancy were:

Consultants	*Subject*
Spencer Stuart	Advice on the selection of UK Atomic Energy Authority Board Member
Valstar Technical Systems Ltd)	Contracts for computing
Gearhart Geodata Service Ltd)	advice and support to the Department's Petroleum Engineering Division

Energy Performance Information

Mr. John Garrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, pursuant to the oral answer by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Worcestershire South (Mr. Spicer) of 7 March, *Official Report*, column 11, he will give the detailed evidence on which was based the assertion that the Danish Government's scheme to provide energy performance information for buildings is not particularly successful; what representations he has received from the Danish Government on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Morrison: My hon. Friend's remarks were based on the conclusion of a study of the Danish heat survey scheme prepared for the European Commission by independent consultants. I have received no representations from the Danish Government.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

East-West Relations

14. **Mr. Leigh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of East-West relations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: We welcome the improved atmosphere of East-West relations. Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze met in Washington last week. They fixed dates for the Moscow summit (29 May-2 June). We look for further substantive progress in the key areas of arms control, regional issues and human rights.

Libya and Syria

15. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the implications for relations with *(a)* Libya and *(b)* Syria of the revelations at the trial in West Berlin of Christina Endrigkeit, in relation to the bombing of La Belle discotheque.

Mr. Mellor: None, Sir. Christina Endrigkeit is not on trial. I have nothing to add to what my right hon. and learned Friend told the House on 24 October 1986, namely that there is no evidence available to us which implicates Syria or any country other than Libya in the La Belle bombing.

Falkland Islands (BBC Services)

16. **Mr. Campbell-Savours:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will discuss with representatives of the Legislative Council for the Falklands Islands arrangements for transmission of the external services of the BBC.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to meet representatives of the Legislative Council. The BBC world service can be heard throughout the islands on short wave and further BBC radio material is rebroadcast daily on the FM band by the Falkland Islands broadcasting service and by British forces broadcasting services.

USSR (Foreign Policy)

17. **Mr. David Shaw:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the implications for Soviet foreign policy of internal protest within the Soviet Union.

Mr. Mellor: Unfortunately the improving Soviet human rights performance has not yet been reflected at the CSCE conference in Vienna. Nationalist tensions clearly have implications for Mr. Gorbachev's policy of openness.

Afghanistan

18. **Mr. Mans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures have been taken recently to encourage the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: When I was in Moscow in February I told Mr. Gorbachev and Mr. Shevardnadze of the need for the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan this year and our wish to see a neutral, non-aligned and independent Afghanistan. We welcome the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General's personal representative to pave the way for a settlement.

24. **Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to visit Kabul.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to visit Kabul.

25. **Mr. Favell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about progress towards a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Mr. Eggar: The Soviet Union has expressed its intention to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. Arrangements for the withdrawal are the subject of proximity talks in Geneva involving Pakistan and the Kabul regime. We have repeatedly called for Soviet withdrawal to be completed within 1988.

Middle East

19. **Mr. Andrew MacKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to visit the middle east.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no current plans for an early visit to the middle east. I regularly visit the area, and we keep in the closest touch with developments in the region.

43. **Mr. Walters:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards a middle east peace settlement.

Mr. Mellor: We support current efforts to promote the convening of an international conference as a framework for negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. We hope that all the parties concerned will avoid action which could stifle progress towards a settlement.

50. **Mr. Marlow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Government policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict in the middle east.

Mr. Mellor: We support current efforts to promote the convening of an international conference as a framework for negotiations to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. We hope that all the parties concerned will avoid action which could stifle progress towards a settlement.

57. **Mr. Menzies Campbell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet the Israeli Foreign Minister to discuss the situation in the middle east; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present for such a meeting.

62. **Mr. Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what contributions he intends to make towards encouraging the Israeli Government to respond favourably to the Shultz plan on the middle east.

Mr. Mellor: We shall continue to stress to the Israeli Government the urgent need for progress towards a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government regarding the proposals for peace negotiations in the middle east put forward by the United States Secretary of State in his letter to the Prime Minister of Israel dated 4 March; and whether that policy has been conveyed to Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shamir.

Mr. Mellor: We support the United States' initiative, and urge the parties to work for progress on this basis. All concerned are aware of our views.

EC-Japan

20. **Mr. Wood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will report on recent bilateral discussions between the European Community and Japan.

Mrs. Chalker: Members of the Commission met Japanese Ministers in Tokyo on 2-5 December last year to discuss current issues between the two sides. There have been regular official level meetings since then.

South Africa

21. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives Her Majesty's Government have taken since 1979 about the repeated South African invasions of Angolan territory, the illegal occupation of Namibia and the repression of black South Africans.

Mrs. Chalker: We have been active throughout in urging the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola. As a member of the contact group, we have also been closely involved in negotiations for Namibian independence. We have repeatedly called for an early end to apartheid, and sought to encourage dialogue between all South Africans across the racial divide.

23. **Mr. Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of South Africa concerning the administration of justice in South Africa.

Mrs. Chalker: None.

32. **Mr. Hood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all the initiatives taken since 1979 by Her Majesty's Government, alone or with member nations of the United Nations or European Community, regarding *(a)* apartheid in South Africa, *(b)* the illegal occupation of Namibia by South Africa, *(c)* the repeated violation of the territory of Angola by South African troops and *(d)* the funding of mercenary troops in Mozambique.

Mrs. Chalker: We have taken every opportunity bilaterally, with European Community partners, the

Commonwealth and through the United Nations to urge on the South African Government the need to end apartheid, to implement the United Nation plan for Namibian independence, to withdraw from Angola, and to pursue a peaceful policy towards her neighbours. We shall continue to do so.

47. **Mr. Pike:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the benefits to the United Kingdom of maintaining normal diplomatic relationships with South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: Without diplomatic relations it would not be possible for us to influence the South African Government or to maintain contact with a wide range of opinion in South Africa including many members of the parliamentary and extra-parliamentary opposition, the Churches and trades unions. We use our contacts with the South African Government to seek to persuade them of the need for peaceful but fundamental change, to allow the United Nation plan for Namibian independence to go ahead, and to withdraw from Angola.

61. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next intends to meet the South African ambassador in London; and if he will make a statement on the recent contacts between his Department and representatives of the South African Government following the decision on the Sharpeville Six of 18 March.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend has no present plans to meet the South African ambassador. On the "Sharpeville Six", I have nothing to add to what I told the House on 16 and 17 March.

66. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the South African Government regarding the new restrictions imposed upon certain organisations.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend issued a statement on 24 February condemning these restrictions, following which I summoned the South African ambassador for the same purpose on 25 February. Her Majesty's ambassador at Cape Town has also made plain our views to the South African Government.

France

22. **Mr. Ian Taylor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when last he met the President of France.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend last saw President Mitterrand at the NATO summit on 2-3 March although they did not have the opportunity at that time for a substantive discussion.

Iran-Iraq War

26. **Mr. Couchman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is his latest information on developments in the Iran-Iraq war.

Mr. Mellor: Although we have seen nothing on the scale of last year's offensives near Basra, fierce fighting continues in Kurdistan, where there have also been recent claims of the use of chemical weapons. The "war of the cities" involving the exchange of missile attacks on major Iranian and Iraqi cities also continues, resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians. Attacks on shipping in the Gulf have recently resumed after a three-week lull.

We deplore the continuation of the conflict and call on both sides to implement Security Council resolution 598 immediately, most importantly a complete ceasefire.

56. **Mr. David Nicholson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about progress towards achieving a ceasefire in the Gulf conflict.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The Security Council issued a statement on 16 March reaffirming the need for immediate implementation of SCR 598, and supporting the Secretary-General's intention of having intensive consultation with emissaries from Iran and Iraq. In parallel, work is continuing on an arms embargo resolution.

China

27. **Mr. Devlin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when last he met the Chinese Foreign Minister; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend had talks with Foreign Ministers Wu on 10-11 March during his visit to the United Kingdom. Their agenda covered a wide range of bilateral and international subjects including East-West relations, disarmament, the middle east and Hong Kong.

63. **Mr. Anthony Coombs:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current state of Sino-British relations.

Mr. Eggar: During their talks earlier this month my right hon. and learned Friend and the Chinese Foreign Minister noted with satisfaction the excellent state of Sino-British relations. We continue to work closely together on matters relating to Hong Kong, and there is an active programme of commercial, scientific, educational and cultural exchanges between our two countries.

Kampuchea

28. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent developments in Kampuchea.

Mr. Eggar: We continue to seek the withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and a settlement which would allow the Cambodian people to determine their own future, free from outside interference, through free and fair elections.

USSR (Broadcasting)

29. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics about freedom of broadcasting across frontiers.

Mr. Mellor: None. Jamming of the BBC vernacular services to the Soviet Union and Poland has ceased. We hope that the Soviet Union will take steps to end all jamming and will continue to make our views known in appropriate fora.

Persian Gulf

30. **Mr. Stokes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what length of stay he envisages for the Gulf task force.

Mr. Mellor: The Armilla patrol will remain in the region for as long as British shipping remains under serious threat as a result of the Iran — Iraq conflict. However, we keep that presence under constant review and make necessary adjustments in the light of current circumstances.

35. **Mr. Peter Archer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will initiate international discussions to ensure the right of peaceful navigation through the Persian Gulf.

Mr. Mellor: There is already close co-operation between western countries which maintain naval forces in the Gulf in order to help ensure freedom of navigation. We encourage all countries with an interest in the region to contribute by whatever means they can to upholding this vital principle.

EC Foreign Policy

31. **Mr. Knox:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next proposes to have discussions with his European Community partners concerning the development of common European foreign policies.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend met his colleagues from the Twelve to discuss European political co-operation matters at an informal weekend meeting in Konstanz on 5-6 March, and again on 22 March in Brussels. He expects to discuss these matters with them next on 13 June in Brussels.

Foreign Ministers Meeting (Hamburg)

33. **Mr. Doran:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with what action he proposes to follow up the conference of European and Central American Foreign Ministers in Hamburg.

Mr. Eggar: We continue to give firm support to the peace process. The commitments which the Community and its member states have entered into are recorded in the political and economic communiqués copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

55. **Mr. Frank Cook:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Her Majesty's Government's response to the European Community conference on Central American affairs, held in Hamburg on 29 February.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave to the hon. Member for Clydesdale (Mr. Hood) on 4 March at column *742*.

USSR

34. **Mr. Jack:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he received from Soviet human rights groups on his recent visit to Moscow.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend met a number of refuseniks and former prisoners of conscience during his visit and accepted representations from them. The Soviet authorities have been left in no doubt of our views on the human rights issues raised and the individual cases concerned.

38. **Mr. Arbuthnot:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will be making representations to the Soviet Union about human rights in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mellor: We regularly raise with the Soviet authorities the issue of human rights in the Soviet Union as a whole. Recent events in Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly the violent clashes which have taken place, are clearly of major concern to the Soviet authorities. We are following closely their efforts to address grievances and defuse tensions in the area.

46. **Mr. Sumberg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will seek a further opportunity of raising with the Soviet Foreign Minister the plight of those long-term refuseniks such as Inna and Yuly Kosharovsky who are still waiting for exit visas.

Mr. Mellor: Yuly Kosharovsky was among the refuseniks with whom my right hon. and learned Friend met during his recent visit to the Soviet Union. Inna and Yuly Kosharovsky are among the cases about which we have repeatedly expressed our concern to the Soviet authorities. We shall continue to take every possible opportunity to raise with them the plight of the refuseniks.

49. **Mrs. Gillian Shephard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes there have been in the Soviet Union, during the period of glasnost, in the numbers of dissidents obtaining exit visas.

Mr. Mellor: During 1987 more than 8,000 Soviet Jews, 15,000 Germans and several thousand Armenians left the Soviet Union, a considerable increase over previous years. While we welcome these signs of greater freedom of movement, the fundamental change in Soviet policy towards freedom of emigration which we seek is still absent. We shall continue to press the Soviet authorities to respect the right to emigrate of all Soviet citizens who wish to do so.

54. **Mr. Brazier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Soviet Union on the freedom of religion over the last year.

Mr. Mellor: We regularly make representations to the Soviet Union on freedom of religion, both in bilateral contacts and at the CSCE review conference in Vienna. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister pressed for greater freedom of religion during her talks in Moscow in March last year. My right hon. and learned Friend again raised this issue with the Soviet authorities during his recent visit to the Soviet Union.

60. **Sir George Young:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made by the Soviet Union, under pressure from Her Majesty's Government, to grant human rights to all its citizens.

Mr. Mellor: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North

(Mr. Gale) on 2 March. We continue to press for further improvements in Soviet human rights performance both bilaterally and at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna.

65. **Mr. Allen McKay:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures are being taken by Her Majesty's Government to persuade the Soviet Government to permit Michael Kremen to emigrate.

Mr. Mellor: Michael Kremen's case is among those about which we have expressed concern to the Soviet authorities. My right hon. and learned Friend again raised the issue of Soviet citizens denied permission to emigrate with Mr. Shevardnadze during his talks in Moscow last month.

United States of America

36. **Mr. Hind:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to meet the President of the United States of America to discuss Anglo-American relations.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to see President Reagan when he visits London on 2-3 June after the Moscow summit.

Trinidad and Tobago

37. **Mr. Butler:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago; and what was discussed.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend last saw Prime Minister Robinson at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Vancouver in October 1987. A variety of international and bilateral topics of mutual interest was discussed.

Operation Fire Focus

39. **Mr. Home Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been received from other Governments in relation to Operation Fire Focus.

Mr. Eggar: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Halifax (Mrs. Mahon) on 2 March at column *587*.

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

40. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on the outcome of the recent NATO summit.

Mr. Mellor: No direct representations have been received from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament on the outcome of the recent NATO summit.

Chemical Weapons

41. **Mr. Baldry:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a further statement on progress towards achieving a verifiable worldwide ban on chemical weapons.

Mr. Mellor: Encouraging progress has been made at the chemical weapons negotiations in Geneva. However, complex issues remain to be dealt with, particularly on verification and arrangements for an international inspectorate, if we are to achieve an effective convention.

Falkland Islands

42. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Governor General of the Falklands; and what subjects were discussed.

Mr. Eggar: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) on 2 March at column *587*.

Single European Act

44. **Sir Anthony Meyer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect on the decision-making process within the Community of the Single European Act.

Mrs. Chalker: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave on 21 October to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor). Since then, qualified majority voting has led to the adoption of air transport liberalisation measures and the public supplies directive which opens up contract opportunities. It has enabled a common position to be reached by the Council on a number of other single market measures, including non-life insurance and toy safety.

Nicaragua

45. **Mr. Haynes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the recent peace talks in Nicaragua.

Mr. Eggar: None. However, we welcome the resumption of direct ceasefire talks between the Nicaraguan Government and the Contras, and hope that they will lead to a ceasefire and prevent any repitition of the Nicaraguan incursion into Honduras.

Cyprus

48. **Mr. James Lamond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he has any plans to meet the President of Cyprus in the near future.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. and learned Friend will have talks with President Vassiliou in London on 31 March.

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference

51. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role his Department has in preparations for the forthcoming review of the working of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Geoffrey Howe: The review of the working of the Conference is to be undertaken by the two Governments. My Department will contribute to the preparation and conduct of our part in the review.

NATO—Warsaw Pact (Conventional Forces)

52. **Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a

further statement on progress towards reducing the imbalance in conventional forces between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Warsaw pact.

Mr. Mellor: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) on 3 February at column *629*.

Austria

53. **Sir Brandon Rhys Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made in negotiations to associate Austria more closely with the EEC.

Mrs. Chalker: The European Economic Community —Austria free trade agreement of 1972 provides a basis for economic co-operation. EC-EFTA ministerial meetings take place regularly to promote co-operation in specific fields. Progress has been made recently in areas of interest to Austria, including transit procedures and frontier controls.

Japan

58. **Mr. Forth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about the current state of Anglo-Japanese relations.

Mr. Eggar: None. Anglo-Japanese relations are excellent.

South-east Asia

59. **Mr. Fallon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to seek to make an official visit to south-east Asia; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend will make official visits to Malaysia (5-7 April), Singapore (7-9 April) and Brunei (9-10 April). The purpose of these visits is to build on the excellent relations which exist between the United Kingdom and the three Commonwealth countries of south-east Asia, and to discuss a range of regional and international issues.

Mauritius

64. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the Mauritian high commissioner; and what was discussed.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and Learned Friend met the Mauritian high commissioner on 15 January during his intitial call as the new high commissioner for Mauritius in London. Topics of mutual interest were discussed.

Refugee Camps

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how often during the past 10 years Her Majesty's Government have made formal representations to the Governments of *(a)* Jordan and *(b)* the Lebanon about conditions in the Palestinian refugee camps in those countries; and when was the last occasion in respect of each Government.

Mr. Mellor: This information is not available in the form requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. We regularly discuss Palestinian refugee issues with the Jordanian and Lebanese Governments. In February 1987, my right hon. and learned Friend raised with President Gemayel conditions in the refugee camps in Lebanon.

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the infant mortality rate in the refugee camps in Gaza and the comparable rates in *(a)* Syria, *(b)* Iran, *(c)* Iraq, *(d)* the Yemen, *(e)* the Lebanon and *(f)* Jordan.

Mr. Mellor: World Health Organisation figures for infant mortality per 1,000 live births in 1987 are as follows:

	Number
Syria	59
Iran	113
Iraq	80
Yemen	[1]137
	[2]135
Lebanon	52
Jordan	54

[1] Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen.
[2] Yemen Arab Republic.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency's latest estimate is that the infant mortality rate in Palestinian refugee camps in all five areas of operation (Gaza, West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan) is between 30 and 40 per 1,000 live births.

Nuclear-free Zone

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is Her Majesty's Government policy on the proposals of the Warsaw pact countries of a nuclear-free corridor along the line of contact between the Warsaw pact and NATO with a width of 300 km and from which all types of offensive weapons would be withdrawn; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: It is our view that such a nuclear-free corridor would not enhance the security of the area. The corridor could still be targeted by weapons based outside and mobile systems could easily be moved back at a time of tension.

Naval Forces (Mediterranean)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what conditions he considers are required to accept the Soviet Union proposal of a freeze on naval forces in the Mediterranean from 1 July; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We cannot support this Soviet proposal. A freeze on naval forces would constrain NATO's ability to reinforce Europe by sea in times of crisis, on which our defensive strategy depends, without significantly affecting the Warsaw pact's military capability.

British Citizens (Belgium)

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Belgian Government in connection with the arrest of a number of British citizens in Brussels on 2 March; what representations he has received from the families of those arrested and other interested parties; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: My right hon. and learned Friend has made no representations to the Belgian Government. He has received copies of statements from five of the persons who were taken into custody.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will provide information to the Data Protection Registrar, in a way that does not compromise national security, on the number, scope and extent of the certificates that he has signed under section 27 of the Data Protection Act.

Mr. Eggar: No. It is not necessary for the Registrar, in the exercise of his responsibilities under the Act, to have these details.

NATO (Flexible Response)

Mr. Kirkhope: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress was made on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation summit in seeking to maintain the policy of the flexible response.

Mr. Mellor: The declaration issued by Heads of Government at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation summit confirms the continuing validity of the Alliance's strategy, which depends on an

"appropriate mix of adequate and effective nuclear and conventional forces which will continue to be kept up to date where necessary."

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Eggar: The management and computer consultants awarded contracts in the financial year 1987-88 are as follows:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of Assingment*
Management Consultants	
B. J. Stent, Materials Services and Consultancy	Procurement Consultancy
Kinsley Lord	Review of Assistant Under Secretary command
R. Pope	Report on Purchasing
Peat Marwick McLintock	Freight Tender Review
Ken Snooks International	Review of Thomas Cook/British Airways Implant
SPS Management Services	Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Contract
Touche Ross	Study of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Computer Audit Requirements
BIS	Review of Information Handling Requirements of the Diplomatic Service
Computer Consultants	
Data General	Management Accounting and Information System
Excel Systems	An Expenditure Forecasting System
Kinesis Computing Limited	Development of Overseas Systems
BIS	Development of Overseas Systems
Kode Limited	Review of Faults in Overseas Systems
Towngate Software Limited	Development of an Overseas Accounting System
Computer Sciences Limited	Folios Consultancy Studies
Logica United Kingdom Limited	Folios Consultancy Studies
Systems Designers Public Limited Company	Folios Consultancy Studies
The Instruction Set (i)	Folios Consultancy Studies
(ii)	Administration Records Consultancy
Information and Records Management Systems	Folios Consultancy Studies
Psychometric R + D Limited	Folios Consultancy Studies
Information Resources (i)	A Financial Estimates System
(ii)	An Overseas Estates Financial System
Software Sciences Limited	Advice on computer strategy and standards
Price Waterhouse (i)	Computerisation of Administration Records
(ii)	Replacement of Financial System
Kings Brook Information Associates	Replacement of System for Library and Records.

Palestine Liberation Organisation

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the officially stated policy of Her Majesty's Government relating to the claim of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, endorsed by the Arab League and other bodies, to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestine people; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Mellor: We do not accept this claim.

Anglo-Guatemalan Relations

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Guatemalan authorities about Anglo-Guatemalan relations.

Mr. Eggar: Both my right hon. and learned Friend and I met the Vice President of Guatemala, Sr. Roberto Carpio Nicolle, on 8 March. Our conversations covered a number of topics, including the nature of our bilateral relationship.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Members of Parliament (Allowances)

Mr. Soley: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will carry out a full review of hon. Members' allowances including an assessment of staffing and equipment needs of hon. Members.

Mr. Wakeham: The Top Salaries Review Body carried out a full review of Members' allowances in 1986. There is no case for a further review at present.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Lord President of the Council (1) whether he intends to increase hon. Members' research and secretarial allowance in line with inflation in 1988;

(2) whether he has any proposals to increase hon. Members' research and secretarial allowance in 1988.

Mr. Wakeham: The office costs allowance will increase in line with the formula set out in the Resolution of this House of 21 July 1987.

Select Committees (Officials)

Mr. Hanley: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether the "Memorandum of Guidance to Officials Appearing Before Select Committees" issued in 1980 is still in use.

Mr. Wakeham: I have today arranged for copies of an updated memorandum of guidance to be placed in the House Libraries. The principles of the 1980 memorandum remain unchanged, though the additional guidance issued in April 1987, on evidence concerning the conduct of civil servants, has been incorporated, as undertaken in Cm. 78.

Procedure Committee Reports

Mr. Amess: To ask the Lord President of the Council if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of Procedure Committee reports for each Session since 1958; and if he will list those reports which were debated on the Floor of the House, together with the date, since that date.

Mr. Wakeham: The following list includes the substantive reports from Procedure Committees, together with their titles or an indication of their subject matter, and the dates on which the reports, or the recommendations made in reports, were debated:

Session	*Report*		*Report or recommendations debated*
1958-59	Procedure in the Public Business of the House		13 July 1959
1961-62	Effect of Standing Order No. 58 (2) on minorities		
1962-63	First Report	The rule relating to reference in the House of Commons to matters considered as sub judice	20 June 1963
	Second Report	Expediting the Finance Bill	
	Third Report	The Recommittal of Bills to Committees of the whole House; the operation of sub-paragraph *(a)* or paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 1A (Exemptions from S.O. No. 1 (Sittings of the House)) in relation to Consolidated Fund Bills; renaming Standing Committees; the application of Standing Order No. 95A (Statutory Instruments, (Procedure)) to motions for affirmative resolution; the application of paragraph 4 of Standing Order No. 8 (Questions to Members) in relation to Mondays	23 July 1963
1963-64	First Report	The form of the Defence Estimates	
	Second Report	The disclosure of matters contained in the Reports of Select Committees	27 October 1965
	Third Report	The allocation of time to proceedings on public bills; the method of signifying objection during the time for unopposed business; opportunities for short speeches; morning sittings	
1964-65	First Report	Second Reading Committees; Ten-Minute Rule Bills	27 October 1965
	Second Report	Question Time	27 October 1965
	Third Report	Expediting the Finance Bill	27 October 1965 19 April 1967
	Fourth Report	"Specialist" Committees	27 October 1965 14 December 1966
	Fifth Report	Proxy voting for sick Members	
1965-66	First Report	Supply, Ways and Means, and other Money Committees	14 December 1966
1966-67	First Report	Times of Sitting of the House	14 December 1966 19 April 1967 12 December 1967 12 November 1968
	Second Report	Urgent and Topical Debates	19 April 1967 14 November 1967
	Third Report	Methods of Voting	19 April 1967
	Fourth Report	The Finance Bill	19 April 1967 14 November 1967
	Fifth Report	Questions	14 November 1967
	Sixth Report	Public Bill Procedure	14 November 1967 12 December 1967
1967-68	The Dates of the Session; The Financial Year		
1968-69	First Report	Scrutiny of Public Expenditure and Administration	21 October 1969 12 November 1970
	Second Report	The Form of the Defence Estimates	21 October 1969

Session	*Report*		*Report or recommendations debated*
1969-70	First Report	Ten Minute Rule Bills	23 November 1970
	Second Report	Question Time	7 April 1971
1970-71	Second Special Report	Joint Committee on Consolidation, etc Bills	
	First Report	Scrutiny of Taxation	
	Second Report	The Process of Legislation	[1]16 November 1971 24 November 1971 8 August 1972 18 December 1972
1971-72	Fourth Special Report	Scrutiny of Taxation	
	First Report	Election of a Speaker	8 August 1972
	Second Report	Debates on Consolidated Fund Bills; and Ministerial Statements	18 December 1972
	Third Report	Rights of Members to attend Meeting of Select Committee	18 December 1972
	Fourth Report	Matters sub judice	28 June 1972
	Fifth Report	Lords Amendments to the NHS (Family Planning) Amendment Bill	
	Sixth Report	Time of Opposed Private Business	
1972-73	First Report	Timing of the Budget Statement	
	Second Report	Powers of Chairman of Standing Committees, and Public Petitions	
	Third Report	Debates on Defence	24 November 1973
	Fourth Report	Introduction of New Members after By-Elections	
	Fifth Report	Deferment of Private Members' Bills	20 November 1973
	Sixth Report	Members' Constituency Interests and Select Committee Inquiries	
1974-75	First Report	European Secondary Legislation	3 November 1975
	Second Report	Calling Amendments for Division at the end of debate on a motion	
	Third Report	Late Sittings of the House	
	Fourth Report	Restriction on the length of speeches	
1975-76	First Report	Procedure for establishing the order of Oral Questions	31 October 1979
	Second Report	Order of Precedence of Private Members' Bills	31 October 1979
	Third Report	Tabling of Questions and Access to the Table Office	
1976-77	First Report	Calling Amendments for Divison at the end of Debate	31 October 1979
	Second Report	Method of Raising Points of Order during Divisions	31 October 1979
	Third Report	Voting on Opposition Motions on Supply Days	31 October 1979 30 October 1980
	Fourth Report	Business of the House Motions	31 October 1979
	Fifth Report	Questions to the Prime Minister	31 October 1979
	Sixth Report	The Operation of Standing Order No. 9	31 October 1979
	Seventh Report	Eligibility of Members successful in Ballots for Motions and Bills to take part in subsequent Ballots	31 October 1979
	Eighth Report	Tabling of Amendments to Bills on the day of Second Reading	31 October 1979
1977-78	First Report	Public Bill Procedure; Delegated Legislation; European Communities Legislation; Financial Control; Organisation of Sessions and sittings	31 October 1979 17 January 1980 30 October 1980
1980-81	First Report	Procedure (Supply)	19 July 1982
1982-83	First Report	Procedure (Finance)	6 December 1983
1983-84	First Report	Short Speeches	31 October 1984
1984-85	First Report	Printing of Oral Questions to the Prime Minister	
	Second Report	Public Bill Procedure	27 February 1986
	Third Report	Questions lost when a Sitting is broken	27 February 1986
	Fourth Report	Short Speeches	27 February 1986
1985-86	First Report	The Operation of Standing Order No.10	27 February 1986

Session		Report	Report or recommendations debated
	Second Report	Allocation of time to Goverment Bills in Standing Committee	
	Third Report	Short Speeches	
1986-87	First Report	A Parliamentary Calendar	
	Second Report	Use of time on the Floor of the House	
	Third Report	Early Day Motions	

[1] Some recommendations were the subject of a Government Statement on 8 November 1971.

WALES

Welsh Language

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to reduce the continuing shortage of Welsh medium teachers in all secondary school subjects.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: I am proposing to introduce a teacher training incentive supplement which I hope will encourage Welsh-speaking graduates to consider teaching as a career. It is designed in particular for those who need some practice and additional language immersion to give them the confidence to use their Welsh in a formal teaching situation.

The supplement, to be paid in addition to the normal mandatory maintenance grant, will be £1,200. Selected students will be expected to attend additional language workshops to improve their command of the language. These additional attendances will take place during the vacation periods.

The scheme will be available in the first instance for secondary post-graduate certificate of education courses at UCW Aberystwyth, UCNW Bangor, University college, Cardiff (home economics), Gwent college of higher education (CDT) and Trinity college Carmarthen (religious education). The scheme is being introduced on a trial basis for 1988 and 1989. If it leads to an increase in the number of students training through the medium of Welsh it could be extended in future years.

EMPLOYMENT

Disabled Persons

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what programmes are presently in existence to promote the employment of disabled persons; and what initiatives are being considered to encourage employers to hire the handicapped.

Mr. Lee: The Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission promote the employment of people with disabilities through a range of programmes which are designed to assess abilities; determine needs; assist rehabilitation and development of skills; place in employment; and, for people with severe disabilities, provide employment opportunities. These programmes include the Department resettlement service, the quota scheme, disablement advisory service, the code of good practice on employment of disabled people, and sheltered employment programme; and the commission's rehabilitation service, and support for residential training centres. All general programmes administered by the Department and the commission are also open to people with disabilities. Information about the operation of all these programmes was published in the Manpower Services Commission's report for 1986-87. Measures to encourage employers to recruit and retain people with disabilities are the particular responsibility of the Department's disablement advisory service. The effectiveness of measures taken to encourage employers to develop an equal opportunity policy towards people with disabilities will be included in the review of policies and programmes which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment announced that we would be undertaking during the debate on the Local Government Bill, on Wednesday 19 March at column 346.

Benefits (Income Support)

Ms. Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether individuals who benefit from transitional protection to prevent their benefit being reduced under income support will retain the protection on leaving a place on the adult training scheme.

Mr. Nicholls: I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Race and Sex Monitoring

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what information he has concerning the extent of race and sex monitoring, respectively, among major and minor industries, respectively.

(2) how many and what percentage of the significant private sector employers visited by his Department's race relations advisory service since 1985, have introduced ethnic monitoring arrangements; and how many and what percentage were considering the introduction of such arrangements at the time of the visit.

Mr. Fowler: No detailed information is available on the full extent of race and sex monitoring in the workplace. However for race in the period 1 April 1985 to 31 December 1987, of 374 major private sector employers visited by the Department of Employment's race relations advisory service, 126 (34 per cent.) have introduced or are actively considering the introduction of ethnic monitoring. No records are available to show the number who were already considering such arrangements prior to the visit being made.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he will institute an inquiry to ascertain the extent to which *(a)* race and *(b)* sex monitoring practices in major and minor industries, respectively, comply with the codes of the Commission for Racial Equality and of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Mr. Fowler: I have no plans to do so at the present time.

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what research projects he has commissioned to ascertain the response of industry to the introduction of sex and race monitoring systems; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: A research project will shortly be commissioned to investigate the benefits that accrue from the introduction of ethnic monitoring systems by employers. In so far as it does not detract from the central focus of the project, the research will cover gender and disability dimensions also.

Tourists

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many overseas tourists visited *(a)* London, *(b)* the rest of England, *(c)* Scotland, *(d)* Northern Ireland and *(e)* Wales in 1987.

Mr. Lee: The information is not yet available for the whole of 1987. However, in the 12 months to September 1987, overseas residents made 9 million visits to London 7 million visits to the rest of England, 1·4 million visits to Scotland and 0·6 million visits to Wales. A comparable estimate of visits to Northern Ireland is not available.

Tourism (North-West)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what steps he is taking to promote job opportunities in tourism in the north-west.

Mr. Lee: My Department works with other Government Departments and the tourist boards to promote the many and varied job opportunities that exist in tourism, and to create the framework which will encourage new jobs. Jobs in tourism are growing at the rate of nearly 1,000 a week all over the country. In the north-west specifically there was a 7 per cent. increase in hotel and catering jobs in the 12 months to September 1987.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what have been the levels of funding for the Health and Safety Executive to carry out research in each of the past three years.

Mr. Nicholls: The Health and Safety Commission and Executive are responsible for the provision of funds for research from their overall operational budget. The figures for HSE's spending on research since 1985-86 are:

	£ million
1985-86	5·3
1986-87	5·4
1987-88	[1]5·1

[1] Estimate.

Labour Statistics

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many young people aged between 16 and 25 years were unemployed on 1 January of each of the past 10 years.

Mr. Lee: The following is the available information, which is also in the Library. The tables show for the date closest to January 1 each year for which data are available, the numbers of unemployed registrants aged 16 to 24 years in the United Kingdom for each year from 1979 to 1982 (table (a)) and the numbers of unemployed claimants in the same age category for each year from 1983 to 1988 (table (b)). The figures are affected by the changes in the coverage of the count.

Table (a)

United Kingdom	*Unemployed registrants—aged 16 to 24 years*
11 January 1979	524,724
10 January 1980	538,574
15 January 1981	930,990
14 January 1982	1,153,602

Table (b)

United Kingdom	*Unemployed claimants—aged 16 to 24 years*
13 January 1983	1,225,957
12 January 1984	1,259,737
10 January 1985	1,286,182
9 January 1986	1,245,892
8 January 1987	1,132,792
14 January 1988	893,317

Mr. Holt: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what were the unemployment figures for the Langbaurgh division in *(a)* June 1983 and *(b)* January 1988.

Mr. Lee: On 14 January 1988 the number of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituency of Langbaurgh was 6,800. The corresponding figure for June 1983 was 8,000.

Employment Protection (Complaints)

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) how many complaints under section 19 of the Employment Protection Act have been made to the Central Arbitration Committee in each year since 1977;

(2) how many Central Arbitration Committee declarations had been made under section 19 of the Employment Protection Act for each year since 1977;

(3) how many complaints under section 20 of the Employment Protection Act have been made to the Central Arbitration Committee for each year since 1977; and how many Central Arbitration Committee awards of improved terms and conditions have been made under section 21 of the Employment Protection Act.

Mr. Nicholls: The information requested is as follows:

	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
(a). Number of complaints to CAC under section 19	13	62	38	21	18	18	12	11	16	13	22
(b). Number of declarations under section 19	—	10	13	15	2	6	—	1	3	3	2
(c). Number of complaints under section 20	—	1	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
(d). Number of CAC awards under section 21	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Youth Training

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will categorise the main areas of employment currently providing places for YTS trainees; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Cope: At 31 December 1987, 60 per cent. of YTS training was in the main occupational areas of: administrative and clerical; construction and civil engineering; selling and storage; health community and personnel service; mechanical engineering and metal processing.

A further 20 per cent. of training was in motor vehicle repair and maintenance; agriculture; electrical and electronic engineering and catering and food preparation.

YTS places exist in all sectors of the economy, covering almost all occupations. The Manpower Services Commission plans YTS places according to local labour market needs. Two-year YTS is now firmly established and offers all school leavers quality training in modern work skills.

This will be of benefit both to young people and to British industry, which will gain from a better trained, more flexible young work force.

Adult Training

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment when the new adult training programme will come into operation.

Mr. Fowler: The new programme, which I have decided will be called "Employment Training", will come into operation on 5 September this year. The Manpower Services Commission is now well advanced with its detailed plans for launching the new programme and it has already established contact with a wide range of training providers. This new programme, which will have resources

of £1·4 billion, will enable up to 600,000 unemployed people each year to acquire the training they need to fill the job vacancies which are now increasingly available.

Gangmasters

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment whether he is now able to give the results of his Department's recent investigations into the activities of gangmasters; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Fowler: Benefit fraud investigators from my Department, supported by investigators from the Department of Health and Social Security, have now concluded a major investigation into the activities of gangmasters and their workers in Lincolnshire. Of the 600 people investigated, all of whom were drawing benefits as unemployed, between 40 and 60 are likely to face prosecution for offences under social security legislation. Up to 20 of those facing prosecution are likely to be gangmasters. In addition to the likely prosecution cases 300 of the 600 claimants investigated withdrew their claims to benefit during the investigation. Benefit savings from the exercises are likely to total some £330,000.

The Government are determined to reduce abuse of the gangmaster system in the interests both of safeguarding public funds and of protecting legitimate gangmasters and their equally honest employees whose businesses are being undermined by the dishonest in the industry. Further unannounced fraud drives will therefore take place in the areas concerned at regular intervals for the foreseeable future.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by Manpower Services Commission in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Lee: The management and computer consultancy contracts awarded during 1987 are listed below:

Management consultancy contracts

Consultants	*Subject of Assignment*
Jones, Lang, Wootton	Feasibility study on untying MSC from Property Services Agency
Central Unit on Purchasing (Her Majesty's Treasury Consultant)	Provide advice about purchasing arrangements within MSC
PIEDA	To improve local labour market operations in Scotland
Centre for Urban and Regional Industrial Development (University of Manchester)	Manchester labour market consultancy project
Coopers and Lybrand	Guidance for MSC staff on appraisal and viability of Voluntary Organisations
Centre for Employment Initiatives	Study of operational systems
Coopers and Lybrand	Guidance for MSC staff on implementation of item 5 above
Armitage Norton	Drawing up financial systems of control for community roots trust
EOSYS Ltd	Production of an information technology directory
Armitage Norton	Drawing up managerial systems of control for community roots trust
Centre for Employment Initiatives	Study of operational systems
Sheffield Council of Voluntary Services	Pilot appraisal and viability test checks see 5 and 7 above
Prospect Centre	Develop MSC's human resource development strategy
Sheffield City Polytechnic	To assist central research information unit

(2) Computer consultancy projects

P E Consulting Services	To study current and future needs of sheltered employment branch
C. J. Makeson	A study to examine MSC's proposals for, and design of a network terminal protocol
Comshare	To provide MSC senior management with on-line access to screen-based reports of corporate information
Central Computer and telecommunications Agency (CCTA)	To examine the PLECTRUM computer system, evaluate errors and security procedures
A. J. Aykroyd	A consultant to assist with the development of the "Master Modeller" software package
Coopers and Lybrand	To advise the Director of the MSC on the levels of investment the commission should make in information technology
P A Computer and Telecommunications	To assist MSC in the introduction of office technology in head office
Arthur Young	To assist MSC in deciding whether data sharing is applicable in the MSC environment
P. E. Consulting Services	To produce options and recommendations for stand-alone office technology systems
Hoskyns Group	To study the options for the continuing support of the TOPS and SPECTRUM systems
Mr. Boothroyd	To monitor the progress of the introduction of office technology for senior management and special measures division
Concurrent Computer Corporation Ltd	To test the work load capacity of the SUPERVACS system
Arthur Young	A consultant to provide technical support in information engineering concepts and methods
CCTA Consultant	A feasibility study into the expansion of the BACIE database
CCTA Consultant	To examine MSC's use of automated software development tools and to make recommendations for future use
Mr. Harrison	To produce a distance learning package for SUPERVACS operators
Mr. Boothroyd	To provide advice to head of computing on proposed office technology development
CCTA	To establish the effectiveness of control, management and working methods employed on the FMAS project
CCTA	To establish the user requirements, system specification and business case for central research information system
Mr. Humphries	A consultant to provide advice about the training access point project
ICL	A consultant to provide advice about the implementation of a free text multi-user database

Consultants	Subject of Assignment
CAP Industry Ltd	To provide quality assurance for the SUPERVACS project
CCTA	To provide contingency plans to support the SUPERVACS system
Compsoft	A consultant to provide advice about computerisation of the staff deployment survey
South Yorkshire Microsystems Centre	To develop a database and provide training for the RESTART project
Comshare	Additional development work on providing information to MSC senior management
P. A. Consultants	A consultancy to provide a training course for the implementation of the office technology systems
CCTA	To carry out further work on the central research information system
CCTA Consultant	To carry out a post-implementation review of the 'VETG' reorganisation project
Xentec	To assist in the running of the SPECTRUM system
J. Westgate (Consultants) Ltd	To assist with the implementation of network terminal protocol
CAP	To look into the feasibility on implementing a terminal protocol on an open systems interconnection conforming network
Xentec	To assist in the maintenance of the SPECTRUM system
C. Makemson	To provide quality assurance for the various outputs from MSC's virtual terminal protocol project
Sherringtom Software Ltd	To provide programmers for work on the TOPS MINIS project
CCTA Consultant	To establish the requirements for the display of vacancies on ORACLE
COMPSOFT	To provide guidance on the most efficient way to design and implement an accident database
Presenting with Style	To provide training in the use of 'WordPerfect' software for senior officers' secretaries
M. Wilson (Consuitant)	To carry out changes to the Supercalc system for a staff development survey
P. A. Computers and Telecommunications Ltd	To provide advice and assistance on replicating MSC's 'MASCOT' system in head office
EOSYS	To carry out a strategic review of videoconferencing requirements within the DE group
CCTA Consultant	To undertake a scoping study of funding, charging and management aspects of the MSC network
ORACLE TELETEXT Ltd	To investigate and determine the requirements of the employment service in respect of passing information from the jobcentre computer network to ORACLE
CAMTEC	To assist with the development of the MSC network management system

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Lee: The following firms were awarded contracts by the Department of Employment group, excluding the Manpower Services Commission, in 1987:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	Subject of assignment
AIMS Training	Advice on the use of structured systems analysis and design methodology (SSADM)
Arthur Andersen	To prepare a full study report on computerisation of benefit-related payments
D. E. Barnard Systems	Post-implementation review follow-up study
CACI	Research on unemployment in council house estates
CCTA Consultancy Services	Electronic mail study
CCTA Consultancy Services	Non-quantifiable benefits study
CMA Ltd.	Ad-hoc consultancy for computer project
CMG Information Services Public Sector Ltd.	Comparative study of computing costs
Coopers and Lybrand	Review of local innovation centres
Datasolve Ltd.	Consultancy support to computer
Deloitte Haskins and Sell	Financial management review of British Tourist Authority and English Tourist Board
Durham University Business School	Employment of graduates in small firms
HUSAT	Job design and other human factors affecting operators in the NUBS 2 project
ICL Ltd.	Advice on the use of software tools
ICL Ltd.	Development of a computer prototype
IFF Research Ltd.	Vacancies and recruitment in Great Britain
Logica	System support
Macdonell Douglas	To produce a prototype for the computerisation of personnel records
R O'Connor Consultants	Information technology standards strategy study
PA Computers and Telecommunications Ltd.	Evaluation criteria for a major computer project
PA Consultancy Services Ltd.	Office automation pilot study
PA Consultancy Services Ltd.	Work in connection with the review of the skills training agency
Pannell Kerr Foster Associates	Review of the statistical needs of the tourism industry
Segal Quince Wicksteed	Helping small firms start up and grow; creating a supportive local environment
Donald Smith Seymour and Rooley	Generator replacement feasibility study
Yale Data Ltd.	To investigate the feasibility of local payment of benefit
Arthur Young	To prepare and advise on procedures for managing major capital works projects
Arthur Young	Enhancement to resource information system: commitment accounting

Closed Shops

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what information he has as to the number of union membership agreements or closed shops, approved by ballot, in newspapers, broadcasting and other media since 14 August 1980; and if he will list those media companies where such closed shops currently exist.

Mr. Nicholls: My Department does not have direct access to the information requested. We are aware,

however, of two such ballots which have taken place since 14 August 1980. One of the ballots reached the required majority for approval, the other did not.

Job Release Schemes

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will announce the results of the review of the rates of allowance payable under both the job release scheme and the part-time job release scheme.

Mr. Lee: Although the job release scheme closed on 31 January 1988, the allowances will continue to be paid to participants for up to five years. Following our annual review, the allowances payable from 11 April 1988 under the job release schemes will be as follows:

Full-time Scheme

For disabled men who entered the scheme aged 60, 61, 62 and 63:

for those who are married with a dependent wife whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week—£75·50 a week, taxable;

for all other disabled men £62·15 a week, taxable.

For women who entered the scheme aged 59 and men who entered the scheme aged 64:

for those who are married with a dependent spouse whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week—£70·25 a week, tax free;

for all others £56·05 a week, tax free.

Part-time Scheme

The part-time job release scheme closed on 30 May 1986. However, the rates of allowance for those who entered the scheme on or before that date will be as follows:

For disabled men who entered the part-time scheme aged 60 and 61 and men who entered the part-time scheme aged 62 and 63:

who are married with a dependent wife whose net income from all sources does not exceed £13 a week—£44·70 a week, taxable;

for all others £37·25 a week, taxable.

(There are no longer any participants receiving the tax-free allowance on the part-time scheme.)

Disability Benefit

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people received *(a)* provisional assessments; and *(b)* final assessments of under 14 per cent. in respect of disability benefit in the 12 months prior to September 1986; and what was the total amount paid.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* I have been asked to reply.

The information is as follows for the period 1 October 1985 to 30 September 1986.

	Number
Provisional assessments less than 14 per cent.	53,850
Final assessments less than 14 per cent.	[1]55,240

[1] Includes some assessments also shown under provisional assessments

Disablement benefit was paid in most of these cases as a lump sum gratuity. It is estimated that the total amount paid in this period was about £40 million.

Mr. Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many people received *(a)* provisional assessments and *(b)* final assessments of 14 per cent. and higher in respect of disability benefit in the 12 months following September 1986; and what was the total amount paid.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* I have been asked to reply.

To date information on assessments is available only for the six-month period 1 October 1986 to 4 April 1987. It is as follows:

	Number
Provisional assessments 14 per cent. or more	5,175
Final assessments 14 per cent. or more	2,325

The total amount paid on these cases during this period is estimated to be about £5¾ million. Following changes introduced in October 1986 this sum consists mainly of weekly pensions, though it includes some lump sum gratuities.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Hospital Waiting Lists

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by regional health authority of the allocation of resources to district health authorities for operations to be conducted by private hospitals to reduce waiting lists for the next financial year.

Mr. Newton: Our policy is that the Health Service and the private sector should co-operate to provide the best possible total health care for all patients. Health authorities provide us with data on contractual arrangements with private institutions annually in arrears. We do not, therefore, have data for the next financial year.

So far 20 projects which will make use of the private sector facilities are in the regional health authorities' programmes for the use of the £30 million waiting list fund for 1988-89.

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the waiting list figures for September 1987.

Mr. Newton: I regret to say that there have been continuing difficulties in switching to the new and more detailed information system which have delayed the production of waiting list statistics in a validated form. They will be published as soon as possible after Easter.

Further work is being undertaken to establish whether gaps in the data so far collected by health authorities can be filled.

Mental Patients

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the amounts provided for the forthcoming year by each health region in England and Wales for bridging funds for local care of patients discharged or excluded from mental hospitals; how much in each case is provided for the long-term patients still to be discharged from hospitals and how much for those already discharged from hospitals; and what the time per patient is in each case.

Mr. Newton: I regret that this information is not available centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to contact the chairman of each regional health authority for the information he is seeking.

Hospital Closures

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy not to announce any

decision regarding proposals for hospital or ward closures during the period when the House of Commons is in the summer adjournment; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: Decisions on the closure of hospitals are taken, and announced, as a part of a formal process over many months involving district health authority discussion and, where appropriate, consideration by the regional health authority and Ministers. It would not be conducive to good Health Service planning and the efficient use of resources to delay formal announcements of closures by Ministers by what could be a further three months in some cases.

Griffiths Report

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to respond to proposals made by Sir Roy Griffiths in his report to the Secretary of State for Social Services, "Community Care Agenda for Action"; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 29 March.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Moore: Details of each management or computer consultancy awarded by the Department in 1987 are as follows:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of assignment*
Abbey Business Consultants	General support
Abbey Business Consultants	Family Practitioner Committee computing requirements
Abbey Business Consultants	Development of General Practitioner/Family Practitioner Committee links
Abbey Business Consultants	Evaluation of system for Medical Practices Committee
Action Tech	Medical Division clinical trial exemption project
Applied Systems Engineering; CSC	Departmental Integrated Support Environment
Arthur Andersens; CSC	Operational Strategy Services task force
Arthur Andersens; CSC	End to End Architecture
Arthur Andersens	Retirement Pension Forecast and Advice Service
Arthur Young	General support
	Medicines Division—IT Strategy
	Medicines Division—Adverse drug reaction
Arthur Young	Whole Unit Concept: internal staffing factors
Arthur Young	Expert system for Korner-based performance indicators
Arthur Young; Systems Design; Enator; KPMG	Review of forecasting, planning and control systems for local office network
Arthur Young; Dr. P. Grasso	Good laboratory practice
Atkins Planning	Setting targets for the utilisation of NHS residential accommodation
D. E. Barnard	Family Practitioner Services Data Communications
Binder Hamlyn	IT User Training
Binder Hamlyn; A. Holbrook	Review of medicines laboratory at Edinburgh
BIS	Development of an implementation methodology.
BIS	Review of telecommunications.
Delia Bubby	Programming: Operational Research Studies.
BT; CSC	Family Credits.
BT Talks	Strategy Data Network.
Campbell and Devore Associates	Family Centres Inspection.
Cocking and Drury; Data Logic	Operational Strategy implementation model based on APL.
Computer People South	Dentists/Dental Estimates Board links software development.
Coopers and Lybrand	Activity sampling in Social Security offices.
Coopers and Lybrand	Health promotion and disease prevention—policy modelling.
Coopers and Lybrand; Queen Mary's Medical School; St. Mary's Medical School	Integrated Review of Resource Allocation Working Party.
Coopers and Lybrand; Gallup; Logica; Sigma; Delgat	Regional Organisation Scrutiny.
CRC (Commercial)	GP computing support.
CSC; Falcon	Local Office Project.
CSC	Service Management.
CSC	Strategy Product Assurance Group.
CSC	Overall Management.
CSSL	SR5 Information Centre.
Kay Curtis	Upgrade of Primary Care system GP/FPC links software development.
DEGW	Accommodation study for occupation of Richmond Yard.
Deloitte, Häskins and Sells	Proprietorial lead element of pharmacist proprietors notional salary.
Enator	Aggregate Performance Indicators.
Enator	Implementation of Regional Office By Office Package in six Social Security Regions.
Eosys	Richmond Yard (communication implications).
Ernst and Whinney	Investment Appraisal.
Ernst and Whinney	FA/FB—Operational Project.
Ernst and Whinney	Social Services Inspectorate—System Specification
Fabric Care Research Association	Total linen management systems.
Grafton	Information Centre.
ICL	Mainframe Management System: Newcastle Central Office.
ICL	Retirement Pension Project.
ICL	Consultant (mainframe environment).
I.N.I. Systems	Operational Strategy: Manpower Model.
Institute of Health Services Management	Senior manager's pay structure plus analysis of backgrounds of Unit General Managers.
Institute of Manpower Studies	Manpower Management Model.
Institute of Manpower Studies	Staffing implications of Social Security Review.
Kings Fund College	Advice to the national development team for people with mental handicap.
Kinsley Lord	Management communications in the NHS.
KPMG	Fincare campus. Development needs of the NHS finance function.
Linklaters and Paines; Rowe and Mawe	Personal Pension Scheme model rules
Local Government Training Board	Training of senior managers in Social Services

Firm	Subject of assignment
Logica	Telecommunications Network studies
Logica	Implications of moving mainframe to Lytham
John McGee	Facilitator for NHS Management Board on organisational strategies
MAS; IJK Research; CACI; Leicester University	Advertising on smoking
Metron	Interim system for Professional Information Requirements
MOM	Asset register
Dr. A. T. Moore	Pilot study in East Anglia, out-patient referral systems
Moss Price Computing	Medicines Division Inspectorate—operational planning system
National Institute of Social Work	One-day seminar
Oxford RHA	FPC Software Training
PA Management Consultants	Management Information Systems for Regional Directorate
PActel	SR5 Information Centre
Peat Marwick McLintock	Integrated Strategic Planning
PHH Ltd.	Transport fleet management and information system
Price Waterhouse	Review of Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
Price Waterhouse	Service Management group
Price Waterhouse	Waiting List initiative
Price Waterhouse	YTS Feasibility Study
REL	Strategy Security
Resources International; Ultra Comp.	National Unemployment Benefit system
Richmond Associates	Consultancy on accommodation
Drs. Rogers, Lockwood, Zermansky, Rose, Sandilands and Phillips (GPs)	Review of prescribing publications and other work
Roundhouse Marketing; J.C. Barnett	Action on prescribing
SIA	SR5 Information Centre
Software AG	SR5 Information Centre
Software AG	FA/FB—Operational Project
Spicer and Pegler	Performance Indicators expert system
Grant Thornton	Domestic catering and laundry services
Touche Ross	GP/FPC links trial evaluation
Touche Ross	Dentists/Dental Estimates Board links trial evaluation
University of Keele	Structures in pathology laboratory service
WS Atkins	Quality Assurance
WS Atkins	Regional Liaison general IT support
WS Atkins	Telecommunications: Wiring survey
Wootton Jeffreys	Procurement guidance

Patients (Treatment Statistics)

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for each district health authority, regional health authority and special health authority and for England as a whole *(a)* the number of people readmitted for treatment and tests once during the last year and the proportion of the total case load this figure represents, *(b)* the number of people readmitted for treatment and tests during the last year and the proportion of the total case load this represents, and *(c)* the number of people readmitted for treatment and tests more than twice in the last year and the proportion of the total case load this represents.

Mrs. Currie: I regret that this information is not held centrally.

Abortions

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to publish the results of the study currently being undertaken at the request of his Department into the incidence of post-abortion stress disorder.

Mr. Newton: The collection of data for the joint Royal College of General Practitioners — Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists "Attitudes to Pregnancy" study continued until the end of 1987. The data are still being analysed. It is hoped that some information on the psychiatric sequelae of abortion will be published this year.

Family Credit

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much of the extra £220 million being spent on family credit is attributable to the cash compensation for the loss of free school meals.

Mr. Portillo: The net cost of including cash in the children's rates in place of free school meals and free welfare milk, after allowing for the cost of these items which would otherwise arise, is around £65 million. It is not possible to estimate a separate figure in respect of free school meals.

Social Security Act 1986

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what extra resources he plans to make available to his Department's local budgets to implement the Social Security Act 1986.

Mr. Portillo: Budgets for 1987-88 were increased by some £27 million to provide 3,000 staff for the implementation of the reforms. Thereafter, as the reformed schemes and the computerisation programmes are implemented, the Department's manpower and consequently the budgets will reduce (see Cmnd. 288-II table 15.30).

Dental Treatment

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much the maximum cost of dental treatment has risen in real terms between April 1979 and April 1988.

Mr. Newton: The maximum cost to the patient for a single course of treatment under the general dental service was £30 on 1 April 1979. On 1 April 1988 it will become £150, an increase of 400 per cent. in cash and 160 per cent. in real terms[1].

[1] adjusted in line with the RPI.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how much prescription charges have risen in cash and real terms between April 1979 and April 1988.

Mr. Newton: The information requested is set out as follows:

	April 1979 £	April 1988 £	Percentage change Cash	Real[1]
Prescription charge	20	2·60	1,200	577
Pre-payment certificate:				
4-monthly	—	13·50	n/a	n/a
6-monthly	2·00	—	n/a	n/a
Annual	3·50	37·50	971	458

Note:
n/a = not available.
[1] Adjusted in line with the RPI.

Smoking

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what medical evidence is available to him about the comparative health risks of *(a)* smoking cigarettes and *(b)* ingesting oral tobacco products; and if he will break down this evidence as between the different forms of health risks.

Mrs. Currie: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Warwick and Leamington (Sir D. Smith) on 23 March 1988, at columns *153-54*.

Mr. Michael Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps Her Majesty's Government now propose to take in the light of the publication of the Froggatt report on passive smoking to persuade smokers to change to alternative methods of ingesting tobacco; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The Government do not propose to encourage alternative forms of tobacco consumption, as all common use of tobacco carries a significant risk to health.

Death Rates

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for each year since 1979, the death rate *(a)* from drowning, *(b)* from accidents in the home and *(c)* from road accidents.

Mrs. Currie: Information from the registration of deaths is given in the table. Statistics for 1981 may have been affected by a dispute in the registration service, and are not comparable with other years.

Mortality rates per million population for drowning, accidents in the home, road accidents. Persons of all ages. England and Wales—1979-1986

	Cause of death Drowning 994.1[1]	Accidents in the home E850-E869, E880-E928[1]	Road accidents E810-E819, E826-E829[1]
1979	23·3	93·4	118·5
1980	24·1	86·3	117·6
1981	22·8	65·5	82·6
1982	22·5	78·3	107·1
1983	21·7	78·3	103·4
1984	19·5	77·6	102·4
1985	19·7	76·3	98·0
1986[2]	18·3	na	97·6

[1] International Classification of Diseases—9th Revision.
[2] Age 28 days and over.
na = not yet available.

Operations

Mr. Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list, for each regional health authority in order of frequency, the total numbers of operations performed in each of the following categories in the latest year for which figures are available *(a)* kidney transplant operations *(b)* hip replacement operations, *(c)* heart surgery upon infants, *(d)* cataract operations, *(e)* male and female sterilisations and *(f)* terminations of pregnancy;

(2) what information he has concerning the average National Health Service waiting times in each regional health authority for operations in each of the following categories *(a)* kidney transplant operations, *(b)* hip replacement operations, *(c)* heart surgery upon infants, *(d)* cataract operations, *(e)* male and female sterilisations and *(f)* terminations of pregnancy; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 24 February 1988]:* The total number of kidney transplants performed in 1987, by region, in which the operation was carried out according to information provided by the Unite Kingdom transplant service, is given in table 1. Information on waiting times for kidney transplants is not collected centrally.

Table 2 shows, for the remaining categories, the numbers of patients operated on in National Health Service hospitals in England during 1985 (the latest year for which the figures are available) and the median waiting times, in weeks, of those admitted from a hospital waiting list. These were estimated from a 10 per cent. sample of anonymised hospital records for in-patients and day-case patients.

Table 1

Regional Health Authority	Kidney transplants
Northern	75
Yorkshire	81
Trent	108
East Anglian	67
North West Thames	97
North East Thames	126
South East Thames	181
South West Thames	42
Wessex	71
Oxford	72
South Western	89
West Midlands	125
Mersey	52
North Western	79
Total	1,265

Table 2
Estimated numbers and median waiting time in weeks of waiting list cases, selected operations, by region of treatment, National Health Service hospitals, England, 1985

			In-patient cases treated region of residence						
		England	*Northern*	*Yorkshire*	*Trent*	*East Anglian*	*North West Thames*	*North East Thames*	*South East Thames*
Operation on eye lens	Est. No.	59,140	4,440	4,950	6,060	3,300	3,540	3,290	3,790
	Med. W.T.	16	13	21	16	15	17	11	16
Interval sterilisation—Female	Est. No.	49,910	3,200	3,550	6,360	2,700	3,810	2,880	3,300
	Med. W.T.	12	12	17	13	11	7	8	11
Termination of pregnancy	Est. No.	47,650	3,840	2,930	5,920	2,680	4,480	4,770	3,330
	Med. W.T.	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
Hip replacement operations	Est. No.	37,650	2,960	2,470	3,330	1,560	2,480	3,660	2,850
	Med. W.T.	21	19	20	25	21	13	18	23
Sterilisation associated with delivery	Est. No.	9,972	849	1,121	1,372	196	653	719	555
	Med. W.T.	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r
Sterilisation associated with abortion	Est. No.	5,024	301	400	608	420	315	490	279
	Med. W.T.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ligation or Vasectomy of Vas Deferens	Est. No.	3,710	270	310	300	130	120	360	180
	Med. W.T.	12	u/r	7	12	u/r	u/r	u/r	u/r
Heart surgery: 0 to 4 years	Est. No.	2,120	200	190	80	nil	100	nil	280
	Med. W.T.	2	u/r	nil	u/r	nil	nil	nil	u/r

n/a—Not available.
n/r—Not relevant.
u/r—Small sample numbers—unreliable estimates.

		In-patient cases treated								*Day cases*
		South West Thames	*Wessex*	*Oxford*	*South Western*	*West Midlands*	*Mersey*	*North Western*	*SHA's*	*England*
Operations on Eye Lens	Est. No.	3,470	3,800	2,160	3,790	5,000	2,740	3,450	3,400	1,570
	Med. W.T.	14	18	24	21	27	11	16	10	6
Interval Sterilisation Female	Est. No.[1]	2,770	3,350	3,110	3,210	4,960	1,790	4,910	n/r	6,380
	Med. W.T.	15	11	14	13	15	9	10	n/r	16
Termination of Pregnancy	Est. No.	1,770	2,050	3,250	3,720	2,870	930	4,720	390	25,820
	Med. W.T.	1	1	<1	1	1	<1	1	nil	1
Hip Replacement operations	Est. No.	2,640	2,730	2,090	2,840	4,020	1,550	3,330	20	60
	Med. W.T.	26	28	18	22	24	16	19	n/r	n/a
Sterilisation associated with Delivery	Est. No.[1]	435	327	468	392	1,110	664	1,110	n/r	u/r
	Med. W.T.	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	n/r	nil
Sterilisation associated with Abortion	Est. No.	190	295	319	350	360	145	552	n/a	nil
	Med. W.T.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	nil
Ligation or Vasectomy of Vas Deferens	Est. No.	190	470	150	490	350	80	310	u/r	42,080
	Med. W.T.	u/r	9	u/r	12	u/r	u/r	7	nil	10
Heart Surgery 0-4 years	Est. No.	nil	200	50	30	240	470	40	240	u/r
	Med. W.T.	nil	u/r	nil	u/r	u/r	1	u/r	u/r	nil

Brighton Health Authority

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide details of the Brighton health authority waiting list for each category of care for each year from 1979, and for each quarter in 1987.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 4 March 1988]*: The information available centrally is given in the table.

Number of patients on the in-patient waiting list for Brighton District Health Authority from 31 March 1979 to 31 March 1987

Specialty	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*
Thoracic medicine	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dermatology	—	—	12	10	19	—	7	—	—
Geriatrics	43	13	45	38	—	9	10	18	13
General surgery	1,696	1,398	1,197	1,020	1,108	1,046	1,463	1,024	1,138
Ear, nose and throat	556	554	436	395	670	471	477	405	568
Traumatic and orthopaedic	873	896	826	907	979	874	625	678	984
Ophthalmology	51	113	169	131	204	299	320	207	148
Urology	722	568	568	494	456	725	601	553	225
Plastic surgery	5	—	—	—	—	—	3	18	30
Oral surgery	112	223	129	107	123	144	164	204	237
Orthodontics	—	—	—	—	—	10	—	4	1

Specialty	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987
Neurosurgery	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Gynaecology	391	367	284	345	242	281	303	413	398
Mental illness	15	39	17	16	—	—	—	—	—
G.P. dental	51	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paediatric surgery[1]	—	52	63	—	—	—	—	360	244
Other	—	23	24	30	—	—	33	29	36
Total	4,515	4,250	3,770	3,493	3,801	3,859	4,006	3,915	4,022

[1] between 1982 and 1985, Paediatric Surgery was included in General Surgery.

Spending Power

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish figures, similar to those in his Department's tax-benefit model tables, comparing net weekly spending power for a lone mother with two children aged four and six years, in each of the following circumstances *(a)* not working, after one year on benefit, *(b)* earning £20 a week from part-time work, *(c)* earning £40 a week from part-time work and *(d)* working full time and earning (i) £60, (ii) £70, (iii) £80, (iv) £90, (v) £100, (vi) £110 and (vii) £120 per week under the tax and insurance rates announced in the Budget of 15 March, and the benefit system which will be implemented in April;

(2) if he will publish tables, similar to those in his Department's tax-benefit model table, showing net weekly spending power for each of a single wage married couple (i) with two children aged four and six years and (ii) with three children aged three, eight and 11 years earning *(a)* £60, *(b)* £70, *(c)* £80, *(d)* £90, *(e)* £100, *(f)* £110, *(g)* £120, *(h)* £130, *(i)* £140, *(j)* £150, *(k)* £160 and *(l)* £170 under the tax and insurance rates announced in the Budget on 15 March and the benefit system which will be implemented in April.

Mr. Scott *[holding answer 16 March 1988]:* The information requested is set out in the tables. It should be noted that the results are hypothetical in two senses. First, the results are based on average local authority housing charges and do not reflect the wide variety of rents and domestic rates that people actually pay. Secondly, the other assumptions used are those set out in "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits," October 1987.

New tax and benefit system from April 1988—lone mother with two children aged 4 and 6 (assuming average local authority rents and rates)

	Not working—1 year on benefit £	Working part-time—£20 earnings £	Working part-time—£40 earnings £
Income support	45·35	40·35	20·35
Gross earnings	0·00	20·00	40·00
Tax	0·00	0·00	0·00
National Insurance	0·00	0·00	0·00
Fares to work	0·00	2·92	2·92
Rent	19·12	19·12	19·12
Rent rebate	19·12	19·12	19·12
Rates	9·80	9·80	9·80
Rate rebate	6·42	6·42	6·42
Child benefit	19·40	19·40	19·40
Free school meals	2·55	2·55	2·55
Free welfare milk	1·83	1·83	1·83
Net weekly spending power	65·75	77·83	77·83

New tax and benefit system from April 1988—lone working mother with two children aged 4 and 6 (assuming average local authority rent and rates)

Gross earnings	Tax	NI	Family credit	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power
60·00	0·00	3·00	40·32	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	81·95
70·00	0·00	4·90	34·65	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	84·38
80·00	0·31	5·60	28·35	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	87·07
90·00	2·81	6·30	23·59	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	89·11
100·00	5·31	7·00	18·83	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	91·15
110·00	7·81	9·90	15·61	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	92·53
120·00	10·31	10·80	10·99	19·40	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	94·51

New tax and benefit system—single wage married couple with two children aged 4 and 6

Gross earnings	Tax	NI	Family credit	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power
60·00	0·00	3·00	40·32	14·50	19·12	4·36	9·80	1·87	5·85	83·28
70·00	0·00	4·90	34·65	14·50	19·12	2·78	9·80	1·39	5·85	83·65
80·00	0·31	5·60	28·35	14·50	19·12	1·02	9·80	0·85	5·85	84·04
90·00	2·81	6·30	23·59	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	84·21
100·00	5·31	7·00	18·83	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	86·25
110·00	7·81	9·90	15·61	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	87·63
120·00	10·31	10·80	10·99	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	89·61
130·00	12·81	11·70	6·37	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	91·59
140·00	15·31	12·60	1·75	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	93·57

Gross earnings	Tax	NI	Family credit	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power
150·00	17·81	13·50	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	98·42
160·00	20·31	14·40	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	105·02
170·00	22·81	15·30	0·00	14·50	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	111·62

New tax and benefit system—single wage married couple with three children aged 3, 8, and 11

Gross earnings	Tax	NI	Family credit	Child benefit	Rent	Rent rebate	Rates	Rate rebate	Fares to work	Net weekly spending power
60·00	0·00	3·00	51·72	21·75	19·12	2·70	9·80	1·36	5·85	99·76
70·00	0·00	4·90	46·05	21·75	19·12	1·12	9·80	0·88	5·85	100·13
80·00	0·31	5·60	39·75	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	100·82
90·00	2·81	6·30	34·99	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	102·86
100·00	5·31	7·00	30·23	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	104·90
110·00	7·81	9·90	27·01	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	106·28
120·00	10·31	10·80	22·39	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	108·26
130·00	12·81	11·70	17·77	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	110·24
140·00	15·31	12·60	13·15	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	112·22
150·00	17·81	13·50	8·53	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	114·20
160·00	20·31	14·40	3·91	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	116·18
170·00	22·81	15·30	0·00	21·75	19·12	0·00	9·80	0·00	5·85	118·87

Mental Handicap Services

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures will be undertaken by his Department and by local authorities to monitor the quality and effectiveness of community-based services for mentally handicapped people provided by his Department, the voluntary sector, the independent sector and local authorities;

(2) what steps are being taken by his Department to ensure that Health Service managers and practitioners are informed of his Department's policy on mental handicap; and what measures are being taken to ensure that they are carrying out the policy.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 16 March 1988]:* The Government's policy on the care of mentally handicapped people has been summarised and issued to health authorities and social services departments in a number of publications including "Mental Handicap: Policies and Priorities" under HN(85)2/LASSL (85)6 as annex 2 of the Government's response to the report of the Social Services Select Committee on "Community Care with Special Reference to Adult Mentally ill and Mentally Handicapped People" (November 1985. Cmnd. 9674). We shall be reviewing our community care policies in the light of the Wagner and Griffiths reports and reactions to them, bringing forward our own proposals in due course.

Health authorities are responsible for monitoring their own services. The Department regularly assesses progress and plans through the annual review system. The social services inspectorate maintains liaison with local social services departments, monitors the development of personal social services and helps authorities to improve and maintain standards. The inspectorate has just completed a study of the implementation of the Registered Homes Act 1984, which included 11 visits to authorities and independent homes of which 18 had facilities for mentally handicapped people. The inspectorate has also completed a study of day services for mentally handicapped people in 13 local authorities chosen to be nationally representative and a selected sample of non-statutory provision.

The Department also obtains information about health and social services through visits and reports from the national development team for people with a mental handicap, which advises health authorities and social services departments on the development of their services and draws attention to good practice. In addition, information is also obtained through the central collection of statistics, correspondence, discussions and visits involving private and voluntary provision of care as well as the statutory authorities.

Northern Regional Health Authority

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the average cost per accident and emergency attendance in each hospital in the Northern regional health authority in the last year.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* The information for 1986-87 in respect of those hospitals in the northern region which undertake treatment of accident and emergency patients is as follows:

Accident and emergency patients

Health District and Hospital	Cost per attendance £
Darlington	
Darlington Memorial	12·40
Durham	
Dryburn	13·69
East Cumbria	
Alston	4·72
Brampton	4·87
Cumberland Infirmary	13·23

Health District and Hospital	Cost per attendance (£)
Keswick	10·41
Penrith New	8·84
Gateshead	
Queen Elizabeth	17·00
Hartlepool	
General	20·99
Newcastle	
General	17·12
Royal Victoria Infirmary	17·77
North Tees	
General	16·87
North Tyneside	
General	17·77
GB Hunter	7·75
North West Durham	
Shotley Bridge General	21·69
Northumberland	
Alnwick Infirmary	15·32
Ashington	15·74
Berwick Infirmary	19·52
Coquetdale Cottage	33·33
Haltwhistle War Memorial	5·67
Hexham General	22·59
Morpeth Cottage	28·82
Thomas Knight Memorial	3·34
South Cumbria	
Furness General	18·06
Westmoreland County	12·75
South Tees	
Cleveland Cottage	10·17
Guisborough General	11·41
Middlesbrough General	17·24
North Riding Infirmary	8·38
Stead Memorial	6·71
South Tyneside	
Ingham Infirmary	11·60
South West Durham	
Bishop Auckland General	21·97
Sunderland	
Eye Infirmary	6·73
District General	16·87
West Cumbria	
Cockermouth	8·37
Maryport	3·78
West Cumberland	11·35
Workington	9·07

Benefits (Refusal)

Mr. McAllion: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total number of claimants in the Dundee area who have been refused benefit through the decision of an independent adjudication officer; if he will break this figure down according to the reasons for withdrawal of benefit; and if he will provide the information requested for each year since 1979.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Statistics are available only for the number of supplementary benefit decisions where benefit was refused during the period 14 April 1982 to 9 February 1988. There are no corresponding statistics for contributory benefits. The total number of decisions where supplementary benefit was refused for the above period, in the two local offices serving the Dundee area is as follows:

	Dundee East	Dundee West
1982-83	3,964	2,770
1983-84	3,089	2,946
1984-85	2,735	3,129
1985-86	3,818	3,376
1986-87	4,731	3,970
1987-88	3,239	2,319

I regret that the reasons for refusal of benefit are not recorded and that no statistics are kept in respect of benefits withdrawn once entitlement has been established.

Departmental Offices, Bradford

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the amount paid out in single payments at his Department's local offices at Lair Russell house, Vicar lane, Bradford, and Leeds road, Bradford, for 1987; what is the allocation for the social fund for the 12 months commencing in April 1988; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* Information is not available in precisely the form requested. In the period from 17 December 1986 to 15 December 1987 single payments expenditure at the Bradford, South office was £583,457 and at the Bradford, East office it was £649,893. Information on their social fund budget allocations for the period from 11 April 1988 to 31 March 1989 was contained in my hon. Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 4 November 1987, at columns *774-81.*

Cancer Incidence

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will ensure that all material relating to the high incidence of child cancer in the Humberside villages of Kirkella Willerby and Analaby is referred to the area statistics unit within the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; and if, in accordance with its remit, he will request it to report as a matter of urgency;

(2) what progress has been made by the area statistics unit within the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in identifying and analysing unusal clusters of disease in the neighbourhood of industrial installations; and what material emanating from its work has been, or is intended shortly to be, made public.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The small area health statistics unit (SAHSU) at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine is establishing a computerised data base and, in collaboration with others, developing further methods of analysing health statistics in relation to potential sources of pollution. These advances should in due course greatly strengthen our understanding of such statistics.

Officials from Departments funding the unit met the director and his colleagues at the steering committee on 23 March. The development phase is well advanced and should be completed within two years. Before then the unit will be able to advise on any reports of unusual incidence

of disease using more limited means of analysis already available. SAHSU will publish reports of its scientific investigations in the usual way.

My hon. Friend is aware that the East Yorkshire health authority has asked Dr. Ray Cartwright to assess the statistical evidence of local patterns of childhood cancer on Humberside. We await the results of that work, which I am told are expected very quickly. Because of the health authority's initiative and the unit's stage of development, we do not propose to ask SAHSU to investigate the problem reported on Humberside. Once the results are made available, we will take advice as to whether further studies would be helpful.

I understand that my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for waste disposal and sport has instigated an investigation into the radioactive discharges from Capper Pass to be carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the average length of stay in hospital for motor cyclists who have sustained serious leg injuries in road accidents.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The information is not currently available centrally.

NHS Patients (Private Treatment)

Mr. Fearn: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of National Health Service patients cared for and treated under contractual arrangements with the private sector, by specialty and regions for each year since 1979 and the cost to the regional health authorities.

Mrs. Currie *[pursuant to her reply, 10 March 1988, c. 347]:* Tables showing the requested information have been placed in the Library. Expenditure by specialty is not collected separately.

TRANSPORT

Docklands Light Railway

Mr. Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if there are any plans to extend the docklands light railway into the London borough of Southwark; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: There are no current plans for such an extension. LRT, with the London Docklands development corporation and British Rail, is examining various possible improvements in rail transport for the London borough of Southwark, including a possible extension of the east London line to Peckham.

Railway Records

Mr. Bidwell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many applications for consents to transfers of relics, records or premises under section 144(1)*(b)* of the Transport Act 1968 he has received since the Act came into force; and if he will give details of those *(a)* to which he has consented and *(b)* which related to the area of the former Great Western Railway.

Mr. David Mitchell: We have received no applications for such consents in recent years. Records are not readily available for earlier periods.

Non-corridor Rolling Stock (Network SouthEast)

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will issue a direction to British Rail to withdraw, on grounds of passenger safety, all non-corridor rolling stock from all Network SouthEast routes.

Mr. David Mitchell: Deployment of rolling stock is a matter for BR in the light of its statutory obligations, but I have discussed the recent tragic murder with Sir Robert Reid. I understand that all non-corridor rolling stock will be phased out by 1991. In the meantime it is used only on a limited number of lines and normally only at peak times. Even off-peak, non-corridor compartment coaches account for only part of the train, so that passengers have a choice between compartment and open coaches. BR is taking steps to bring this choice to passengers' attention and is considering whether further measures might be appropriate.

Kelsall Bypass

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has for improving safety on the Kelsall bypass; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Following the two recent fatal accidents we have asked Cheshire county council, as our agents, to look at what might be done to improve safety. I expect its report shortly and will let my hon. Friend know what we decide.

A51 (Chester Bypass)

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals he has for constructing a bypass round Chester on the A51; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Our only proposal for a bypass round Chester is on the A41 east of the city. This will include a new junction with the A51. Line and side roads orders were recently confirmed and construction could start next year.

Private Companies (Safety)

Mr. Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to seek to extend his powers to enforce safety improvements on private companies.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: We regularly seek to foster the safe movement of people and goods.

Transport Safety

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has any plans to produce a White Paper on transport safety; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 14 March, at column *476*, to the hon. Member for Hackney, North and Stoke Newington (Ms. Abbott).

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list each management or computer

consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Comprehensive records of all contracts with consultancy firms are not held centrally. It would be disproportionately expensive to collect all the information required. The following list identifies those management and computing consultancies which began in 1987 and are valued at £10,000 or more.

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
CACI Inc. International	NIS-TR121A and TR529 forms—Computerisation
	Files and PQs databases—Minor Modification
	HMIS Development
	DDS—Maintenance and Support
	Lands Management System
Central Computer Service	Study of Highway Data needs in London
DE Barnard Systems Ltd.	NIS Quality Assurance—Technical Review
HM Systems	Further computerisation of Transport and Road Research Laboratory—administrative support services
Howard Humphries and Partners	Maintenance and Support of DEFLEC and CHART—road condition survey material
	Structures Database Maintenance Contract
	Bridges Database Phase 2 Merging and Standardising Databases
JMP Consultants Ltd	Supply and Maintenance of RMMS DCD software—road maintenance management material
Learmonth Burchett Management Systems	NIS Central Consultancy
Logsys Ltd.	3rd Party Claims Database Phase 1
	Highways Inquiries Database Phase 1 and 2
Matt Hall	Industrial Bonus Scheme
Matt Hall	Vehicle Examiners in Testing Stations
MVA Systematica	Coding of COBA 10—cost benefit analysis system
Peat Marwick McLintock	Logical Design for RMMS
PE Consultants	Provision of independent means of assessing/validating manpower levels (in AA and AO grade) in Drivers Division
Perth Crest	Winter Fleet Maintenance
S. G. Bisson	Bridges database Report Generator
	Pace Data Load
SIA	NISR/CHART Interface Contract
	NIS—Graphical Presentation Utility
	NISR and Accidents Maintenance Contract
	GPU Maintenance
Savoy Software Science Ltd.	Support and Development of RMMS—Two Counties Study
Total Video	NIS—Video Copying
Touche Ross	IFCOS—Stage One
Transportation Planning Associates	Maintenance of OSCADY
Wootton Jeffries	ROTAN 2—Annual average day flow of traffic calculations for census work.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]*: The total amount spent by the Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases, was £2·3 million.

Vehicle Excise Duty

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the total cost of administering the collection of vehicle excise duty in the latest year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* collection, *(b)* detection of evasion, *(c)* prosecution and *(d)* other.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: A breakdown of costs in the form requested cannot be provided. The function of licensing vehicles and collecting vehicle excise duty (VED) cannot readily be separated from the function of running a register of vehicles. The total cost of performing these functions together in the United Kingdom in 1986-87 was £99 million. Some £8 million to £9 million of that was Department of Transport costs of detecting, pursuing and prosecuting VED evaders. Police and traffic wardens contribute substantially to the detection of VED evasion in the course of their normal duties, and costs are likewise incurred by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr. David Martin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total revenue collected from vehicle excise duty in the most recent year for which figures are available; what estimates he has of the total revenue owing but not collected in that year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The net amount of vehicle excise duty collected in the United Kingdom in 1986-87 was £2,520 million. Estimated loss of revenue for that period through evasion (based on the evidence of a 1984 survey) was about £105 million. The Government are determined to increase the effectiveness of enforcement action against VED evasion. In 1986-87 £23 million was recovered in fines, back duty and out-of-court settlements, more than twice the 1982-83 total. Campaigns are an effective way of deterring evasion. Fifteen campaigns have been held during 1987-88, and 14 are already planned for the rest of the calendar year 1988.

A38 (Roadworks)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the locations of all roadworks on the A38 (Exeter to Plymouth section); whether they are on the eastbound or westbound carriageway; what is the nature of the work; when the work was started; who the contractors are on each section; what is the contract completion date on each section; and what is the cost involved.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The current roadworks are two central reserve safety barrier installations: for 3 miles at Drumbridges; and for 2·8 miles at south Brent.

Over parts of these sections one lane of both east and west-bound carriageways is closed as the work progresses. Both sections started last October and were due to be completed in February. Because of poor ground conditions work on the Drumbridges section is not now expected to be completed until the end of April. Work at south Brent should be completed before Easter. The contractor for both sections is Colas Roads Ltd. and the total cost is £576,000.

Ferries (Safety)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received on the safety of ro-ro ferries.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend receives frequent representations about ferry safety from organisations and individuals.

M40

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the latest estimate of the completion date of the M40 motorway; and whether final decisions have been taken as to the number of lanes in each carriageway throughout its length.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Subject to the outcome of the public inquiry held recently into the Waterstock-Wendlebury section, we plan to complete the whole of the M40 extension from Oxford to Birmingham during 1991.

The sections north of Wendlebury will be dual three-lane standard. Between Waterstock and Wendlebury, where traffic flows are forecast to be much lower, we are proposing dual two-lane standard but with the scheme designed to accommodate provision of third lanes when warranted by traffic levels. The question of standards on this section was discussed in detail at the recent inquiry. We are currently awaiting the inspector's report.

North Report

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the North committee report on road traffic laws will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 22 March, at column *61*, to my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs).

Public Service Obligation Grant Cash Ceiling

Dame Peggy Fenner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make an announcement about the public service obligation grant cash ceiling for 1988-89.

Mr. Channon: For 1988-89, the cash ceiling on PSO grant, will be £605 million. For the first time this year the grant will be for the Network SouthEast and provincial sectors only. The figure of £605 million makes full provision for worthwhile investment to improve quality of service and increase efficiency.

Heathrow and Gatwick

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to respond to the report of the committee, chaired by Mr. Christopher Tugendhat, on runway utilisation at Heathrow and Gatwick.

Mr. Channon: I have responded today. Copies of my letter to Mr. Tugendhat and of the report which was published today by the Civil Aviation Authority have been placed in the Library.

InterCity

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what changes he has made to the directions given to the British Railways Board under section 3 of the Railways Act 1974, in view of the objective that InterCity should cease to be eligible for grant from 1 April of the current year.

Mr. Channon: I have now issued a direction under section 3 of the Railways Act 1974 which excludes InterCity services from the passenger service obligation. As a result, that sector will no longer be eligible for grant, in accordance with the objectives agreed with Sir Ronald Reid in 1986. The new direction, which replaces that issued in 1974, also clarifies the status of subsequent developments in the board's activities. These changes do not mark any change of policy towards the services provided by the British Railways Board, or in the resources available to them.

A copy of the direction has been placed in the Library of the House.

National Bus Company

Mr. French: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the National Bus Company's disposal programme.

Mr. David Mitchell: I yesterday approved the sale of the National Bus Company's London Country (North East) subsidiary to Parkdale Holdings plc and Mr. Alan Stephenson, a bus operator. I understand that, subject to the approval of Parkdale's shareholders, the sale is likely to be completed before the end of April. This will mark the conclusion of the privatisation of NBC's bus operations.

The substantial completion of privatisation, well before the statutory deadline, is a remarkable achievement. I am particularly pleased that the outcome of the privatisation has so clearly vindicated our decision to sell NBC's operations by means of the separate disposal of individual subsidiaries. Seventy subsidiaries have now been sold, 52 of them local bus operating companies. Some 40 of the companies have been bought by management or employee teams; and many of the sales have included provision for employee share schemes or profit-sharing schemes. NBC privatisation has helped to make a reality of our policy of spreading wealth in the community instead of concentrating it in the hands of the state.

Separate sales have also achieved their objective of promoting competition in the bus industry. There are already numerous examples of ex-NBC subsidiaries competing with each other to provide better services for bus passengers up and down the country. Privatisation has thus reinforced and enhanced the success of our policy of bus deregulation.

Finally, separate sales have proved good for proceeds. Individual sale prices are not being disclosed for commercial reasons; but I hope to make a statement to the House as soon as practicable on the aggregate proceeds of the disposal programme.

In recording the success of the NBC privatisation I pay tribute to the board of NBC and in particular to the chairman of the company, Mr. Rodney Lund; to the board member responsible for privatisation, Mr. Christopher Campbell; and to their negotiating team who have worked so hard and so successfully over the past two years.

Passenger Transport Authorities

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has considered the responses to his proposal for passenger transport authorities to bill their districts; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. David Mitchell: My right hon. Friend and I have considered carefully all the views expressed by local authorities, their associations and others in response to my Department's discussion paper. Although most respondents disliked our proposals, they did so on the grounds that the proposals will lead to mass secession from PTAs by district councils; we do not consider this will happen but will treat any applications on their merits. Moreover, their response has confirmed our view that the proposal will deliver valuable gains in accountability. The Government, therefore, intend to introduce appropriate amendments to the Bill on Report to effect the change. I have today placed copies of the responses to the discussion paper in the Libraries of both Houses.

Cabotage

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the share of the United Kingdom cabotage market held by British shipping: and whether there is any information available as to the value of the market.

Mr. Channon: British-flagged shipping was estimated to have some 72 per cent. of the total United Kingdom cabotage market (by value) in 1986, the last year for which information was available. The United Kingdom has 59 per cent. of the cargo cabotage, 93 per cent. of the passenger cabotage and 73 per cent. of the offshore supply markets. In addition, up to a further 5 per cent. of the total traffic carried in foreign-flagged vessels may have been beneficially owned by United Kingdom nationals. Other EC states accounted for 12 per cent. of the total market. The value of the total United Kingdom cabotage market is estimated to be in the order of £440 million.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what area of the body is most often seriously injured amongst motor cyclist casualties.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Over 60 per cent. of all serious injuries to motor cyclists are to the legs. It is estimated that leg protectors could transfer 40 per cent. of leg injuries from the serious category to slight and eliminate 30 per cent. of slight leg injuries.

Portsmouth City Transport

Mr. Robert Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make a decision on the application for sale of Portsmouth City Transport.

Mr. David Mitchell *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The Secretary of State has decided to grant his consent to the application from Portsmouth city council for the sale of Portsmouth City Transport Ltd. to Southern Vectis.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many homeless persons in Northern Ireland have previously been admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses;

(2) how many homeless persons in Northern Ireland have previously been admitted to mental hospitals; and what this figure represents as a percentage of the total number of homeless persons in Northern Ireland;

(3) how many residential places in the community will be provided for those discharged from mental hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the next seven years.

Dr. Mawhinney: This information is not available.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what experiments in hospital hostels for discharged mental patients have been conducted in Northern Ireland; what lessons have been learnt; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: Hospital hostels are regarded as part of the psychiatric hospital provision and do not accommodate patients who have actually been discharged. The hostels cater for some patients as part of their rehabilitation programmes. Experimentation with rehabilitation programmes using hospital hostels and other types of facilities is conducted on a continuing basis.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the amounts provided for the forthcoming year in Northern Ireland for bridging funds for local care of patients discharged or excluded from mental hospitals; how much in each case is provided for long-term patients still to be discharged from hospital and how much for those already discharged from hospital; what the figure per new patient is in each case; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: A total of £3·45 million in bridging finance is being allocated to health and social services boards in 1988-89. This consists of two amounts: £2·45 million continued funding for schemes identified by boards in 1987-88 and a further £1 million for new schemes.

These resources are intended primarily to assist in reducing the number of long-stay patients in psychiatric and mental handicap hospitals. However, some of this money will be spent on community facilities such as day hospitals which will also serve those outside hospital.

Bridging finance is only one source of funding for community care schemes, many of which will also involve the voluntary and private sectors. The initiative also involves a wide variety of schemes which are at different stages of development. As a result it is not yet possible to calculate overall costs for each patient involved.

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the mental hospitals which are scheduled to *(a)* open and *(b)* close in Northern Ireland in each of the next seven years.

Dr. Mawhinney: There are no plans either to open or close any mental hospitals in Northern Ireland over the next seven years.

Rush Park Flats (Damage)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will inquire into the conditions of hallway floors and walls and the lift walls and floors since the contractors moved into the multi-storey blocks of flats at Rush Park, Newtownabbey, County Antrim; whether damage could have been diminished by the use of a small skip inside these buildings as recommended by the tenants to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and its consultants; and whether the use of a small skip would have assisted workmen in clearing up nightly and would have facilitated the caretaker in maintaining high standards of upkeep.

Dr. Mawhinney: This is a matter for the chief executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who has advised me that a skip could not be used inside the multistorey blocks of flats at Rush Park, Newtownabbey. Doors would have had to be removed and the lifting of the skips would have been impossible. Each floor being worked on is cleaned on a daily basis by the contractor who removes all debris to outside skips.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will inquire into the level of nuisance and disturbance, damage and general uncleanliness experienced at Rush Park, Newtownabbey, during installation of economy seven, rewiring and fitting new kitchens; what standards of work and cleanliness for work carried out by contractors for public bodies his Department lays down; and what procedures he advises the Northern Ireland Housing Executive tenants to follow when they observe damage being caused by contractors to floors, walls, lifts and security doors in blocks of flats or other property.

Dr. Mawhinney: These are matters for the chief executive of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who has advised me that the level of disturbance experienced at Rush park, Newtownabbey, is commensurate with a major contract of this type. Standards of work and cleanliness are set by the Housing Executive within contract documentation. All materials must be to the Executive's approved specification and works must be executed by competent tradesmen in workmanlike manner and to the satisfaction of the supervising officer in all respects. The contractor is responsible for removal of rubbish, debris, sawdust and surplus material, and so on, from the site, both as it accumulates from time to time and at completion. Prior to work commencing tenants were advised at a series of meetings of the procedures to follow if they observed damage being caused by the contractor. They were informed that details should be reported to the Housing Executive district office or to the clerk of works who is regularly on site.

Cairdhu Hospital

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the present position regarding the future of Cairndhu hospital, Larne; and whether this property will be transferred to Larne borough council.

Dr. Mawhinney: The Sir Thomas and Lady Edith Dixon hospital (Cairndhu) was closed on 1 June 1986 and action to dispose of the property was begun shortly thereafter. However, the conditions under which the hospital was orginally donated may affect its disposal and the matter has been referred to the Chancery court.

I am aware of Larne borough council's interest in acquiring the property and will bear its interest in mind.

Members' Correspondence

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will request, through his nominees on the Eastern health and social services board, an immediate and considerable improvement in the time taken to reply to letters from right hon. and hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney: Guidance was issued to boards in June 1985 on the target time scale for replying to inquiries of this type, and in the light of the right hon. Gentleman's question I will remind boards of their obligations in this matter.

If the right hon. Gentleman has any specific complaints he would like to raise with my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for health matters, he would be glad to pursue them.

Windscale (Radioactive Fallout)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what actions the Government of Northern Ireland took in 1957 and 1958 to warn the people of Northern Ireland regarding the radioactive fallout from Windscale in October 1957; and what provisions were made to safeguard the health and welfare of the populace in Northern Ireland at that time.

Dr. Mawhinney: No warning action was considered necessary because the radioactive material released was carried in a southerly direction across England and Wales before travelling into parts of northern Europe. It did not therefore pose any threat to Northern Ireland.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the locations in Northern Ireland where readings of radioactive fallout were taken following the fire at No. 1 pile at Windscale in October 1957; and if he will publish the results and dates of such readings.

Dr. Mawhinney: I am not aware of any readings of radioactivity having been taken specifically in relation to the Windscale fire in October 1957. The routine monitoring of milk at that time for Strontium 90 indicated levels which were of no radiological significance for the population of Northern Ireland. As I have indicated in reply to a previous question from the hon. Gentleman, there was no threat to Northern Ireland from this incident, and therefore no additional monitoring action was deemed necessary.

Trade Refuse Collection

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those district councils which, in addition to the rates, impose an additional charge per week on ratepayers for the collection of trade refuse from their commercial and industrial premises.

Dr. Mawhinney: As there is no duty on district councils in Northern Ireland to notify the Government whether or not they charge for waste collection, the information requested is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Brucellosis

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on which dates since 24 January 1987 the dairy herd of Messrs. T and J. J. Rainey, 256-62 Ballygowan road, Crossnacreery, Belfast, has been tested for brucellosis; and on which dates the results were made available to the herd owners.

Dr. Mawhinney: Twelve animals in this herd were tested on 10 March 1987 and retested on 24 March 1987. The herd owner was verbally advised of the results by Department of Agriculture staff on 19 March 1987 and 3 April 1987 respectively. The annual brucellosis herd test was completed on 28 October 1987. Results of annual tests are notified to herd owners only when a positive or inconclusive reaction occurs. All of these tests were negative.

Community Care

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what is his estimate for expenditure on community care in Northern Ireland in each of the next three years.

Dr. Mawhinney: Current accounting procedures do not readily allow for separate identification of expenditure on community care, a term which itself is open to interpretation. It is estimated, however, that approximately 26 per cent. of health and social services boards' expenditure, £624 million, is currently allocated to community services. Under the regional strategy for the period 1987 to 1992 it is envisaged that this proportion will rise to 30 per cent. by 1992.

Community Programme

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if subsidised work presently carried out by individuals on community programmes puts at risk in any way the viability of small businesses employing craftsmen and tradesmen.

Dr. Mawhinney: No. ACE sponsors must satisfy the Department of Economic Development that proposed projects do not threaten existing businesses or put at risk existing jobs.

Homes (Insulation)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement detailing the number of homes insulation grants made in each of the past three years and the total amounts of money expended.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information requested is as follows:

Date	*Grants made*	*Expenditure* £
April 1985 to March 1986	4,800	333,647
April 1986 to March 1987	5,400	346,472
April 1987 to January 1988	3,146	220,284

Orthotists

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table showing for each area board the number of orthotists in post for each of the last five years for which figures are available; what plans he has to increase the number of orthotists in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the orthotics service in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: In Northern Ireland the prosthetic orthotic and aids service is administered by the Eastern health and social services board as a regional service supplying artificial limbs (prostheses) and appliances (orthoses). The figures requested are as follows:

Prosthetist/Orthotist

Year	*Number*
1983	4
1984	5
1985	5
1986	5
1987	5

Under powers conferred by statute the Department of Health and Social Security has delegated to health and social services boards its functions of providing or securing the provision of integrated health services designed to promote the health and social welfare of the people of Northern Ireland. It is for the Eastern board to decide how best to provide this particular service in the light of its assessment of need and other competing demands.

Health Care (Report)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library a copy of the report entitled "A Survey of Expertise in the Northern Ireland Health Care Sector" written by United Medical Enterprises on behalf of the Industrial Development Board for Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* Yes.

Mairead Farrell

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what amount of student grant was awarded to Mairead Farrell, in respect of her course at Queen's university, Belfast.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the reply given to a question by the hon. Member for Belfast, South (Rev. Martin Smyth) on 18 March 1988, at column *686*.

Castle Court Development, Belfast

Mr. Clifford Forsythe: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public finance is being allocated for the building of the Castle Court development in Belfast, and what percentage this figure is of the total cost.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The Government have offered support of up to £10 million to John Laing Developments Ltd. towards the cost of the Castle Court project. This represents 18·18 per cent. of the estimated total development cost of £55 million. The £10

million will support a profit level of up to 15 per cent. of development costs. After this point the Government will share the profits equally with Laings.

Higher Education Grants

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to monitor grants of public funds to those in higher education who have active sponsorship of terrorist organisations; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* None.

Teachers (Leave of Absence)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will discuss with education and library boards the case for provision for leave of absence without pay for teachers accompanying a husband or wife who has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at a business promotion or marketing conference overseas, where requests for such leave occur not more than once in five years and the school principal can make satisfactory arrangements to cover the absent teacher; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* I have no plans to do so. This is, in the first instance, a matter for the employing authority, and where leave of absence without pay is recommended by the authority it is usual practice for the Department of Education for Northern Ireland to approve.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Free Food Scheme

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the amount of food which to date has been issued to the needy under the free food scheme for each country and each product; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I will provide the hon. Member with the information once the final authorisation for release of food has been given by the Commission.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My Department has placed the following contracts with management and computer consultants in 1987:

Management consultancy contracts

Firm	*Subject of Assignment*
PA Consulting Services Ltd	1. Support of the ADAS Data Flow project 2. IT Strategic Architecture Study
Hoskyns Group plc	IT Organisation/Resources Study
Peat, Marwick, McLintock	Development & Support of ADAS Work Recording System
Vauntberry Computer Services	Support of ADAS Invoicing System
Mr. P. W. Cunliffe	Review of Animal Medicines Licensing

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under what circumstances mink farms may operate without a licence.

Mr. Donald Thompson: To keep mink without a licence is an offence under the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932. However, where discussions are continuing with an applicant in order to ensure satisfactory standards, a prosecution may not be the most appropriate form of enforcement.

Milk Quotas

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the level of milk quotas in England and Wales in 1987-88 and 1988-89.

Mr. MacGregor: We announced on 31 March 1987 the arrangements for transferring quota from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. We implemented an outgoers' scheme to obtain sufficient quota to meet this requirement but none was offered. The provisional cut of about 0·3 per cent. that was imposed in 1987-88 will therefore be made definitive because the outgoers' scheme was unsuccessful. Compensation will be paid at the rate already announced; that is, 27·49p per litre spread over seven years.

Turning now to the arrangements for 1988-89, the House will already be aware of the agreement in the Community to reduce quotas permanently by 1 per cent. This is in addition to the 2 per cent. cut imposed in 1987-88. A Community outgoers' scheme to obtain as much as possible of this quantity voluntarily achieved only a very small percentage of the 1 per cent. target quantity required in England and Wales. The balance will now be achieved by making uniform cuts in each producer's quota, compensated at 27·49p per litre spread over seven years. This means that, compared with 1987-88 quotas, the reduction required in England and Wales will be very close to 1 per cent. in both wholesale and direct sales quotas.

Also as a result of Community decisions, the temporary suspension of wholesale quotas in 1987-88 was 4 per cent. of 1986-87 allocations. This will be replaced by a suspension of 5½ per cent. of 1986-87 allocations in 1988-89. Producers will be compensated for this at the rate of 6·8p per litre.

The Government's policy has been to maximise the amount of quota which producers can use by allocating the whole national quantity; this means that if new requirements arise there is no pool of quota from which they can be drawn. Some small additional adjustments are now needed within England and Wales to allow for various needs. These include the award of quota to the beneficiaries of expropriated land awards and those producers who have successfully pursued judicial reviews of allocations made to them by the Dairy Produce Quota Tribunal. It would be prudent to reduce all quotas by about one thousandth (0·1 per cent.) to meet these

requirements. This will be done on a provisional basis pending a final assessment of the amount of quota actually required to meet the needs which I have mentioned.

Finally, an amendment is also being made to the prescribed quota per hectare under the end of tenancy compensation provisions. This will reflect the compulsory 1 per cent. reduction in quotas required as from 1 April 1988 and the provisional cut mentioned above. This is in accordance with the assurances regarding adjustments to standard quota given in the House of Lords on 2 July 1986.

Council of Agriculture Ministers

Mr. Moss: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the outcome of the Council of Agriculture Ministers meeting on 28 and 29 March in Brussels; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: The Council of Agriculture Ministers met in Brussels on 28-30 March 1988. I represented the United Kingdom.

The major business at this meeting was to conclude discussion on a stabiliser for the wine sector necessary to complete the European Council summit package on agriculture. The negotiation was long and difficult. I had to resist strong pressure from wine-producing countries to weaken the proposals, but I am pleased to report to the House that the Council finally agreed that a much more rigorous price should be set for the quantity of surplus wine which producers are required to send for distillation. Under the arrangements agreed, the price paid to producers for this obligatory distillation will be reduced by more than half. This severe drop in price support will encourage producers to reduce production by grubbing up part or all of their vineyards. Those who opt to do so will be eligible for single payments and may be exempted from the obligation to distil a proportion of their wine production. This is a tough arrangement to tackle costs and surpluses in this sector and is fully consistent with the outcome of the European Council.

The Commissioner for Agriculture formally presented his price proposals for 1988 and Ministers had a first exchange of views on them. I made clear the importance the Government attach to the Community pursuing a strict price policy and containing the cost of the price settlement within the guideline agreed by the European Council. I stressed the current level of negative monetary compensatory amounts in the United Kingdom, reminded the Council of my strong support for the Commission objective of the removal of MCAs by 1992 and argued for measured steps towards their objective this year. Specifically on pigmeat, I pressed for complete devaluation of the United Kingdom green rate in the pig sector where monetary compensatory amounts are clearly causing market distortion.

The Council reached agreement on new terms for pigmeat production aids. I continue to believe that it is wrong to have Community financing of grant-aided schemes which encourage pig production at a time when the pig sector is under pressure and the Community is more than self-sufficient. I would have liked to see these grants phased out immediately but a majority of member states were in favour of retaining them. However, by continuing to press our case I succeeded in considerably reducing their impact on pig production from the end of March, by reducing the number of pig places per holding eligible for grant. The grants will also now cease on 31 December 1990 unless the Council decides otherwise.

The Council adopted two proposals for revision of production aid for olive oil. Under this system, on current estimates of the last harvest aid will be cut this season by 11 per cent.

In the absence of agreement on price levels for milk and beef for the coming marketing years, which were due to begin on 1 and 4 April respectively, the Council agreed to extend the current marketing years for those commodities to 30 April.

Potatoes

Mr. Knapman: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has determined the market support prices for potatoes to apply in Great Britain for the 1988-89 crop year beginning on 1 July.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Agriculture Ministers have consulted the farmers' unions about the market support arrangements to apply for the 1988-89 crop year. Ministers have decided to authorise the Potato Marketing Board to enter into pre-season contracts with producers to purchase not more than 300,000 tonnes of potatoes over the period November 1988 to May 1989 at a scale of prices not exceeding a weighted average of £53 per tonne. Within the 300,000 tonnes limit the board is free to decide what tonnage to place under contract. We have also authorised the board to intervene directly on the market throughout the season where this will ensure that support can be carried out more cheaply than by purchasing under contract, provided that the total intervention during 1989-90 does not exceed 500,000 tonnes. The target area for potato plantings in Great Britain, another important factor in market stability, was fixed last July at 156,000 hectares.

Radioactivity

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will review his current methods of monitoring for radioactivity post-Chernobyl, in view of the recent discoveries of high levels of radioactivity in soil.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The principal objective of my Department's monitoring programme is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs. Whilst my Department is constantly reviewing its methods in the light of scientific and other developments, radioactivity levels in soils are only indirectly related to the level of radioactivity in food.

ADAS Advice

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many farmers received respectively, commercial advice and advice on conservation and pollution, animal welfare and diversification, at their own request, from Agricultural Development and Advisory Service officials in each of the last five years for which figures are available.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Information is not available in the form requested. ADAS advisers have provided farmers with advice on animal welfare, environmental affairs and other relevant subjects in the course of advising on other matters and during special visits.

Free Food Scheme

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the local authorities and voluntary organisations that have indicated a willingness to participate in the European Community free food scheme in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer *[holding answer 18 March 1988]:* I am currently considering applications for designation under the scheme received from a number of charitable and other organisations and from certain local authorities. I shall announce the list of designated organisations as soon as possible.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 31 March 1988

PRIME MINISTER

Unused Land

Q38. **Mr. Steen:** To ask the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to a publicly owned site of unused land.

The Prime Minister: I have at present no plans to do so.

Community Care

Q101. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Prime Minister what proposals she has arising from the publication of the Griffiths report for improving the co-ordination of Her Majesty's Government's policies on community care.

The Prime Minister: We are considering Sir Roy Griffiths' recommendations and will bring forward our own proposals in due course.

Terrorists (Surveillance)

Q116. **Dr. Godman:** To ask the Prime Minister if, in the light of the killings in Gibraltar, she will make it her policy that future surveillance and apprehension of suspected terrorists be carried out by police officers.

The Prime Minister: It will remain the Government's policy that military assistance may be requested by a chief constable in the United Kingdom or the competent authority in a dependent territory, where this is appropriate.

Health Insurance

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Prime Minister if the views expressed by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, the hon. Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) on the ITV "This Week" programme, regarding elderly people remortgaging their houses in order to pay for private health insurance, represent Government policy.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security pointed out that many elderly people have substantial capital assets. They have the option, if they choose to pursue it, of considering private health care.

Agricultural Stabilisers

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what progress has been made on the details of the agricultural stabilisers following the recent European Council provisional agreement on extra funding; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies which my right hon. Friend the Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food gave to my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory) on 10 March, at columns *323-24*, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Moss) on 30 March.

European Council

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what proposals have been tabled for discussion at the next meeting of the European Council.

The Prime Minister: The agenda for the European Council will be established by the German presidency. No formal proposals have yet been made. Completion of the single market is expected to be the main item of discussion.

EC Expenditure

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Prime Minister what is her latest estimate of the amount to be spent by the EEC in the current year, in the light of currency movements since the meeting of the European Council; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The draft budget for 1988 established by the Council of Ministers on 7 March for total expenditure of 44·7 billion ecu (£31·0 billion) in commitments and 43·4 billion ecu (£30·1 billion) in payments. Both sums include 1 billion ecu (£693·6 million) for a monetary reserve to cover the effects on agricultural guarantee expenditure of substantial unforeseen movements in the ecu/dollar exchange rate. The European Parliament has the right under the treaty to add a further 380 million ecu (£263·6 million) in commitments and 341 million ecu (£236·5 million) in payments to the Council's figures.

Scottish Electricity Boards

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Prime Minister whether the speech of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy, the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer), in Miami on 28 March represents Government policy in respect of the privatisation of the two Scottish electricity boards; and if she will make a statement.

The Prime Minister: The Government's policy on the privatisation of the Scottish electricity industry is set out in the White Paper (Cm. 327) presented to Parliament by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland on 2 March 1988.

Companies (Names)

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Prime Minister what guidelines are in force concerning contracts or dealings between Departments and companies trading under the name of serving Ministers of the Crown.

The Prime Minister: There is no guidance on dealings with companies on the basis of how they are named.

Engagements

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

Mr. Stern: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

Mr. Butler: To ask the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 31 March.

The Prime Minister: In addition to my duties in the House I shall be having further meetings later today, including one with the President of Cyprus.

THE ARTS

China

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will list the British arts companies who have performed in China in each of the last five years.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The following list comprises only those British arts companies which have visited China with British Council assistance. Other companies may have made their own arrangements. There are no centrally kept comprehensive records.

British Council visitors to China—Arts, 1983-87

Companies	
1983-84	
Royal Ballet	19 Performances, Beijing, Shanghai Guangzhou
Sir Anton Dolin John Allidis	Ballet Master classes, Beijing and Shanghai
Music Group of London	Master classes and concerts
Jane Glover and Martin Isepp	Master classes
Sir Michael Tippett and Meirion Bowen	
Simone Michelle	Dance workshop
Poster Art Exhibition	
Tuckwell Wind Quintet	
1984-85	
Belinda Wright and Jelko Yuresha	Production of "Giselle" with Central Ballet
Photographic Exhibition	"The Petroleum Story" (five cities tour)
Rodney Slatford	Double bass player
Royal Ballet School	Exchange with Central Dance Academy, Beijing
European Community Youth Orchestra	
1985-86	
Albion Wind Quintet	
Music Group of London	
John Allidis	Choral conductor
David Glass	Mime
Noelle Barker	Voice specialist
Royal Ballet School	Continued exchanges
John Giorgiardis	Master classes with the China Youth Orchestra
1986-87	
Gabrieli Brass Ensemble	
Alberni String Quartet	
Graphics UK Exhibition	
Jane Glover	Master classes
Shakespeare Display	At Shakespeare Festival, Shanghai
Little Angel Marionette Theatre	
Norman Morrice	Choreographic workshop
David Glass	Mime
British History Exhibition	

Figures for 1987-88 are not yet available.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts whether he will list the Chinese arts companies who have performed in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years.

Mr. Luce *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The following list comprises only those Chinese arts companies which have visited the United Kingdom with grants from Visiting Arts. Other companies may have visited under their own funding arrangements. There are no centrally kept comprehensive records.

Visiting Arts
Visits to Britain by Chinese arts companies (in receipt of VA grants)

Year	*Arts group*	*Venue*
1983-84	—	—
1984-85	Chinese National Dance Company	Billingham Festival
1985-86	Two Chinese Musicians	Appearance with BBC Welsh Symphony Orchestra at Cardiff Festival of Music
	"Theatre du Petit Miroir"	Prema Project
	Chinese Puppet Theatre	
	The Emperors Warriors Chinese Terracottas Exhibition	Edinburgh
1986-87	Peking Opera	10 City tour
	Fujian Hand Puppet Co	Various venues
	A Pictorial History of Chinese Dance—Lecture Demonstration and Exhibition	Colchester—Royal Festival Hall London
1987-88	Zigong Sichwan Opera Troupe	
	Chinese Picture Stories	Museum of Modern Art
	Shanghai Kunju Theatre Company	Cardiff

Rylands Library (Manchester)

Mr. Robert Sheldon: To ask the Minister for the Arts what action he proposes to take to ensure that books from the Rylands library in Manchester are retained in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Luce: I do not control sales from individual libraries. However, any book which has been in this country more than 50 years and which is valued at over £16,000 requires an individual export licence. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has statutory responsibility for export licensing.

Library Subscription Services

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts, pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) of 28 March, *Official Report*, column 722, how many letters he has received from members of the public saying that they would like libraries to provide subscription services.

Mr. Luce: I receive many letters from the public about the public library service either directly or through hon. Members. I regret it is not possible to count and analyse all of them. A significant proportion however recommend the replacement of the present free book loan service by a system of charging, often involving an annual subscription. Some letters, recognising the educational role of the service, have suggested that charges are limited to novels.

Libraries (Premium Lending Service)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for the Arts, pursuant to his oral answer to the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) of 28 March, *Official*

Report, column 722, which library authority recently drew up proposals to set up a premium lending service for newly published novels and biographies.

Mr. Luce: It is not my practice to disclose the identity of library authorities that seek my advice in confidence.

South Bank Arts Estate

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Minister for the Arts what arrangements are being made for the future of the South Bank arts estate.

Mr. Luce: The Chairmen of the Arts Council and of the South Bank board have asked my consent to the setting up of an independent charitable trust to administer the south bank. With the agreement of the Lord President of the Council I have given my consent, to be effective from 1 April 1988. The charitable trust to be known as the South Bank Centre will assume the powers hitherto exercised by the South Bank board as a committee of the Arts Council. The sole trustee of the South Bank Centre will be a public limited company to be called the South Bank Board Limited, and the Arts Council will grant a lease of the south bank estate to that company, in its capacity as trustee, at a nominal rent.

A report on the discharge of the responsibilities of the South Bank Centre, and its accounts, will be laid before Parliament annually, as provided by section 47 of the Local Government Act, 1985. The Accounts will of course continue to be certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

I have appointed Mr. Ronald Grierson, who is at present chairman of the South Bank board, to be the chairman of the South Bank Centre for three years from 1 April 1988. The other members of the South Bank board have been appointed, with my approval, to be members of the South Bank Board Limited.

As I undertook in an answer to a question by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 14 March, at column *432*, I shall be placing a copy of the trust deed setting up the South Bank Centre in the Library as soon as it has been executed.

WALES

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many households are in receipt of an education maintenance allowance for 16 to 19-year-olds in full-time school or further education; what is the average payment; which local education authorities are making such payments; and how many each authority has made in the last financial year.

Mr. Wyn Roberts: Not all of this information is held centrally in the form requested. The only authorities which have reported expenditure on such payments in 1986-87 are Clwyd, Gwent, Mid Glamorgan and Powys.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Peter Walker: Separate figures are not readily available for spending in inner city and other urban areas in Wales. However, the budget or allocations for specific bodies and programmes which concentrate on urban areas for 1987-88 include; the Welsh Development Agency, £77 million; Cardiff Bay Development Corporation, £11·5 million; the urban programme, urban development grant (including URG) and special measures for the South Wales valleys, £32·4 million.

In addition, expenditure provision for main local authority programmes in Wales makes a significant contribution to spending in urban areas.

Export Breakfasts

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much of the £29,488 spent on his two Welsh export breakfasts was spent, respectively, on *(a)* the equipment, *(b)* the road crews, *(c)* the speakers and *(d)* the presenter.

Mr. Peter Walker: Following the competitive tender, the contract for the two breakfast time export seminars was given to the Central Office of Information and much of the work was subcontracted. Details of the costs of the various elements of the work are commercially confidential.

Press Office

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the annual cost, at constant prices, since 1985 of his Department's press office; and what is the planned future budget provision for 1988-89.

Mr. Peter Walker: Expressed in real terms as measured by the GDP deflator at market prices using 1986-87 as the base year, the information requested is as follows:

1985-86 £ *Thousands*	*1986-87* £ *Thousands*	*1987-88* £ *Thousands*	*1988-89* £ *Thousands*
145	147	154	156

Forestry

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make it his policy that grant money will not be paid by his Department, or through the Forestry Commission, in respect of its activities in Wales, for schemes whereby broadleaf forests are replaced by conifer forests.

Mr. Peter Walker: There is already a strong presumption in operation against the payment of grants for the conversion of broadleaved forests to conifer forests.

House Condition Survey

Mr. Roy Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects to publish the Welsh house condition survey.

Mr. Grist: On 6 May.

Local Authority Services (Competition)

Mr. Gwilym Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the results of the consultation exercise undertaken in November 1987 on competition in the provision of local authority services.

Mr. Peter Walker: All responses to the consultation exercise have now been carefully considered. As a result I

propose to make the following changes to the initial proposals circulated in the consultation document. These take account of the fact that a decision on the possibility of adding sport and leisure management to the list of defined activities has not yet been taken, and therefore, if this activity is added by order, some delay in implementing competition for it is inevitable.

1. The initial implementation date will be deferred from 1 April to 1 August 1989, with the second phase of implementation starting on 1 January 1990 and so on thereafter.
2. The implementation of ground maintenance competition will be by five annual tranches of 20 per cent. instead of six monthly tranches of 10 per cent. as originally proposed. The initial implementation date for ground maintenance will be 1 January 1990.
3. Refuse collection has been separated from other cleaning such as street cleaning, thus enabling authorities to let these activities on a different time scale from each other.
4. The implementation of school and welfare catering and building cleaning will be separated by at least one year. This will reduce the burden on education authorities in the implementation of school catering and school building cleaning competition.

Those local authorities which responded to the consultation exercise were content with the grouping of local authorities for implementation purposes detailed in the consultation document. As a result, I do not intend to make any changes. Nor do I intend to change the £100,000 "de minimis" level suggested in the document, below which work carried out by authorities is exempt from competition.

I have arranged for copies of a revised schedule arising from the proposed changes, giving details of phasing in of competition by authority, date and activitiy, to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Foreign Investment

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of foreign-owned plants established each year in Wales since 1983, and the number in each zone which have been closed down since 1983;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1983 the number of new plants established in Wales by foreign-owned firms which were not already manufacturing in other countries in the United Kingdom and the total numbers now employed in such plants compared to the numbers employed in 1983.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 29 March 1988]*: The number of new plants and major new developments and expansions by overseas companies commenced during the period 1983 to 1987 were as follows:

	Number
1983	21
1984	45
1985	43
1986	36
1987	52
TOTAL	197

In addition to this investment, a further 17 companies were acquired by overseas investors during the period.

Of the six plants which subsequently closed, three were located in Gwent, and one each in the counties of Gwynedd, Mid Glamorgan and South Glamorgan. In 1987 plants established by foreign firms since 1983, and still open, employed 3,500 as compared with 100 in 1983. However, it is not possible to say which of these firms were already manufacturing elsewhere in the United Kingdom without incurring disproportionate costs.

Manufacturing

Mr. Gareth Wardell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for manufacturing plants in Wales generally and for those which are owned by Japanese firms *(a)* the gross value added as a percentage of gross output, *(b)* wages and salaries, respectively, as a percentage of gross output, and *(c)* average wages and salaries, respectively, per head.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 29 March 1988]*: The information is given in the following table:

Manufacturing units in Wales 1986

	Gross Value Added as a percentage of gross output (per cent.)	*Payments to ATC's as a percentage of gross output (per cent.)*	*Payments to Operatives as a percentage of gross output (per cent.)*	*Payments to ATC's in pounds per head (pounds)*	*Payments to Operatives in pounds per head (pounds)*
All units	31·0	5·0	9·9	10,960	8,181
Japanese-owned units	18·8	3·0	6·0	8,979	6,659
All United Kingdom units classified "Electronic consumer goods and other electronic equipment not elsewhere specified"	16·6	4·6	5·3	10,304	6,527

Source: Annual Census of Production, 1986

Notes:

ATC = Administrative, technical and clerical staff. These payments have been used to indicate salaries, and payments to operatives to indicate wages.

The third line of figures is a more appropriate comparison for Japanese-owned units in Wales since the category is the dominant one for these units.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 30 March 1988]*: The following centrally managed contracts were awarded by my Department in 1987.

Firm	*Subject of assignment*
Inbucon Management Consultants Ltd.	Financial, management and policy review of the National Museum of Wales
Frank Griffiths Associates	Review of Departmental Purchasing
R. A. Pengelly	Review of Welsh Dental Advisory Committee
Burgoynes Consultants	Atlantic Trading Estate and Barry Dock Public Inquiry

It is not possible to identify without disproportionate costs management or computer consultancy contracts awarded in respect of projects not centrally managed.

Nurses

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the establishment figures, *(b)* the funded establishment figures and *(c)* the in-post figures of each health authority in Wales for the following nursing grades: regional nursing officer 1 and 2, regional nurse 1 and 2, district nursing officer grades 1 to 7, director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6, senior nurse grades 1 + to 8, sister I, sister II, health visitor, deputy nursing sister, staff nurse, senior enrolled nurse, enrolled nurse and nursing auxiliary/assistant; and if he will publish, for each grade category, the number of employees in full-time posts, the number of part-time employees and the whole-time equivalent of those part-time employees.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 30 March 1988]*: Only information regarding staff in post is available centrally and is given in the following table (as at 30 September 1987).

Health authority/Grade	*Whole-time number*	*Part-time*	
		Number	*Whole-time equivalent*
Clwyd			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	5	—	—
Senior nurses grades 1 + to 8	133	2	0·9
Sister I	17	1	0·8
Sister II	480	45	29·4
Health visitor	59	15	8·3
Deputy nursing sister	3	37	28·6
Staff nurse [2]	547	390	245·6
Senior enrolled nurse [2]	494	316	208·8
Enrolled nurse	443	584	412·5
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]			
East Dyfed			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	—	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	4	—	—
Senior nurses grades 1 + to 8	53	—	—
Sister I	19	—	—
Sister II	324	40	27·1
Health visitor	46	10	5·0
Deputy nursing sister	—	—	—
Staff nurse [2]	271	273	150·4
Senior enrolled nurse [2]	276	268	155·3
Enrolled nurse	383	333	213·3
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]			
Pembrokeshire			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	—	—	—
Senior nurses grades 1 + to 8	17	—	—
Sister I	3	—	—
Sister II	103	27	20·2
Health visitor	18	9	5·4
Deputy nursing sister	—	10	7·7
Staff nurse [2]	67	121	78·6
Senior enrolled nurse [2]	56	129	101·7
Enrolled nurse	33	175	130·7
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]			
Gwent			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	5	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1 + to 8	115	—	—
Sister I	16	7	4·8
Sister II	577	127	78·7
Health visitor	52	36	18·6
Deputy nursing sister	4	20	13·4
Staff nurse [2]	523	474	261·1
Senior enrolled nurse [2]	553	701	424·9
Enrolled nurse	410	1,180	795·5
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]			
Gwynedd			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	4	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1 + to 8	80	—	—
Sister I	3	1	0·7
Sister II	294	37	23·1
Health visitor	43	7	4·6
Deputy nursing sister	9	2	0·6
Staff nurse [2]	349	214	128·4
Senior enrolled nurse [2]	260	143	82·5
Enrolled nurse	363	273	177·7
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]			
Mid Glamorgan			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1 + to 6	6	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1 + to 8	135	—	—
Sister I	5	1	0·8
Sister II	767	162	104·4
Health visitor	77	35	21·6
Deputy nursing sister	1	8	6·7
Staff nurse [2]	709	577	340·9
Senior enrolled nurse [2]			

Health authority/Grade	Whole-time number	Part-time Number	Part-time Whole-time equivalent
Enrolled nurse	663	658	413·0
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]	850	820	537·8
Powys			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1+ to 6	3	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1+ to 8	23	—	—
Sister I	10	—	—
Sister II	179	70	40·0
Health visitor	22	9	5·2
Deputy nursing sister	2	—	—
Staff nurse [2]	70	101	43·3
Senior enrolled nurse [2]			
Enrolled nurse	163	122	64·5
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]	174	355	228·3
South Glamorgan			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1+ to 6	5	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1+ to 8	114	2	1·3
Sister I	5	—	—
Sister II	571	171	105·3
Health visitor	66	44	23·7
Deputy nursing sister	1	25	18·4
Staff nurse [2]	738	493	260·3
Senior enrolled nurse [2]			
Enrolled nurse	531	356	210·3
Nursing auxiliary/assistant and NNEB's [3]	689	1,018	641·3
West Glamorgan			
Chief administrative nursing officer [1]	1	—	—
Director of nursing services grades 1+ to 6	5	—	—
Senior nurse grades 1+ to 8	77	—	—
Sister I	9	—	—
Sister II	511	34	20·9
Health visitor	67	18	8·7
Deputy nursing sister	3	—	—
Staff nurse [2]	610	580	333·5
Senior enrolled nurse [2]			
Enrolled nurse	429	423	260·4
Nursing auxiliary/asssistant and NNEB's [3]	301	476	331·4

[1] This is the highest in Welsh Health Authorities and is equivalent to a district nursing officer in England.
[2] It is not possible to give a reliable split between these two grades.
[3] NNEB's are staff holding the Certificate of the National Nursery Examination Board.

Hospital Beds

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the number of beds available in Wales in each specialty in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* for the last year for which figures are available; and if he will give the percentage increase or decrease.

Mr. Grist *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* The information is given in the following table:

Average daily available beds

Specialty	1979	1986	Percentage [2]
General medicine	1,620·6	1,697·0	+ 4·7
Paediatrics	513·8	473·1	− 7·9
Infectious diseases	92·6	19·3	−79·2
Diseases of the chest	725·8	231·2	−68·1
Dermatology	135·3	131·6	− 2·7
Neurology	79·1	72·7	− 8·1
Cardiology	53·7	50·6	− 5·8
Physical medicine/ Rehabilitation	76·0	66·8	−12·1
Sexually transmitted diseases	4·0	1·5	−62·5
Rheumatology	69·7	91·4	+31·1
Geriatrics	4,090·2	4,164·8	+ 1·8
Younger disabled	37·2	33·5	− 9·9
General surgery	1,873·0	1,768·7	− 5·6
Ear, nose and throat	360·5	340·1	− 5·7
Traumatic & orthopaedic surgery	1,379·4	1,281·5	− 7·1
Ophthalmology	266·9	240·0	−10·1
Radiotherapy	140·1	166·2	+18·6
Urology	98·9	158·9	+60·7
Plastic surgery	78·4	90·3	+15·2
Thoracic surgery	36·5	19·0	−47·9
Dental surgery	63·2	74·0	+17·1
Neurosurgery	66·2	83·5	+26·1
Gynaecology	686·2	654·2	− 4·7
Obstetrics	981·9	911·0	− 7·2
Special care baby unit	237·3	220·7	− 7·0
Mental illness children	37·0	30·1	−18·6
Mental handicap	2,484·9	2,089·4	−15·9
Mental illness	5,263·9	4,210·4	−20·0
Adolescent psychiatry	45·5	32·0	−29·7
Pre-convalsecent	303·9	168·0	−44·7
General practitioner— maternity	187·4	117·2	−37·5
General practitioner— medical	908·5	1,019·4	+12·2
General practitioner— dental	0·1	0·1	0·0
Unclassified	52·0	27·5	−47·1
Staff wards	11·4	1·3	−88·6
Intensive therapy units	17·3	81·1	+368·8
Renal dialysis	4·0	21·1	−427·5
Burns surgery	36·0	34·7	− 3·6
Short stay unit	11·2	38·9	−247·3
Cardiac surgery	15·9	23·3	−46·5
Psycho-geriatric	184·7	458·2	+148·1
Chronic sick	4·3	8·0	+86·0
Haematology	17·7	58·9	+232·8
Continuing care (cancer)	8·3	34·3	+313·3
Medical Research Council	9·8	8·1	−17·3
Spina bifida unit	11·5	11·6	+0·9
Polish patients	—	74·0	n.a.
Elderly mentally infirm	10·0	10·0	0·0
Pain clinic	—	2·2	n.a.
Programmed investigation unit	—	3·1	n.a.
Coronary care	—	13·2	n.a.
War pensioners	56·7	19·8	−65·1
High dependency unit	—	10·0	n.a.
Spinal injuries	—	39·1	n.a.
Miners treatment centre	7·3	—	−100·0
Total [1]	23,456·1	21,686·2	−7·5

[1] Individual specialty figures may not add to total due to rounding.
[2] Increase/decrease.
n.a. Not applicable.

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps he is taking to ensure that all mink farms in Wales comply with the terms of the Mink Keeping Order 1987; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Walker *[holding answer 30 March 1988]*: The Mink (Keeping) Order 1987, prohibits the keeping of mink on certain offshore islands of Great Britain and in certain areas of Scotland and prohibits the keeping of mink in the rest of Great Britain except under licence. Any new premises to be used as a mink farm are inspected after an application for a licence is received or if it becomes known that mink are being kept in captivity. In considering an application for a licence my officials would wish to be satisfied that the mink are to be kept in the manner prescribed in the Mink (Keeping) Regulations, 1975, as amended. Any other relevant factors would also be taken into account including the likely impact on farming and wildlife if mink were to escape from captivity. Licences are valid for a period of up to 12 months. There are powers of revocation.

ENERGY

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what proportion of the energy programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Parkinson: This information is not available in the form required.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if, in the light of the new £250 limit on resourcing the answers to parliamentary questions, he will review all replies given since June 1987 that gave no substantive answer on the grounds that such were only possible at disproportionate cost, to ascertain whether substantive replies may now be given following the resource increase.

Mr. Parkinson: No.

Ministerial Interview

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy if he will seek to obtain from the BBC copyright permission to place in his departmental library a copy of the interview on the Radio Four "Today" programme broadcast on 28 March, with the hon. Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer) the Under-Secretary of State, on opportunities for United States commercial investment in the privatised United Kingdom nuclear programme.

Mr. Parkinson: No. I understand that the Library of the House does obtain transcripts from the broadcasters on behalf of hon. Members.

Power Station Statistics

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what is the uranium charge of each operating Magnox and advanced gas-cooled reactor in the United Kingdom; what will be the expected figure for the pressurised water reactor plants to be constructed; and how much plutonium he estimates will be produced by each during the effective life of the stations.

Mr. Parkinson: For the uranium charges for Magnox and advanced gas-cooled reactors, I refer the hon. Member to the reply by the hon. Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie) to my hon. Friend the Member for Bedfordshire, North (Sir T. Skeet) on 14 December 1977 at column *218*. I understand that the core of a pressurised water reactor of the type under construction at Sizewell B requires approximately 500 tonnes of natural uranium in its manufacture.

The lifetime production of plutonium during the life of any nuclear station is dependent on its load factor and assumed lifetime. In evidence to the Sizewell inquiry, a copy of which has been placed in the House Library, British Nuclear Fuels plc estimated that the total lifetime production of plutonium from the United Kingdom's civil Magnox and advanced gas-cooled stations will amount to some 78 tonnes. The amount of plutonium produced by a PWR station similar to Sizewell B during its lifetime was estimated to be about 8 tonnes.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, assuming that no fuel elements were reprocessed in the United Kingdom, what accumulated tonnage of untreated nuclear fuel elements would have to be stored; and on the basis of reprocessing, what tonnage of waste will have accumulated in the United Kingdom by 1991, taking into account all types of operating nuclear power plants.

Mr. Parkinson: Spent fuel currently stored under water in the United Kingdom will have to be reprocessed for safety reasons. Details on the volumes of raw wastes arising from reprocessing to the year 2029 were published in the eighth annual report of the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee. This is available in the House Library. The relevant table is table 5, appendix F.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what was the total throughput of spent Magnox fuel, expressed in terms of uranium content, which was reprocessed at BNFL Sellafield in each year from 1979 to 1987, by financial year;

(2) what was the total throughput of spent Magnox fuel, expressed in terms of uranium content, which was reprocessed at the Windscale reprocessing works in each financial year from 1963-64 to 1969-70;

(3) what was the total throughput of spent Magnox fuel, expressed in terms of uranium content, which was reprocessed at the BNFL Sellafield in each of the financial years 1977-78 and 1978-79.

Mr. Parkinson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Eddisbury (Mr. Goodlad) to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 11 December 1985 at columns *638-39*, to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Member for Worcestershire, South (Mr. Spicer) to the hon. Member for Newport, West (Mr. Flynn) on 1 February 1988 at columns *473-74*, and the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Riddick) on 16 December 1987 at column *516*.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy, what is his estimate of the likely stockpiling of plutonium resulting from reprocessing spent nuclear fuel from United Kingdom reactors over the next 10 years.

Mr. Parkinson: Production of plutonium from reprocessing of irradiated fuel from United Kingdom civil magnox reactors is expected to continue at a rate of 1·5 to 2 tonnes per year for the next 10 years. Reprocessing of irradiated fuel from United Kingdom AGR reactors, which is expected to commence in the 1990s is expected to produce up to 5 tonnes of plutonium over the next 10 years.

Bradwell Reactor

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Energy what are the implications for other electricity board Magnox reactors on the grid of the decision to close the Central Electricity Generating Board Magnox reactor at Bradwell; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Parkinson: The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate has listed a number of measures that the Central Electricity Generating Board will need to take to allow continued operation of the Bradwell reactors after certain dates. I understand that the CEGB is considering what action to take: no decision to close Bradwell has been taken. Work on long-term safety reviews of other Magnox reactors is in hand and the NII's decisions on these will be announced in due course.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Industry Regeneration (Lewisham)

Ms. Ruddock: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will put forward proposals to regenerate industry in Lewisham.

Mr. Atkins: Industry in Lewisham, as elsewhere, stands to benefit from all we are doing to create a climate that stimulates enterprise, cuts red tape, encourages healthy competition and expands markets for British products and services. The business consultancy scheme which we launched earlier this year, under the enterprise initiative, can help small and medium-sized firms improved their performance and profitability. Lewisham is an urban programme area with a programme of £1·95 million proposed for 1988-89. As a result of this status, eligible companies there qualify for the higher rate of assistance under the enterprise initiative and may also submit projects for city grant. The borough was also the finishing point this year for our national US roadshow, offering detailed guidance on the United States' market to local exporters.

British Steel (Privatisation)

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made in the preparations for the privatisation of British Steel.

Mr. Atkins: The British Steel Bill is currently in Committee. Other preparations for privatisation are also proceeding, and a number of Government advisers have been appointed.

Manufacturing Industry (Exchange Rate)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what assessment he has made of the effects of a high exchange rate on British manufacturing industry; and what is his expectation of the effect on Anglo-German trade in manufactured goods of a sustained exchange rate of the pound sterling equalling over 3 deutschmarks.

Mr. Alan Clark: The exchange rate is only one of many factors affecting performance in manufacturing, as Germany's experience confirms. The outlook for United Kingdom manufacturing output, investment and exports generally is one of continuing growth. Our improved performance in areas such as quality, design, and reliability is particularly relevant to the demands of the German market.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of the trade and industry programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: My Department plans to spend £1,250 million in 1988-89. All its programmes take account as appropriate of the needs of the inner cities. Inner cities will in particular benefit from the enhanced rate of support for business development consultancies under the enterprise initiative. But it is not possible in every case to identify that proportion of the budget which is spent in the inner cities. However expenditure by the inner cities unit and grant in aid for English Estates new managed workshop programme are solely directed at inner city areas and this will amount to £27 million in 1988-89.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* which wards of which local authorities he treats as part of the inner cities;

(2) which local authorities, or parts of local authorities, are covered by the inner cities;

(3) which areas of the United Kingdom are not eligible for assistance under the action for cities programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The areas for action for most of the cities programmes are shown in the map in the "Action for Cities" document, copies of which have been placed in the Library and Vote Office, and distributed to Members of the House with urban constituencies. Some programmes or initiatives, such as the urban development corporations, urban programme, enterprise zones, and inner city task forces, operate within precisely defined boundaries. For urban programme purposes, priority areas are either formally defined, in the case of partnership areas, or agreed with local authorities in order to target resources through inner area programmes. Urban programme areas are also used to target some other forms of support including special assistance under the enterprise initiative. Support through other programmes, such as housing association grant and estate action is available more widely, but is concentrated in inner cities.

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will give for each inner city area, and for inner cities in total, the population, employment, unemployment, child population, school population and pensioner population.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Figures are available only for urban programme areas and not for any other definition of inner city areas. Those figures are shown in the tables. Table 1 gives the latest available estimates of numbers of employees, taken from the September 1984 census of employment. The results of the September 1987 census are expected to become available next year. Table 2 gives estimated district level unemployment percentage rates for November 1987, using 1981 census data on population as the denominator. Table 3 gives the usually resident self-employed population aged over 16, drawn from the 1981 census. Table 4 gives OPCS population estimates for mid 1986, broken down (i) for under 15s, (ii) for those of pensionable age.

Employees in employment:[1] September 1984

Local authority district[2]	*Number (thousands)*
Birmingham	473·9
Hackney	79·9
Islington	114·5
Lambeth	129·1
Liverpool	219·7
Manchester	270·0
Salford	89·1
Newcastle upon Tyne	152·1
Gateshead	67·5
Barnsley	73·0
Blackburn	55·4
Bolton	87·9
Bradford	173·6
Brent	97·4
Bristol	197·6
Burnley	33·1
Coventry	124·7
Derby	106·2
Doncaster	94·8
Dudley	92·9
Greenwich	64·8
Halton	41·8
Hammersmith	77·2
Haringey	58·4
Hartlepool	29·0
Kensington and Chelsea	83·6
Kingston upon Hull	105·4
Kirklees	121·5
Knowsley	53·5
Langbaurgh	44·2
Leeds	294·7
Leicester	159·5
Lewisham	59·6
Middlesbrough	50·0
Newham	68·3
North Tyneside	63·7
Nottingham	156·2
Oldham	69·4
Plymouth	94·8
Preston	66·6
Rochdale	68·9
Rotherham	77·1
St. Helens	59·4
Sandwell	129·1
Sefton	79·7
Sheffield	218·0
South Tyneside	42·6
Southwark	130·7
Stockton-on-Tees	60·4
Sunderland	94·4
The Wrekin	42·6
Tower Hamlets	81·1
Walsall	102·5
Wandsworth	83·3
Wigan	85·7
Wirral	88·1
Wolverhampton	101·6
Total all 57 districts	6,040,100

[1] The figures exclude the self employed and members of Her Majesty's forces.
[2] The districts are defined in terms of ward boundaries as at 1984.

District level unemployment: percentage rates

	per cent.
Birmingham	15·85
Hackney	21·06
Islington	17·57
Lambeth	16·65
Liverpool	20·98
Manchester	19·01
Salford	13·44
Newcastle	16·87
Gateshead	13·61
Barnsley	15·01
Blackburn	11·46
Bolton	11·39
Bradford	11·61
Brent	11·63
Bristol	10·95
Burnley	9·48
Coventry	13·85
Derby	12·46
Doncaster	15·86
Dudley	10·49
Greenwich	11·57
Halton	16·05
Hammersmith and Fulham	13·80
Haringey	14·35
Hartlepool	17·35
Kensington and Chelsea	11·20
Kingston upon Hull	16·74
Kirklees	9·36
Knowsley	19·71
Langbaurgh	16·28
Leeds	10·50
Leicester	11·47
Lewisham	13·00
Middlesbrough	19·44
Newham	14·27
North Tyneside	13·46
Nottingham	15·56
Oldham	10·10
Plymouth	12·09
Preston	10·96
Rochdale	10·92
Rotherham	14·65
St. Helens	13·87
Sandwell	14·00
Sefton	12·88
Sheffield	14·82
South Tyneside	17·54
Southwark	17·26
Stockton on Tees	15·38
Sunderland	17·67
The Wrekin	14·25
Tower Hamlets	20·28
Walsall	12·16
Wandsworth	9·90
Wigan	12·34
Wirral	14·38
Wolverhampton	15·50

Usually resident population aged 16+ Self-employed

District	*Number*
Birmingham	25,035
Hackney	6,438

District	Number
Islington	6,740
Lambeth	9,078
Liverpool	10,543
Manchester	11,341
Salford	6,637
Newcastle upon Tyne	6,147
Gateshead	4,207
Barnsley	5,521
Blackburn	4,969
Bolton	9,483
Bradford	15,901
Brent	12,061
Bristol	12,163
Burnley	3,324
Coventry	7,288
Derby	5,141
Doncaster	7,615
Dudley	9,355
Greenwich	6,371
Halton	2,197
Hammersmith and Fulham	6,933
Haringey	9,503
Hartlepool	1,877
Kensington and Chelsea	9,433
Kingston upon Hull	4,763
Kirklees	13,401
Knowsley	2,755
Langbaurgh	2,979
Leeds	23,026
Leicester	8,175
Lewisham	7,781
Middlesbrough	2,582
Newham	5,744
North Tyneside	4,613
Nottingham	6,373
Oldham	8,007
Plymouth	6,868
Preston	4,334
Rochdale	7,534
Rotherham	5,892
St. Helens	4,265
Sandwell	6,381
Sefton	10,295
Sheffield	14,222
South Tyneside	3,060
Southwark	6,510
Stockton-on-Tees	3,508
Sunderland	5,587
The Wrekin	3,569
Tower Hamlets	4,853
Walsall	7,883
Wandsworth	10,631
Wigan	9,028
Wirral	9,882
Wolverhampton	6,318
Total	436,120

Source: 1981 Census of Population.

Mid-1986 Population Estimates (OPCS)

(Thousands)

Local Authority Area	Total Population	Age Group	
		0-15	60-65+
Birmingham	1,004·1	219·4	177·0
Hackney	187·1	41·6	30·0
Islington	168·0	30·9	28·1
Lambeth	245·0	47·1	40·1
Liverpool	483·0	99·0	92·1
Manchester	451·4	92·6	81·7
Salford	239·3	48·7	46·1
Newcastle	281·4	54·2	54·9
Gateshead	207·3	40·7	38·9
Barnsley	222·2	46·4	39·4
Blackburn	139·1	33·5	24·0
Bolton	261·6	58·8	45·1
Bradford	463·1	108·5	78·9
Brent	255·7	51·8	39·9
Bristol	391·5	74·7	76·9
Burnley	88·2	19·5	16·3
Coventry	310·4	66·2	54·4
Derby	216·2	46·5	38·9
Doncaster	289·3	61·7	47·8
Dudley	300·9	60·2	50·8
Greenwich	217·8	46·3	38·5
Halton	123·2	30·1	17·6
Hammersmith and Fulham	150·8	25·6	26·8
Haringey	196·1	38·8	30·8
Hartlepool	90·7	19·6	15·2
Kensington and Chelsea	137·4	19·7	21·7
Kingston upon Hull	258·0	56·6	47·0
Kirklees	376·6	82·3	65·6
Knowsley	163·8	39·6	23·1
Langbaurgh	146·8	32·6	22·9
Leeds	710·9	142·7	131·4
Leicester	281·1	63·9	49·4
Lewisham	232·0	45·6	43·6
Middlesbrough	144·3	43·8	22·5
Newham	205·2	46·6	32·9
North Tyneside	192·3	37·8	38·2
Nottingham	277·8	57·1	50·4
Oldham	220·0	48·7	38·4
Plymouth	256·0	52·4	44·4
Preston	125·0	26·8	23·5
Rochdale	206·6	47·6	33·8
Rotherham	252·1	54·8	40·9
St. Helens	187·9	39·9	31·0
Sandwell	301·1	63·5	55·9
Sefton	298·0	59·8	57·9
Sheffield	534·3	97·9	107·9
South Tyneside	156·9	30·7	30·7
Southwark	216·0	42·5	40·6
Stockton on Tees	175·8	39·5	25·3
Sunderland	297·7	65·6	48·0
The Wrekin	130·2	30·8	18·4
Tower Hamlets	152·8	33·6	25·3
Walsall	261·8	55·6	42·5
Wandsworth	257·1	47·0	45·9
Wigan	306·6	66·2	50·1
Wirral	334·8	69·7	65·1
Wolverhampton	251·9	54·0	44·8

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) what was the expenditure of each Department in the inner cities in each year since 1978-79;

(2) what was the expenditure of each Department on the inner cities planned for 1988-89; and what is the estimated outcome for 1986-87 and 1987-88;

(3) if he will state the expenditure for 1988-89 and all the years of the public expenditure White Paper spent by each Department as part of the inner cities programme.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: Information on inner city expenditure by Departments is not available on a consistent basis before 1988-89. Final decisions have not been taken on the proportion of planned expenditure which will be directed to inner cities for later years of the public expenditure survey. My right hon. Friends are responding individually to the hon. Member on the proportion of their Department's expenditure directed at inner cities. We estimate that some £3,000 million will be directed to the inner cities through the programme and initiatives described in the "Action for Cities" document, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Peter Luff

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will specify what steps he has taken to ensure that the departmental duties of the special adviser, Mr. Peter Luff, are not compromised by the investigation of his former employers by his Department into possible illegal takeover conduct; and when these steps were taken.

Mr. Butcher: It has been established practice, followed in Mr. Luff's case, that special advisers should not at any time have access to information about companies for whom they worked.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will reinstate Export Credits Guarantee Department cover to Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Alan Clark: Cover is available for short term business (up to 180 days credit) subject to the security of confirmed irrevocable letters of credit. The position on cover for medium-term business is kept under review.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster which Central and South American countries are currently covered by the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

Mr. Alan Clark: Some cover is currently available, subject in some cases to payment security, for all Central and South American countries except Argentina.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when Nicaragua ceased to be covered by the Export Credits Guarantee Department; and how long cover had been provided prior to its cessation.

Mr. Alan Clark: Medium-term cover for Nicaragua was withdrawn in October 1978 because of the economic problems caused by the war and the acute shortage of foreign exchange. Prior to that date such cover had been available over a continuous period. Short-term cover (up to 80 days) remain available subject to the security of confirmed irrevocable letters of credit.

Fida 88 Exhibition, Chile

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what level of support was given to British companies exhibiting at Fida 88 in Chile; and what companies were involved.

Mr. Alan Clark: The Government provided no financial support for companies exhibiting at the Fida trade fair.

Action for Cities Initiative

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he expects to hold the first working breakfast in his action for cities initiative; and what is the location.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The first working breakfast following the announcement of the Government's action for cities initiative will be held at Newcastle on Wednesday 13 April 1988.

EC Countries

Mr. Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many committees have been established under the process of unifying standards throughout the European Community, on which subjects and how many of the chairmen are British.

Mr. Butcher: Standardisation in Europe is carried out by two bodies — the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) for non-electrical products, and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardisation (CENELEC) for electrical products.

According to our latest information, CEN has 90 technical committees, of which 11 are chaired by the United Kingdom , while CENELEC has 44 technical committees of which 11 are chaired by the United Kingdom.

Letter Post

Mr. Page: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what progress has been made by the Post Office in the implementation of the recommendations made in the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the letter post service; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: The Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the letter post service of the Post Office in the head post office areas of Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff and in the numbered London postal districts (Cmnd. 9332) was published in September 1984. The report made 78 recommendations covering quality of service, financial control, costing and forecasting, mechanisation and manpower and industrial relations. Of the 78 recommendations, 76 were accepted by the Post Office. The Commission was also asked to include in its report a view on whether the Post Office was pursuing a course of conduct which operated against the public interest. It concluded that it must suspend judgment on this since so much depended on what was achieved in the following years.

The Post Office has now produced its three-year report on progress in implementing the MMC's recommendations and I am placing copies in the Library of the House. The Post Office reports that it has implemented the great majority of the 76 recommendations it accepted.

There are still certain recommendations where further work is required, several of which the Post Office declared at the outset would take longer to implement, and my Department will continue to monitor progress. The Post Office reports eight recommendations as still undischarged. One of these recommendations, that the Post Office should seek to increase post code usage to 70 per cent. of all mail, has been accomplished since the Post Office reported on progress in September. Of the remainder, three concern the establishment of standard times and costs and a productivity scheme based on standard times. This is an area in which the Post Office has experienced many industrial relations problems, but I am glad to say the work measurement scheme is now proceeding well and I understand that the new bonus scheme introduced as part of the agreement concluded between the Post Office and its unions in December on a shorter working week will form a better basis for the introduction of a full standard-based scheme.

The other recommendations which remain undischarged concern quality of service, the introduction of a

computerised system for manpower statistics, the computerisation of the system for recording and notifying weights of airmail bags and the replacement of sorting machines at the Post Office's foreign section with modern equipment. While there has been an improvement in quality of service since the report was made, both in the intra-London service and nationally, it is disappointing that the Post Office has continued to fail to meet its targets. As the Post Office comments in its progress report, a factor in this has undoubtedly been the high level of unofficial industrial disputes in recent years. On the other recommendations, although there are plans for their implementation, it is disappointing that the introduction of the new systems and machinery required has been so long delayed.

There are also several recommendations recorded as discharged, particularly those relating to the introduction of better costing information for management, on which, while I acknowledge that the Post Office has done much towards carrying out the MMC's recommendations, further long-term work remains to be done. I shall continue to monitor progress in all these areas.

I do, however, acknowledge and welcome the significant progress that has been made over the three years since the MMC reported, particularly in the introduction of mechanisation and improved working methods. It was largely because of failure to implement recommendations in these areas made in its 1980 report on the inner London letter post that the MMC was led to conclude that it should suspend judgment on the question whether the Post Office was operating against the public interest. I also acknowledge the Post Office's creditable track record over the period in terms of price control, growth in business, profitability and employment creation.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Butcher *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* The following is the list for the 1987 calendar year:

Human Resource Development Ltd. — Footwear Industry Study.
Technical Change Centre—The success of R & D projects.
Admiral Management Services Ltd., Software Sciences Ltd. —Commercial Computer Security work.
Patrick Associates—Vanguard Awareness.
Computer Sciences Co. Ltd. — Patent Office Computer project.
General Technology Systems Ltd. — Co-ord of IT programmes.
Metron Technology Ltd.—Computer Capacity Planning.
PA Technology (Cambridge)—Study of Industrial Growth Industry.
GEC Transportation Projects Ltd.—Transport study.
Software Sciences Ltd.—Computer study.
Coopers & Lybrand Associates — Effectiveness of Innovation centres.
National Computing Centre Ltd.—Starts Programme.
Expertech Ltd.—Expert Systems Feasibility.
C. M. I. (UK) Ltd.—Study of management, education and training.
A. S. I. UK Ltd.
National Computing Centre Ltd.—Information Systems.
John Drew Tucker Associates—High Definition Television.
P A Technology (Cambridge) — Advice on Inner Cities initiative.
Price Waterhouse Associates—Organisational studies.
Agriconsult—Safety study: Fire resistance.
Best Grange Ltd.—Efficient Ship programme.
Admiral Computing Group — Software Standards & Quality advice.
Organisation and System Innovation Ltd. — Application Study
FRH Associates—Intelligent Knowledge based systems
Taylor Nelson Applied Futures — Home of the future project
AMP Systems Ltd.—Company Information Database
Sherington Software Ltd.—Trade Fairs Computer Schemes
Concurrent Computer Corporation Ltd. — Capacity planning study
PA Computers and Telecommunications — Evaluation of UK Communications
Technical Change Centre—Engineering Research in EEC
Logica UK Limited—Computer Project for Fixed Services
Technical Change Centre — Study of UK Science in key areas of research
Logica UK Limited—Satellite Communications Study
T. William Olle Associates—Database Standards
PA Technology—Sets Study
Cap Industries Ltd.—OSI Upper Layer Architecture
British Telconsult—Advisory Services
Segal, Quince Wickstead—Support for Design Scheme
Prognosis Ltd.—Semi-conductor study
Ewbank Preece Group Ltd.—Overseas Project Monitoring Advice
Patrick Consulting Associates—Quality Assurance Study
Neotech Associates—Large Scale Demonstrator project
The Institute of Mechanical Engineers — Demonstrator project
Prognosis Ltd—Semi-conductor layers on silicon study
Scientific Generics Ltd.—Nanotechnology Project
National Computing Centre Ltd. — Computer graphics study
KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock — OSI Demonstration project
Kennedy and Donkin Power Systems Ltd. — Overseas project evaluation
Hollobone Hibbert and Associates—Computing Database preparation
General Technology Systems Ltd.—Space Cost Study
Mott, Hay and Henderson International—Overseas project study
Computer Market Communications — Super Computer Research
British Telecom Research Laboratories — Cellular Radio consultancy
Spicer and Pegler Associates—Strategy study
Metron Technology Ltd.—Computer Capacity Study
Xionics Limited—Internal Network
Inbucon Management Consultants Ltd. — Awareness Statistical Survey
March Consulting Group—Maintenance UK Study
Brown and Root Vickers Ltd.—Purchasing Consultancy
Met Ocean Consultancy Ltd. — Resources from the Sea Study
PA Technology—Programme advice
CAP Ltd.—Advice on use of RPCTE implementation
WS Atkins and Partners—Advice on EC Public Purchasing procedures
Alpha Industrial Electronics Consultants Ltd. — Large demonstrator programme
British Telecom Research Laboratories—OSI Opportunity Study
Organisation and System Innovations Ltd. — Strategy for Expert EC Systems
Human Resource Development Ltd. — Footwear Industry project
Further Education Unit—CNC Machine Tools in Further Education Study
Price Waterhouse Associates — Software Standards and certification study
HR International — Top management programme and advice on deregulation assistance
Coopers & Lybrand Associates — Organisation of DTI Surface Mount Club

March Consulting Ltd. — Managed Workshop Feasibility Study
Logica Ltd.—Quality Management Systems study
Laser-Scan Labs Ltd.—Advice on computer graphics
Telecomputing PLC—Interface Standard
Coopers & Lybrand Associates — UK Electronic Components Industry Survey
Communications Complex Design Ltd. — Product Design Trends & Accidents Study
Collins Oil & Gas Consultancy Ltd. — Purchasing consultancy
Touche Ross & Co.—Feasibility Study
Technical Audit Ltd. — Register of UK Quality Assessed Companies Study
Organisation and System Innovations Ltd. — VADS Training Study
London Transport International — Overseas Transport Study
Data Dictionary Systems Ltd.—Draft ISO Standard
Organisation and System Innovations Ltd.—Guidelines for Selection of expert Systems Applications
Logica UK Ltd—Vanguard-computer studies
ISC Electronic Systems Ltd.—Vanguard-UK Construction Industry Study
Plessey Telecommunications & Office Systems Ltd. — Cellular Radio Study
Coopers & Lybrand Associates; Ernst & Whinney Management Consultants—Enterprise initiative services
KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock — Review of Foreign Inward Investment Agencies
International Computers Ltd. (UK)—ICL advice on MAIL Network
Wallace Ltd.—Radio Spectrum Review
Organisation & System Innovations Ltd. — Vanguard-VADS Communities
Arthur D. Little Ltd.—Vanguard-VADS Communities
KPMG Peat Marwick McLintock — Vanguard-VADS Communities
Langton Ltd.—Vanguard-VADS Communities
Hoskyns Group Plc—Vanguard-VADS Communities
PA Computers & Telecommunications Ltd. — Vanguard-VADS Communities
CAP Ltd.—Vanguard-VADS Communities
SCICON Ltd.—Vanguard-VADS Communities
Price Waterhouse Associates — Vanguard-VADS Communities
Coopers & Lybrand Associates — Vanguard-VADS inter-working study
Baker & Smith Ltd.—Vanguard Community Development Programme

Regional Aid

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what has been the total spending, and the number of cases assisted in Houghton and Washington, through *(a)* regional selective assistance and *(b)* regional development grant from 1984 to 1987, broken down into manufacturing and service industries.

Mr. Atkins *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The information requested on regional selective assistance and regional development grant in Houghton and Washington[1] from 1984 to 1987 is as follows:

	Manufacture	*Service*
Regional Selective Assistance[2]		
Expenditure (£ million)	3·6	0·5
Number of cases assisted	40	3
Regional Development Grant[3]		
Expenditure (£ million)	3·7	0·8
Number of cases assisted	215	41

[1] Interpreted as the parliamentary constituency of Houghton and Washington.
[2] Project and training grants only. Information on the Business Improvement Services and Exchange Risk Guarantee Schemes is not available at the local level.
[3] Detailed data are available only for the revised scheme, introduced in November 1984. However, £15·7 million was paid under the original scheme to companies in the Houghton and Washington employment office areas during the period in question.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Capitation Payments

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has as to capitation paid to *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in (i) the Inner London education authority and (ii) outer London boroughs in each of the last five years; what information he has as to such payments to be made in the coming year; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: Authorities have submitted some details of their per capita allowances for 1985-86 and 1986-87 as part of Her Majesty's inspectorate's 1986 review of LEA provision for education. However, it is not possible to set out accurate comparable data for individual LEAs because each authority has its own type of scheme. Comparisons can be misleading because the allowances do not always cover the same area of expenditure or class of pupils and they are often combined with additional amounts for certain subjects or departments.

ILEA (Abolition)

Mr. Sedgemore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the proposed abolition of the Inner London education authority; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Dunn: We have received some 1,650 letters from hon. Members, organisations and individual members of the public about the proposals announced by my right hon. Friend on 4 February.

Testing

Mrs. Gorman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science how much the introduction of testing for seven, 11, 14 and 16-year-olds will cost; what is the estimated annual cost; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Rumbold: The costs will depend on the nature of the tests and assessment arrangements required for various national curriculum subjects. My right hon. Friend will be reaching decisions on these matters, in the light of advice from subject working groups and the task group on assessment and testing. Overall, the Government expect the implementation of the national curriculum and assessment to be contained within its planned level of provision for education, where necessary by redeploying and using resources more effectively.

School Meals

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science what are the results of the October 1987 census of school meals; and what are the comparable figures for the previous census.

Mr. Dunn: The information is as follows:

Maintained Schools (Including Nursery and Special): England

	October 1937		October 1986	
	Number	Per cent.	Number	Per cent.
Pupils in attendance	6,210,640	100·0	6,351,870	100·0
Pupils taking meals on payment	1,989,746	32·0	1,956,310	30·8
Free	1,101,132	17·7	1,143,817	18·0
Total	3,090,878	49·8	3,100,127	48·8
Pupils bringing own food	2,008,172	32·3	1,937,151	30·5
Pupils having other arrangements	1,111,590	17·9	1,314,592	20·7

An analysis of the returns shows the following proportions for primary and secondary pupils, as percentages of pupils in attendance:

	Primary		Secondary	
	1987	1986	1987	1986
Pupils taking school meals	51·9	51·8	46·2	44·5
Pupils bring own food	39·4	37·3	24·4	23·3
Pupils having other arrangements	8·7	11·0	29·4	32·1

Detailed tabulations on the returns from local education authorities in England, from which these national totals were derived, are being placed in the Library.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Official and Library Corridors

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Lord President of the Council under what circumstances access to the Official Corridor and the Library Corridor is permitted to anyone other than right hon. and hon. Members.

Mr. Wakeham: I shall write to my right hon. Friend.

Guillotined Measures

Mr. Rowlands: To ask the Lord President of the Council whether he will list the Bills guillotined since 1979; at what stage each Bill was guillotined; for how many hours such Bills had been debated *(a)* on Second Reading and *(b)* in Committee; and how many hours were subsequently allowed for each of the remaining stages.

Mr. Wakeham The information is as follows:

Use of guillotine since 1979

Session/Bill	Hours for 2nd Reading	Bills guillotined in standing committee: Hours in committee before guillotine	Bills guillotined in standing committee: Hours in committee after guillotine	Bills guillotined in committee of whole House: Hours in committee before guillotine	Bills guillotined in committee of whole House: Hours in committee after guillotine	Time allotted for report and 3rd Reading	Number of hours allotted for Lords Amendments[1]
1979-80							
Education (No. 2)	7	82	21	—	—	2 days until midnight	4 hours
Social Security	6	60	32	—	—	2 days until midnight	3 hours
Housing	6	110	34	—	—	2 days until midnight	1 day until midnight
Social Security (No. 2)	6	44	20	—	—	1 day until midnight	—
1980-81							
Transport	7	55	41	—	—	1 day until 1 am	1 day until 10 pm
British Nationality	8	90	46	—	—	3 days until midnight	1 day until 10 pm
1981-82							
Oil and Gas (Enterprise)	6	70	29	—	—	1 day until midnight and ½ day until 7 pm	1 day until 10 pm
Employment	7	91	19	—	—	1 day until midnight	1 day until 10 pm
Northern Ireland	7	—	—	54	10	1 day until midnight	—
1982-83							

Session/Bill	Hours for 2nd Reading	Bills guillotined in standing committee: Hours in committee before guillotine	Bills guillotined in standing committee: Hours in committee after guillotine	Bills guillotined in committee of whole House: Hours in committee before guillotine	Bills guillotined in committee of whole House: Hours in committee after guillotine	Time allotted for report and 3rd Reading	Number of hours allotted for Lords Amendments[1]
Transport	6	80	16	—	—	1 day until 1 am	—
Telecommunications	6	110	39	—	—	1 day until midnight	—
Housing and Building Control	6	90	18	—	—	1 day until 1 am	—
1983-84							
Telecommunications	6	80	26	—	—	1 day until midnight	—
Rates	7	80	29	—	—	1 day until midnight	—
Rating and Valuation (Amendment) (Scotland)	6	82	18	—	—	1 day until midnight	—
1984-85							
Local Government	15	86	59	—	—	1 day until midnight and 1 day until 10 pm	1 day until midnight
Transport	5	76	53	—	—	1 day until midnight and 1 day until 10 pm	1 day until 11 pm
1985-86							
Gas	7	75	39	—	—	1 day until midnight and ½ day until 7 pm	2 hours
Social Security	5	100	41	—	—	1 day until midnight and 1 day until 10 pm	4 hours
European Communities (Amendment)	3	—	—	18	4	1 hour	—
1986-87							
Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc (Scotland)	6	101	18	—	—	1 day until midnight and 1 day until 10 pm	3 hours
Local Government Finance	6	—	—	15	6	1 day until midnight	—
1987-88							
Education Reform	7	88	75	—	—	4 days until 10 pm	—
Local Government Finance	12	72	64	—	—	4 days[2], last day until 10 pm	—
Social Security[3]	7	—	—	—	—	—	6

[Hours rounded to nearest whole.]
[1] Including debate on supplementary order.
[2] To be confirmed.
[3] Allocation of time moved on Lords Amendments.

"The House Magazine"

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council what forms of access to the precincts are given to employees of Parliamentary Communications Ltd. for the purposes of the operation of "The House Magazine"; if any advance information is given to the magazine by staff of the House; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Wakeham: Three representatives of "The House Magazine" have access to the Press Gallery. In addition, two research assistants have registered an interest in connection with that magazine, as required by the Resolution of the House of 17 December 1985. The only advance information provided to the magazine, in common with that provided generally to the Press Gallery, is on the future activities of Select and Standing Committees.

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Lord President of the Council when "The House Magazine" was granted permission by the House of Commons (Services) Committee to use the portcullis associated with the House as its insignia.

Mr. Wakeham: I am advised that a record of the information requested cannot be traced.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

Non-military Aid

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the change in the total value of Her Majesty's Government's overseas non-military aid between 1979 and 1987 in real terms; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: Figures for gross public expenditure on overseas aid for 1987 are not yet available. Between 1979 and 1986, expenditure in real terms fell by 16 per cent. In the period since 1982, however, it has been more than maintained and, as the recent public expenditure White Paper made clear, the aid programme is now planned to grow in real terms.

Biwaters Project (Malaysia)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who carried out the independent check that established value for money in the Biwaters Malaysian project.

Mr. Chris Patten: The value-for-money check was carried out by consultants Coopers and Lybrand, in association with Sir William Halcrow and Partners.

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Overseas Development Agency appraisal mission to Malaysia reviewed the performance of Biwater projects elsewhere, particularly in Nigeria; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: The appraisal mission was concerned specifically with the project in Malaysia. In the light of its findings, and other investigations carried out, the Government were content both with the viability of the project and with the capability of Biwater to implement it. A review of other projects carried out by the same contractor is not normally practicable, particularly where the Overseas Development Agency is not involved in funding them.

Aid Projects (Single Contractors)

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Governments of Cameroon, Chile and Thailand have insisted on negotiating a contract with a single contractor for United Kingdom aid projects; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: No. Where assistance is sought from the aid and trade provision, the nature of contracts is primarily a matter for the contractual parties concerned in the light of the circumstances of each case.

Ethiopia

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make a further statement on aid by the United Kingdom to Ethiopia.

Mr. Chris Patten: British commitments for famine relief in Ethiopia, through bilateral and European Community channels, total over £45 million since the beginning of 1987. This includes the cost of 94,500 tonnes of bilateral food aid to help in meeting needs during 1988 and £3 million to support airlift operations by the office of the United Nations disaster relief co-ordinator. It also includes assistance with transport, port handling equipment, medicines and grain storage.

The United Kingdom also maintains a technical co-operation and training programme for Ethiopia and is assisting with famine rehabilitation including a £1·2 million well rehabilitation project in Welo region.

Khmer Rouge

Mr. Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to prevent aid provided by Her Majesty's Government for refugees at the Thai-Cambodia border from being diverted for use by the Khmer Rouge.

Mr. Chris Patten: Our assistance, which is provided through the relevant United Nations agencies, is subject to the stipulation that it should go only to the occupants of those camps controlled by the non-communist elements of the Cambodian resistance. We have received assurances that this stipulation is observed.

Nicaragua

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the last technical assistance training award was made to Nicaragua; how many were made in the previous five years; and why they have ceased.

Mr. Chris Patten: The last technical co-operation training award was made to Nicaragua in 1982. We have no separate statistics of new awards made to Nicaragua in the five years previous to 1982. After 1982, we provided assistance to Nicaragua only for disaster relief or through voluntary agencies or international relief organisations; the European Community has provided substantial aid of which Britain's share is around 20 per cent.

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if Her Majesty's Government will resume technical assistance training awards to Nicaragua; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chris Patten: We have no plans to do so.

NATIONAL FINANCE

Tax Revenue

Mr. Gould: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been raised under the main heads of tax in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

Mr. Brooke: Following is the information:

£ million

	1986-87	*1987-88 latest estimate*
Income tax	38,500	41,400
Corporation tax[1]	13,500	15,600
Petroleum revenue tax[2]	1,190	2,330
Capital gains tax	1,060	1,350
Development land tax	55	25
Inheritance tax	990	1,070
Stamp duties	1,860	2,440

	1986-87	*1987-88 latest estimate*
Total inland revenue	57,200	64,200
Value added tax	21,400	24,100
Petrol, derv, etc.	7,500	7,800
Cigarettes and other tabacco	4,800	4,800
Spirits, beer, wine, cider and perry	4,200	4,400
Betting and gaming	780	810
Car tax	960	1,150
Other excise duties	20	20
EC own resources		
customs duties etc.	1,300	1,470
agricultural levies	250	190
Total customs and excise	41,100	44,700
Vehicle excise duties[3]	2,580	2,700
Gas levy	520	500

[1] Includes net ACT.
[2] Includes advance petroleum revenue tax.
[3] Includes driving licence receipts.

Special Advisers (Payments)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what rules govern the receipt of payments by special advisers from former employers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: All special advisers, including those on secondment from outside employers, are subject to the provisions of the Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code—except for the rules governing acceptance of outside appointments after resignation or retirement, and certain aspects of the rules on political activities.

EC Budget (United Kingdom Contribution)

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total net contribution made by the United Kingdom to the European Economic Community in the financial year 1987-88; and by what amount this total had to be reviewed in light of the recent European Council agreement.

Mr. Brooke: Final information on the outturn of our net payments to European Community institutions in 1987-88 is not yet available. An estimate was contained in table 3.1 of the latest public expenditure White Paper. On the question of revisions to that estimate, I refer my hon. Friend to the information given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary in the debate on the White Paper on 24 February, at columns 316-17.

Inheritance Tax

Mr. Gordon Brown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list all those representations he has received to amend the exemption limit for inheritance tax on donations to political parties; and if he will place the submissions in the Library;

(2) what was the basis on which he calculated that there will be no loss in revenue from his decision to amend the exemption limit for inheritance tax on donations to political parties;

(3) how many estates in which donations were made to political parties in each year since 1979 have been subject to inheritance tax liability or capital transfer tax;

(4) how much *(a)* inheritance tax or *(b)* capital transfer tax has been paid in each year since 1979 on donations to political parties.

Mr. Major: Information is not kept of the number of estates paying inheritance tax or capital transfer tax on gifts to political parties or of the amount of tax paid, but it is not thought that under present rules gifts of £100,000 or more are normally made, so the loss in revenue from abolishing the limit is likely to be negligible. No representations have been received to amend the exemption limit.

Loans (Tax Relief)

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer under what circumstances any interest on loans qualifying for tax relief during a lifetime has obtained tax relief for any interest paid after death in any of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: Generally speaking, relief for interest paid ceases to be available when the borrower dies. However, in certain circumstances, interest on a loan to buy a borrower's main residence may continue to be eligible for relief where paid after the borrower's death by his personal representatives or the trustees of his will settlement, provided the home continues to be the main residence of the deceased's spouse or dependent relative. No figures are available of the claims made under this provision.

Elderly Home Owners

Mr. Butterfill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has regarding the number of elderly home owners who have raised money by means of *(a)* home reversionary schemes, *(b)* mortgage annuity schemes and *(c)* building society maturity loans in each of the last five years; and what total sums are involved in each case.

Mr. Lilley: The information requested is not readily available in the form requested.

Privatisation

Mr. Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list, for each privatisation measure since 1983, the Government's merchant bank advisers, brokers and reporting accountants, and details of any advertising agency involved; and if he will state whether any form of competitive tendering was undertaken in each case for each service.

Mr. Brooke: The Government's merchant bank advisers and brokers in each of the privatisation sales since 1983 are as follows. Reporting accountants and advertising agencies employed in the sales were usually joint appointments with the company, and are also listed. In addition, a number of sales of subsidiaries were carried out by nationalised industries. Details of the advisers for these sales are not held centrally.

In each of the privatisation sales, except for British Airways, the appointment of merchant bank advisers, brokers and advertising agencies was subject to competition. In the case of British Airways, Hill Samuel (the merchant bank advisers) had advised when privatisation was first considered in 1980 and were retained for the sale because of their knowledge of the company—a competitive rate having been negotiated.

The appointment of reporting accountants was subject to competition in the case of Enterprise Oil, British Telecom and the Plant Breeding Institute/National Seed Development Organisation. In the other privatisation sales the companies' auditors were appointed without obtaining alternative tenders, to take advantage of their knowledge of the companies where this was expected to give rise to worthwhile savings in terms of time and costs. In each case a competitive rate was negotiated.

Company	*Date of Sale*	*Government Merchant bank Adviser*	*Government Brokers*	*Reporting Accountant*	*Advertising Agency*
				(Joint appointment unless otherwise stated)	
Associated British Ports	1983	J. Henry Schroder Wagg	W. Greenwell & Co.	Price Waterhouse	—
Enterprise Oil	1984	Kleinwort Benson	Cazenove De Zoete and Bevan	Peat, Marwick, Mitchell	—
British Telecom	1984	Kleinwort Benson	Hoare Govett	Coopers and Lybrand	Dorlands
British Gas	1986	N. M. Rothschild	De Zoete and Bevan Cazenove Wood MacKenzie James Capel	Price Waterhouse	Young & Rubicam[1]
British Airways	1987	Hill Samuel	Cazenove Wood MacKenzie	Ernst and Whinney	Allen Brady & Marsh[2]
Royal Ordnance	1987	N. M. Rothschild	Hoare Govett	Coopers and Lybrand	—
Rolls Royce	1987	Samuel Montagu	James Capel	Coopers and Lybrand	Collett, Dickinson Pearce[3]
BAA	1987	County Nat West	Cazenove County Nat West	Touche Ross	J. Walter Thompson
Plant Breeding Institute/ National Seed Development Organisation	1987	Lazards	—	Touche Ross	—

[1] Dewe Rogerson were also employed for the advertising of the collection of the second instalment.
[2] Government only. The company employed its own agency.
[3] Binns Vereka were also employed for the advertising of the collection of the second instalment.

Age Allowances

Mr. Andrew Bowden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of retirement pensioners *(a)* aged 65 to 79 years and *(b)* aged 80 years or over who will be better off by (i) £1 per week, (ii) £1 to £2 per week, (iii) £2 to £3 per week, (iv) £3 to £4 per week, (v) £4 to £5 per week, and (vi) £5 per week or over as a consequence of the increase in the age allowances to £3,180 and £3,310 for a single person and £5,035 and £5,205 for a married couple.

Mr. Brooke: Estimates are given in the table. The first two columns analyse tax units by the gains in 1988-89 due to the proposed increases in the age allowances and, where appropriate, the main personal allowances. The final two columns analyse tax units by the gains in 1988-89 due to all the reductions in rates of tax and increases in allowances proposed in the Budget. Estimates are based on a projection of the 1985-86 Survey of Personal Income and are provisional.

Gain[1] per week	*Number of tax units[2] who gain as a result of the increase in personal allowances (thousands)*		*Number of tax units[2] who gain from the Budget proposals for income tax rates and allowances (thousands)*	
	Aged 65-79	*Aged 80+*	*Aged 65-79*	*Aged 80+*
up to £1	230	65	115	30
£1-£2	1,510	290	515	120
£2-£3	235	15	560	85
£3-£4	80	15	230	35
£4-£5	75	5	130	20
Over £5	10	Nil	600	80
TOTAL	2,120	400	2,120	400

[1] Compared with 1987-88 tax regime.
[2] Married couples counted as one unit.

Computer Services

Ms. Gordon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if the computer services of *(a)* the Department of Health and Social Security, *(b)* the Inland Revenue, *(c)* the Home Department or *(d)* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are to be contracted out.

Mr. Norman Lamont: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise announced recently that the Department's proposed new entry processing system (CHIEF) would, subject to satisfactory contractual negotiations, be

developed and operated by British Telecom Applied Technology. This company already runs the existing departmental entry processing system (DEPS).

Apart from this, and the use of IT consultancy services for specific functions, the Department has no present plans to contract out its computer services.

The Inland Revenue has for several years made extensive use of the private sector in supporting its computer services and will continue to do so, but there are no plans to contract out any computer services functions.

Responsibility for computer services in the Department of Health and Social Security is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services and in the Home Office the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary.

Higher and Senior Executives

Mr. Galbraith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy to ensure that higher executive officers and senior executive grades will receive a pay award in 1988 sufficient to meet the increased cost of living in London and elsewhere; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Brooke: The Treasury has discussed the 1988 pay claim for the executive grades with the National Union of Civil and Public Servants. An offer of a 4 per cent. increase was made to the NUCPS on 29 March. In response to the claim from the Council of Civil Service Unions the Treasury on 29 March offered an increase of 10 per cent. in London weighting rates. These offers take into account the need to recruit, retain and motivate staff within what can be afforded. Both offers are with effect from 1 April.

Taxation Changes (Purchasing Impact)

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the net purchasing impact of taxation changes in his Budget on the regional economies of *(a)* the south-east, *(b)* the north-west.

Mr. Brooke: My right hon. Friend's Budget will provide a stimulus to enterprise and initiative in all regions of the country.

EC Finance Ministers

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next expects to meet his counterparts from other European Community states; and what matters he intends to raise.

Mr. Brooke: The next meeting of the European Community's Council of Economic and Finance ministers is expected to be held on 18 April. The agenda for the meeting is likely to include the liberalisation of capital movements, a presentation by the Economic Policy Committee on the Commission's indirect tax approximation proposals, and the implementation of the Brussels European Council conclusions on budget discipline.

Business Expansion Scheme

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will clarify the proposed rules for companies which will carry on qualifying activities for relief under the business expansion scheme, through the letting of homes on assured tenancies; and whether he intends that the company will be able to give notice to tenants at the end of the five-year qualifying period for relief under the business expansion scheme.

Mr. Brooke: The proposed rules for this relief will be set out in the Finance Bill. The tenant under an assured tenancy which qualifies for the purposes of the business expansion scheme will have security of tenure (subject to the right of the landlord to recover possession of his property on certain specified grounds set out in the Housing Bill and the Housing (Scotland) Bill).

Drugs (Illegal Imports)

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of estimated illegal imports of drugs are now seized by Customs and Excise or intercepted prior to distribution, by category of drug for each of the last five years for which information is available.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that this information is not available.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportions of seizures of illegally imported drugs, by category of drug, come from EEC countries and from each of the other major source countries for each of the last five years for which information is available.

Mr. Lilley: I regret that this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Income Tax (Higher Rates)

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much in tax concessions has been received by those on tax rates above 40 per cent. since June 1979 at constant prices to the latest available date; what estimates are available of the amount that has gone to each region and of the regional numbers of taxpayers in the tax bands above 40 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lawson *[holding answer 21 March 1988]:* Income tax due from the top 2½ per cent. of taxpayers in 1978-79, the group liable at rates above 40 per cent., amounted to £3·4 billion, equivalent in real terms in 1988-89 to some £7·1 billion. In 1988-89, the tax due from the top 2½ per cent. of taxpayers will be about £9·0 billion — an increase of £2 billion, despite the reductions in tax rates and real increases in allowances since 1978-79. If the taxable incomes of the top 2½ per cent. of taxpayers in 1988-89 were as they are now forecast to be, and at the same time were subject to 1978-79 income tax rates and allowances indexed to 1988-89 levels by reference to the statutory formula, their liability would increase by £6 billion. However, the assumption on which this estimate is based is inherently implausible.

I regret that corresponding information for each region is not available. Estimates of the number of taxpayers paying tax at the 45 per cent. rate or above in 1985-86, the latest year for which regional information is available, are given in the table.

Number of taxpayers[1] in 1985-86 paying tax at the 45 per cent. rate or above

Region	'000
Northern	17
Yorkshire and Humberside	29

Region	'000
North West	39
East Midlands	25
West Midlands	38
East Anglia	21
South East	291
South West	37
Wales	15
Scotland	40
Northern Ireland	11
United Kingdom[2]	570

[1] Married couples counted as one unit.

[2] Includes members of the forces and Merchant Navy and a small number of civil servants serving abroad who have not been allocated to regions.

London Weighting Allowance

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what was the total value of that part of salaries paid as London weighting of the employees of each Government Department during the last year for which full figures are available; and what proportion of the total value of salaries paid by each Department of London employees the London weighting payments account for;

(2) how many and what proportion of the employees of each Government Department receive London weighting payments.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answers 25 March 1988]:* The information is as follows, for non-industrial and industrial staff separately. There is no central record of the total salaries paid by each Department to London employees and this could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Department	Cost of London weighting [1]£ million	Number of staff receiving London weighting	Proportion of staff in department receiving London weighting per cent.
Non-industrials[2]			
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	3·72	2,940	30
Cabinet Office	1·78	1,160	71
Central Office of Information	1·06	700	87
Charity Commission	0·32	210	64
Crown Estate Office	0·06	40	75
Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal	0·00	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service[3]	3·35	2,520	72
Customs and Excise	7·69	6,410	25
Defence	20·16	16,540	18
Education and Science	2·01	1,350	55
Employment Group	12·15	10,160	17
Energy	1·26	830	81
Environment/Transport/PSA	15·27	12,160	34
Export Credits Guarantee Department	1·11	760	42
General Register Officer (Scotland)	0·00	0	0
Government Actuary	0·08	50	92
Health and Social Security	20·06	17,010	18
Home Office	12·28	9,730	28
Inland Revenue	15·21	12,940	19
Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce	0·00	0	0
Land Registry	1·09	1,230	17
Law Officer's Department	0·03	20	94
Lord Advocate's Department	0·03	20	89
Lord Chancellor's Department	5·30	3,940	38
National Investment and Loan Office	0·08	50	100
National Savings	0·24	160	2
Northern Ireland Office	0·16	110	65
Office of Arts and Libraries	0·08	60	98
Office of Fair Trading	0·43	310	98
Office of Gas Supply	0·02	20	100
Office of Population Census and Surveys	1·11	730	35
Ordnance Survey	0·12	140	5
Overseas Development Administration	1·40	950	64
Paymaster General	0·00	0	0
Privy Council	0·05	30	97
Public Record Office	0·43	400	98
Registers of Scotland	0·00	0	0
Registry of Friendly Societies	0·17	110	99
Royal Mint	0·02	10	4
Scottish Courts Administration	0·00	0	0
Scottish Courts Service	0·00	0	0
Scottish Office	0·03	20	0
Scottish Records Office	0·00	0	0
Stationery Office	0·54	360	18
Trade and Industry	10·76	7,770	64
Treasury	2·76	2,070	80
Treasury Solicitor's Department	0·62	410	95
Welsh Office	0·07	40	2

Department	Cost of London weighting [1] £ million	Number of staff receiving London weighting	Proportion of staff in department receiving London weighting per cent.
Industrials[4]			
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	0·05	80	14
Defence	2·86	3,420	5
Employment Group	0·05	60	10
Environment/Transport/PSA	3·73	3,070	29
Health and Social Security	0·03	30	13
Home Office	0·22	210	7
Stationery Office	0·94	660	48
Trade and Industry	0·08	120	36
Treasury	0·23	180	23
Others	0·05	40	2

[1] Estimated cost in 1987-88 financial year.
[2] As at 1 April 1987 (*Source:* Mandate).
[3] The numbers for the Crown Prosecution Service are an estimate.
[4] As at 1 January 1987 (*Source:* Departmental returns).

Pensions

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received seeking changes to reduce the effective 41·6 per cent. rate of tax for pensioners in receipt of age allowance.

Mr. Major *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* There have been a number of representations on this subject.

The situation to which my hon. Friend refers affects fewer than 2 per cent. of pensioner households, and has nothing whatever to do with the Budget changes. The age allowance has always been withdrawn progressively for taxpayers with incomes above a certain limit. This income limit is at its highest ever level in real terms, and the effective rate within the withdrawal band, at 41·6 per cent., is in fact at its lowest ever level. Those few taxpayers who have incomes within the withdrawal band will gain an extra £2·50 per week from the increase of £800 in the income limit proposed in the Budget, on top of the benefit they receive from the double indexation of the personal allowances and the basic rate cut.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Lilley *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* Following is the available information:

Firm and assignment

Arthur Andersen—Design of VAT work planning systems
BIS Systems—Review of planning and control procedure for Customs Handling Import and Export Freight (CHIEF); advice on data cabling of HQ offices (2 contracts)
British Telecom—Technical study of new electronic tariff
Calidus Systems — Advice on data administration for CHIEF
Comshare — Development of management informa-tion systems
Datafit—Development of various computer programmings
Ernst Whinney—Development of management information systems; review of part of IT strategy
Expert Systems International—Advice on expert systems
Honeywell—Study of extension to computerised intelligence system
Hoskyns—Support to CHIEF system (2 contracts)
Hunterskil South—Computerisation of registry
ICL—Support to CHIEF system (4 contracts)
Inforem—Business Systems Analysis methodology
Keith London Associates—Testing of VAT management information system
LBMS—Software design study
Logica—Review of Departmental Entry Processing System requirements; advice on Structural Systems and Design Methodology
Mindworks — Development of management information systems (2 contracts)
National Computing system—Advice on computerisation of personnel records
PActel — Production of project control guidelines for CHIEF
Peat Marwick McLintock — Development of Mainframe links with micro-computers; activity costing and decision support programmes
Regional Computer Systems—Computerisation of personnel records
Soft Option—Computerisation of personnel records
Systems Concepts—Computerisation of personnel records; development of management information system
System Designers—Development of management information systems
Timeslice — Development of accounting system for Solicitor's Office
Yale Data Management—Establishment of CHIEF System Test Branch

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Inland Revenue in 1987 giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Brooke *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* The Inland Revenue awarded the following consultancy contracts in 1987:

Touche Ross—Contingency Planning
Cullinet—Data Management and Database Design
Oracle UK Ltd.—Database Products
Park Avenue Productions PLC—Communications
Celtechnology—Organisation, Management
J. Pincus—Specialist Management Training
Peat Marwick McClintock—Financial Systems

Job Dispersal

Mr. Arnold: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the outcome of the programme for dispersing Government work out of London and the south-east announced in 1979; and whether the Government intend further initiatives on the location of Civil Service work.

Mr. Brooke: In 1979 we announced a programme designed to disperse 5,900 posts, mainly to Scotland and the north. Over 5,500 posts have been dispersed under this programme, and planning is in hand for the remainder. Over the same period, and on their own initiative, Departments have relocated well over 6,000 other posts out of London and the south-east. About four fifths of the Civil Service is now located outside Greater London.

No further central targets for relocation are being set, but Departments will be reviewing their location of work with a view in suitable cases to finding locations offering advantages in terms of recruitment and retention of staff, value for money and other considerations relevant to service delivery and management. In their reviews, Departments will consider localities which offer such advantages, including where appropriate areas which are the focus of the Government's regional and urban policies. A copy of the guidelines issued to Departments for these reviews has been placed in the Library of the House.

Exchange Rate

Mr. Barron: To ask the Chancellor of Exchequer if he will estimate the effect of unsterilised exchange rate intervention on the growth of monetary aggregates over the last 12 months; and if he will estimate any consequent effect on the retail prices index.

Mr. Lilley: The impact of intervention on MO is offset automatically by the Bank of England's daily money market operations. There is no simple relation between the intervention and broad monetary growth. The Government's policy is to fund all intervention, that is, to sterilise it. The published provisional figures for February 1988 indicate that all intervention and other borrowing has been fully funded in the 12 months to that date.

Overseas Investments

Mr. Cran: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the amount of earnings from overseas investments in 1987-88; what proportion this constitutes of the national income; and what are the comparable figures for the preceding five years.

Mr. Major: The figures are shown in the table.

Year	*Net earnings[1] on overseas assets £ million*	*Per cent. of GDP*
1982-83	2,056	0·7
1983-84	2,678	0·9
1984-85	4,493	1·4
1985-86	2,905	0·8
1986-87	5,629	1·4
1987-88[2]	4,196	1·3

[1] In respect of United Kingdom investments overseas *less* overseas investments in the United Kingdom.
[2] First three quarters only available.

Interest and Exchange Rates

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the connection between interest rates and the exchange rates.

Mr. Lilley: I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 2.11 of the 1988-89 "Financial Statement and Budget Report".

Income Tax

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the weekly gain of a single person earning £150,000 a year from his Budget tax changes.

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the weekly gain of a single person earning £100,000 a year from his Budget tax changes.

Mr. Norman Lamont *[pursuant to his reply, 30 March 1988]:* I regret the figures given were incorrect. The answer should have been as follows:

"The weekly gain from the Budget of a single person earning £100,000 and £150,000 a year, with no other income, would be £271·92 and £463·23 respectively. The figures refer only to income tax and assume that the taxpayer is entitled to no income tax reliefs or allowances other than the single person's allowance. The calculation is made by comparing the taxpayer's income tax liability under the 1987-88 tax regime with that under the proposed regime for 1988-89."

TRANSPORT

Aviation Safety

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies of aviation safety have been made by his Department in the last year; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The Department's air accidents investigation branch is responsible for investigating aircraft accidents and their reports are published. The following accident reports have been published during the last 12 months.

No. 1/87 Bell 212 G-BJJR in the North Sea. Issued on 28 April 1987.
No. 2/87 Lockheed Tristar G-BBAJ at Leeds. Issued on 25 September 1987.
No. 3/87 Turbo Commander EL-BGL at Eastbourne. Issued on 29 July 1987.
No. 4/87 DHC-6 Twin Otter G-BGPC at Laphroaig. Issued on 10 December 1987.
No. 5/87 Chinook G-BISO in the North Sea. Issued on 20 January 1988.
No. 6/87 Short SD3 EI-BEM at East Midlands. Issued on 20 January 1988.
No. 7/87 Twin Squirrel G-BKIH at Swalcliffe. Issued on 29 February 1988.
No. 8/87 Boeing 747 G-AWNB at Heathrow. Issued on 29 February 1988.
No. 9/87 Bell 214ST G-BKFN in the North Sea. Issued on 28 March 1988.
No. 1/88 DH 89A Dragon-Rapide G-AGTM at Duxford. Issued on 28 March 1988.

Otherwise, the regulation of air safety is the responsibility of the Civil Aviation Authority.

British Rail (Electrification)

Mr. Ieuan Wyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what Government subsidies have been made available to British Rail in each year since 1979 towards its electrification programme.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Government do not give BR specific investment grants. The public service obligation grant includes provision for the appropriate share of revenue investment and depreciation on capital assets used in the grant-aided railway. A significant proportion of electrification expenditure has, therefore, been eligible for

grant. No grant will however be available for inter-city services from 1 April this year: their investment will be expected to show a commercial rate of return.

Road Bridges

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road bridges currently in use were constructed before the introduction of national design standards in 1922; and how many of these are recognised as requiring replacement or strengthening to answer the needs of modern vehicle weights.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The bridge census and sample survey report, which was published in March 1987, shows that there are about 25,000 bridges on local roads in England built before 1922. There are also about 900 pre-1922 bridges on trunk roads in England. The sample survey indicates that about a quarter of these bridges may require to be strengthened to meet the requirements of the new bridge assessment code BD 21/84. In November the Government announced a programme for the rehabilitation of bridges on motorways and all-purpose trunk roads including the assessment and strengthening of the older bridges. Discussions are taking place with the owners of bridges off the national road system about a similar programme for their bridges.

InterCity

Mr. Stern: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are the latest available figures for the proportion of British Rail InterCity trains that arrive on time; and to what extent these figures differ from the figures published by British Rail according to its definition of on time.

Mr. David Mitchell: We have agreed with BR its objective that 90 per cent. of InterCity trains should arrive within 10 minutes of the timetabled time. I understand that in the four weeks to 27 February, the latest period for which figures are available, 86 per cent. of InterCity trains arrived within 10 minutes of right time. My Department does not monitor figures for arrival at timetabled times.

M25

Mr. John Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make a further statement about improvements planned for the M25.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The motorway is being widened to four lanes between junctions 11 and 13. Consultants are investigating ways of widening the length between junctions 15 and 16. No other major improvements are planned between completion of the review of the motorway as a whole. Details of the review will be announced soon.

Mr. Gardiner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress there has been in establishing responsibility for the problems in construction of the M25 between Leatherhead and Reigate.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Under the conditions of contract it is for the engineer to decide where responsibility rests. He has determined that responsibility rests partly with the Department and partly with the contractor. The Department is considering its position. I shall make a statement as soon as possible.

A51 (Clotton)

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a speed limit for Clotton on the A51.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: No. Conditions on this part of the A51 still do not meet the nationally applied criteria for a speed limit.

A6 (Disley-High Lane Bypass)

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport why the special landscape areas of *(a)* Cheshire and Derbyshire were, and *(b)* Stockport and the Etherow-Goyt River Valley Park were not, included in his published map of the proposed A6 Disley-High Lane bypass; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: The special landscape areas of Cheshire and Derbyshire were shown diagramatically in the consultation brochure because they formed part of those councils' planning policie. Although the Greater Manchester structure plan designated an area that falls within Stockport MBC's boundary as land of special landscape policy it was only on 12 January, six days before the public consultation bagan, that the areas were included in the Stockport borough local plan after committee approval. We shall take account of the special designation in our further consideration of options for a High Lane-Disley bypass.

Mr. Tom Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date he saw a delegation from the High Peak borough council in connection with the proposed A6 Disley-High Lane bypass; what was discussed at the meeting; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I met a delegation from High Peak borough council on 21 March. The delegation explained its concern about the effects of the "Brown Route" and sought more information on the alternatives.

It was agreed that officials from the Department would meet council members and officials to explain the bypass alternatives in more detail. I confirmed that the council's views together with many others we have received would be fully considered in reaching decisions on whether to add a scheme to the national trunk road programme and on choice of route.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the transport programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Around 40 per cent. of the value of the national road programme is accounted for by schemes under construction or in preparation which will benefit inner cities.

About 30 per cent. of the value of all local road schemes accepted for transport supplementary grant consist of schemes costing over £1 million in or assisting inner cities. In addition, there are a large number of smaller schemes which will help transport and provide safety benefit in inner cities.

Over 80 per cent. of grants paid in respect of schemes currently being undertaken under section 56 of the

Transport Act 1968 and nearly 60 per cent. of grants paid in respect of current schemes under the Industrial Development Act are supporting inner city projects.

Inner cities also benefit from a substantial, though unquantifiable, proportion of Government grants to British Rail and London Regional Transport.

Traffic Growth

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what are his Department's assumptions on growth in traffic *(a)* overall and *(b)* on motorways in percentage terms in 1988-89 over 1987-88.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: *(a)* The Department of Transport's national road traffic forecasts predict average rates of annual traffic growth over periods of several years; they are not calibrated for year-on-year forecasting. Since the forecasts were made, traffic has grown at about the upper end of the forecast range. Given a continuation of economic growth, recent trends in traffic growth are likely to continue.

(b) The Department does not forecast traffic by road type.

Road Schemes

Mr. Mudd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many major road schemes have been announced as due to start in 1987-88 or 1988-89; and how many of these are now scheduled to be started in the current year; how many in 1988-89; if he will list those schemes now likely to be delayed until at least 1989-90; and how many trunk road and local bypass schemes announced and scheduled since 1984-85 have now experienced major slippage in time scale.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I refer my hon. Friend to my replies on 2 April 1987 *Official Report* columns *571-2* and 8 February 1988 *Official Report* columns *2-4* when I announced that we planned to start work on 40 schemes in 1987-88 and 34 schemes in 1988-89. Work started on 29 schemes in 1987-88 as indicated in my further answer of 8 February *Official Report* columns *3-4*. Of the remaining schemes originally scheduled to start in 1987-88, we now aim to start 10 in 1988-89 and 1, the A140 Dickleburgh bypass, in 1989-90. Two of the 34 I announced as 1988-89 starts are not now expected to start until 1989-90. They are A16 Boston to Algakirk and A43 Blisworth bypass.

The June 1985 report, "National Roads England", showed 40 bypasses on which work was scheduled to start between June 1985 and March 1987. Of these, 17 have not been started.

The progress of local bypass schemes is a matter for the appropriate local highway authority.

White Hart Roundabout, Northolt

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is taking to improve the flow of traffic and the environment at the White Hart roundabout, Northolt, during current and future work on the Hayes bypass and related works; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: Any proposals to improve the flow of traffic and the environment at the White Hart roundabout are a matter for the London borough of Ealing, which is the highway authority responsible for this scheme. I understand that the opening of a section of the new roundabout today together with associated traffic management should improve the situation. The scheme includes environmental measures.

Central London Rail Study

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 25 March, *Official Report*, column *264*, if the central London rail study will take account of *(a)* his forthcoming announcement concerning the financial objectives of London Regional Transport, *(b)* the cross-rail proposals of the British Railways Board, published in November 1980 and *(c)* the type of cost-benefit analysis applied to capital investment on the Victoria line.

Mr. David Mitchell: I expect to receive initial results from the central London rail study in July, in advance of setting any new objectives for London Regional Transport. The terms of reference are sufficiently wide to embrace any relevant scheme. Detailed appraisal of any such scheme will be in accordance with established appraisal criteria and techniques.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer of 25 March, *Official Report*, column *264*, if he will make it his policy to direct the central London rail study to take account of, and report on *(a)* whether any benefits are to be obtained from increasing the volume of rolling stock and train staff on British Rail and London Underground Limited, *(b)* whether any benefits are to be gained by improvements in the standards of, and number of persons employed in maintenance of track, signalling and rolling stock of British Railways and London Underground Limited, *(c)* whether there are any benefits for line capacity and punctuality of more platform staff and *(d)* what are the costs and benefits of dual voltage electrification of the line from Willesden junction to Clapham junction.

Mr. David Mitchell: The existing terms of reference expressly require the study to examine the scope for improving services and to have regard to the need to make the best use of existing assets.

Mr. Spearing: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer concerning the central London rail study of 25 March, *Official Report*, column *264*, *(a)* which bodies or representatives, or other persons will constitute the membership of the review body, *(b)* which persons or bodies will be eligible to present evidence to the review body, *(c)* from which official or other bodies he expects the review body to receive information concerning future levels of passenger demand and if such information will be publicly available, *(d)* what assumptions the review body will be required to make concerning the level of fares relative to the general cost of living, and the method of ticketing or passes to be used within the Greater London travel-to-work area, *(e)* what assumptions the review will be required to take account of concerning strategic planning policies of Her Majesty's Government and county councils within the London travel-to-work area and its impact on the growth of daily passenger travel to and from and within London, and *(f)* what changes in travel demand or pattern the review will

be required to take account of consequent on the plans of Her Majesty's Government for the de-regulation of bus services in the area now served by London Buses Limited.

Mr. David Mitchell: The study will be conducted by LRT, BR and my officials. It is not envisaged that the study team will call for outside evidence. I have not laid down a set of assumptions for the study, but would expect the team to consider how variations in all major assumptions—particularly those relating to demand—would affect its conclusions.

Summer Time

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents about the impact of summer time changes on road accidents; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: I have not had any recent representations from the society on this subject. I am aware of its views. My right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, is today issuing a consultation document which will set out the options under consideration.

Airports (Landing Charges)

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to by how much more or less than the retail prices index landing charges at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Manchester have increased in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: There is no standard index for charges at each of these airports. An approximation is provided by aggregate traffic income per passenger. The table shows aggregate traffic income per passenger for the period 1978-79 to 1986-87 indexed relative to the RPI.

1978-79 = 100

	Heathrow	*Gatwick*	*Stansted*	*Manchester*
1978-79	100	100	100	100
1979-80	93	90	77	96
1980-81	124	107	99	108
1981-82	117	100	101	108
1982-83	105	82	75	100
1983-84	100	89	92	103
1984-85	89	91	77	95
1985-86	84	95	80	91
1986-87	80	95	90	90

Note: Figures prior to 1983-84 include security levy paid to the then Department of Trade.

Radio Beacons

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce a national policy for United Kingdom radio beacons; what representations he has made in north-west European discussions on the future of Decca and Loran; which countries are involved in the discussions; when he expects to conclude these discussions; when he expects to make an announcement; if he will list the comparative advantages and disadvantages between Decca and Loran; and if he will detail the total estimated cost of each system.

Mr. David Mitchell: The Decca navigator system currently provides the main electronic position-fixed system in United Kingdom waters. The system is operated under a contract between the general lighthouse authorities and Racal Decca Marine Navigation Ltd. The contract runs to 1994 and is extendable to 1997.

My right hon. Friend is not yet able to make a statement about the international discussions on the possible adoption of Loran C as a standard civil electronic aid in north-west Europe. Informal feasibility discussions are proceeding between the United Kingdom, Norway, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland and the Netherlands, but none of the states concerned is yet committed to any change. Examination of the technical and cost aspects of an international co-operative development of Loran C has yet to be completed. If firm proposals for a change emerge from these discussions, my right hon. Friend expects to seek the views of interested parties before reaching a decision. Full account would be taken of user interests and of the relative costs, accuracy and technical suitability of the respective systems.

Seagoing Craft (Radios)

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for making *(a)* VHF radio, *(b)* Decca or equivalent or *(c)* radar compulsory for all seagoing craft.

Mr. David Mitchell: VHF radio is mandatory on all passenger ships and cargo ships of 300 gross tons and upward. Decca is not mandatory.

Radar is mandatory on all merchant ships of 1,600 gross tons and upwards and those constructed after 1 September 1984 of between 500 and 1,600 gross tons.

There are no plans for making any of these equipments compulsory for all seagoing craft.

Signposting

Mr. David Nicholson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has made of French signpost practice on *(a)* motorways and *(b)* other roads regarding (i) sites of tourist interest and (ii) the availability and quality of hotel accommodation; and what representations he has had on future signposting in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Peter Bottomley: On signing matters generally, we are in close touch with other member countries of the European conference of ministers of transport. We are aware of practices in France in relation to signing of tourist attractions and hotels. We have received a variety of representations about signing in the context of the review of directional signs which we completed last year. A copy of the report is available in the Library.

In the light of this review we are conducting an experiment in Kent to assess the benefits to be derived from a limited amount of hotel signing on the highway. We have to balance in all this the need of travellers for information against road safety considerations (too many signs are a distraction to the motorist), and the damage to amenity which would arise if there came to be a clutter of signs on the highway.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Barry Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what is the relative risk of injury in road traffic accidents for motor cyclists compared with other road users.

Mr. Peter Bottomley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The information requested is given for all two-wheeled motor vehicle TWMV riders. It is taken from the annual publication "Road Accidents Great Britain — The Casualty Report, 1986".

Casualty rates[1] by road user type and severity: 1976 to 1986

Rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres/percentage

	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Pedal cyclists:											
Killed	7·1	5·9	7·4	8·4	7·2	6·9	5·6	6·2	6·8	6·1	6·5
KSI	117	98	112	138	132	123	113	123	130	121	125
All severities	552	459	522	623	591	563	534	589	609	577	623
TWMV riders:											
Killed	18	22	21	21	17	15	13	13	13	12	12
KSI	378	406	406	388	344	296	290	288	286	293	281
All severities	1,288	1,353	1,315	1,225	1,073	920	920	917	916	915	898
Car drivers:											
Killed	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·8	0·7	0·7	0·7	0·6	0·6	0·5	0·6
KSI	11	11	11	11	10	10	9	7	7	7	7
All severities	46	46	46	45	40	40	40	34	36	37	38
Bus or coach drivers:											
Killed	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·1	0·1	0·1	0·2	0·1	0·1	—	—
KSI	4	4	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
All severities	22	24	23	23	17	18	16	16	14	17	16
LGV drivers:											
Killed	0·6	0·5	0·5	0·5	0·5	0·4	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·4
KSI	9	8	8	8	6	6	6	4	4	5	4
All severities	37	34	34	33	27	26	25	20	21	23	23
HGV drivers:											
Killed	0·4	0·4	0·4	0·4	0·3	0·3	0·3	0·2	0·3	0·3	0·3
KSI	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
All severities	17	18	17	16	13	12	13	12	12	13	12
All road users:[2]											
Killed	2·9	2·9	2·8	2·7	2·4	2·3	2·2	2·0	2·0	1·8	1·8
KSI	38	38	37	37	34	33	32	28	29	26	25
All severities	151	151	147	141	130	127	126	115	118	110	106
Percentage of all road users accounted for above											
Killed	43	45	44	48	47	48	48	46	46	46	45
KSI	52	52	53	54	55	55	55	55	54	53	53
All severities	52	52	52	53	54	54	55	55	55	54	54

[1] 1985 rates have been revised.
[2] Includes driver and riders of other vehicles.

The following table shows for each year the ratio of TWMV riders to car drivers for each of the three caualty severity classifications—killed, killed or seriously injured and all severities. The table is, effectively, the division of each of the three TWMV rider rows by the corresponding car driver row.

TWMV casualty rates relative to car driver casualty rates: by severity: 1976 to 1986

Car driver casualty rates = 1

Year	Killed	KSI	All severities
1976	23·0	34·4	28·0
1977	27·1	36·9	29·4
1978	26·5	36·9	28·6
1979	26·1	35·3	27·2
1980	24·6	34·4	26·8
1981	21·0	29·6	23·0
1982	19·1	32·2	23·0
1983	22·3	41·1	27·0
1984	21·7	40·9	25·4
1985	24·0	41·9	24·7
1986	20·0	40·1	23·6

DEFENCE

Aircraft Accidents

Mr. Campbell-Savours: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the information recorded on the aircraft accident data computer in the Royal Air Force inspectorate of flight safety includes, for each accident *(a)* the height at which the aircraft was authorised to fly, and *(b)* the height at which the aircraft was flying immediately prior to the accident.

Mr. Freeman: In those cases where the height at which an aircraft was flying just before an accident can be

determined it is recorded on the computerised database of the Royal Air Force's inspectorate of flight safety. Information about authorised heights is not so recorded.

Inner Cities

Mr. Bryan Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the defence programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Ian Stewart: It would probably not be possible to make a sensible estimate of the proportion of the defence programme spent in the inner cities, but, even if it were, this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tanks (Purchase)

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce a decision on the future purchase of tanks for the British Army; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Bridlington (Mr. Townend) on 12 January, at column *200*.

Mr. Fatchett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has carried out any tests upon the Challenger II tank for use by the British Army; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Sainsbury: No. A Mk 2 Challenger does not presently exist in fully developed form.

Journalists (Hospitality Costs)

Mr. Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Bradford, South of 22 March, *Official Report*, column *115*, what was the estimated cost of hosting Ian Bevitt and Ron Sibbald to the unit at Belize; and what method of travel, from and to which points, was used.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The cost of hosting the journalists was about £35, which was met from unit funds. They travelled by Land Rover and helicopter between military bases in Belize, accompanying service men on routine duties.

Exercise Arrowhead Express

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what part British forces played in the recent NATO Exercise Arrowhead Express in northern Norway; and if he will make a statement on the result of that exercise.

Mr. Ian Stewart: The United Kingdom element of the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (AMF), including an infantry battalion, a logistic support battalion, a force artillery HQ, force reconnaissance unit, helicopter support and RAF Jaguars, played a full role in deployment, deterrent and combat operations conducted in Exercise Arrowhead Express. The exercise tested the AMF in its role as an immediate reaction force deployed to a threatened flank area of ACE to deter aggression, to demonstrate NATO solidarity and resolve and to operate alongside host nation forces.

Detailed assessment and evaluation of the exercise is currently being undertaken by participating nations and the appropriate NATO authorities.

From a United Kingdom viewpoint early indications are that the exercise was very successful.

North Sea (Air Combat Platforms)

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consultations his Department has held with British Aerospace in respect of the construction of six air combat manoeuvring system platforms in the North sea; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether his Department has held any discussions with or issued any guidelines to British Aerospace as regards the nationality of the tenderers for the contract to build air combat manoeuvring subsystem platforms in the North sea;

(3) what information he has as to the locations of the air combat manoeuvring instrumentation system platforms in the North sea to be built by British Aerospace;

(4) whether his Department intends to make use of the air combat manoeuvring instrumentation systems to be constructed by British Aerospace; and whether there will be any restrictions placed on use of this system by the defence forces of other nations;

(5) what provision he has made for the cost of contracts which his Department may enter into in respect of the air combat manoeuvring instrumentation system;

(6) whether the defence forces of any other country will be allowed to contract directly with British Aerospace in order to make use of the air combat manoeuvring system to be constructed in the North sea;

(7) what information he has on the principal use of the air combat manoeuvring instrumentation system to be constructed by British Aerospace;

(8) whether British Aerospace is working to any Government guidelines or function specifications as regards the air combat manoeuvring instrumentation project.

Mr. Sainsbury: Further to my answer at column 365 on 28 March, I can confirm that British Aerospace has presented to my Department its unsolicited proposals to build, on a private venture basis, an air combat manoeuvring installation in the North sea. If constructed, use of this training facility by prospective customers would be a matter for the company within the terms of any applicable legal or other regulations. The details of British Aerospace's proposal are under study in this Department. No commitment of any kind has been made to the company and no funds have been provisioned against future use of such a facility by this Department. No guidelines have been given to the company about any technical specifications nor about any commercial aspect of the venture.

Scientists (Deaths)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will institute an inquiry into the security implications of the deaths of Mr. Victor Moore, Mr. Ashad Sharif, Mr. Vimal Dajibhai, Mr. David Sands, Mr. Peter Peapell and Dr. John Brittan;

(2) whether Dr. John Brittan or Mr. Peter Peapell were involved in any subcontracting work for Marconi while in the employment of his Department;

(3) whether the current investigation by Ministry of Defence police into contracts placed with Marconi has at any stage in the past involved questioning or examining Mr. Victor Moore, Mr. Ashad Sharif, Mr. Vimal Dajibhai, Mr. David Sands, Mr. Peter Peapell or Dr. John Knight.

Mr. Sainsbury: The answer to all three questions is no.

Low-flying Aircraft

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the locations and dates of periods of covert monitoring of low-flying operations conducted by Royal Air Force police since 1974.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 4 December 1987, c. 736-37]:* Records of locations where covert surveys of low-flying activity have been carried out only exist for July 1979 onwards. Thereafter, the available information is as follows:

Dates and locations of RAF Police covert observations 1979-87

Date and Location

1979
Peterborough area
Gaydon area
Newent
Isle of Wight
Liverpool/Manchester area
Pembray Range
Twycross Zoo

1980
Hartley
Isle of Skye
Unknown
Marchington
Glen-Pean
Cowden Range
Colbeck Transmitter Masts
Colchester
Sheffield area
Area between Bolton and Southport
Area between Nottingham and Birmingham
Area between Birmingham and London
North London
Brough area
Bewdley
Banbury

1981
Ashpark
Cranfield airfield
Lichfield
Plaish
3-7 August
Desborough
Cranfield airfield
Street

1982
Pontesbury
Shrewsbury
Otterburn Range
Spadeadam Range
East Riding General Hospital
Witnash

1983
Windermere
Ullswater
Burton-Constable
Hall
Yaxley
Stone, Staffordshire
25-29 July
Northants
Corby

1984
30 May-11 June
Harrogate
22-24 May
Watton
Oundle
9-10 May
Aberystwyth
5-7 June
Area between Birmingham and Thames Valley
6-7 September
Pickering
12-14 September
Newark on Trent
17-20 September
Stone
18-20 September
Saltford
25-27 September
Deans Hangar

1985
30-31 January
Rugby
19-21 February
Market Harborough
26-27 February
Newport, Gwent
5-6 March
St. Crispin Hospital, Northants
12-13 March
Rugby
26-27 March
Gorseinon
17 April
Brynamman, Wales
30 April-2 May
Sibson Airfield
Area between Cambridge and Newmarket
Area between RAF Leeming and Teesside
Holbeach
14-16 May
Kelso
Jedburgh
Duns
30 May
Lutterworth
14 June
Filey, Yorkshire
Area between Felixstowe and Ipswich
Area between Coningsby and Boston
Area between Cambridge and Newmarket
21-23 October
Teesside
Holbeach
Newmarket
5-6 December
Alnwick

1986
14-16 January
Broughton
Burton upon Stather
Burringham
21-22 January
Newport, Humberside
27-31 January
Carlisle
Bowness on Windermere
Hexham
Catterick
7-10 April
Windermere
Carlisle
Penrith
Morpeth
Hexham
Alnwick
22-24 April
Area between Leeming and Teesside
Area between Diss and Ipswich
6 June
Pocklington glider site
24-26 June
Weethley Hamlet
21-22 July
Leeds

Garforth
21-24 July
Builth Wells
21-24 July
Exmoor
30-31 July
Chirnside
4-8 August
Keswick
Barnard Castle
5-8 August
Carlisle
Lowther Castle
Catterick
Richmond
Withernsea
26-28 August
Redditch
23-25 September
West Ayton
24-26 September
Whitnash
8-9 October
Grimsby
Cleethorpes
8 October
East Riding Hospital
9 October
Area between Leeming and Teesside
29 October
Carperby
19-20 November
Rothwell
Late 1986/early 1987
Ashbourne

1987
16-18 March
Banham Zoo
7-9 April
Penrith
Morpeth
Amble
9 April
Alnwick
14-15 April
Pickering
Jedburgh
1 June
Peterborough
7-8 July
Redmile
21-24 July
Dumfries and Galloway
21-24 July
Builth Wells
4-6 August
Grindleford Bridge
4-6 August
Alnwick
5 August
Haltwhistle
19-20 August
Haxby
11-12 August
Leighton Hall, Carnforth
13-14 August
Castle Farm, Devon
15-17 September
Scarborough
21-25 September
Ettrick

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1974 disciplinary proceedings have been instituted against pilots found to have been infringing low-flying regulations by Royal Air Force police involved in covert monitoring in low-flying areas, but where no complaints were received from the public.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 4 December 1987, c. 736-37]:* Responsibility for disciplinary action against pilots found to have been infringing low-flying regulations by Royal Air Force police lies with the commanding officer at the appropriate RAF station. Central records of the action taken by commanding officers in such cases are not kept.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Royal Air Force police, expressed as full-time equivalent staff, are currently assigned to covert field monitoring of low-flying aircraft; and what changes have taken place in these staffing levels since 1977.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 4 December 1987, c. 736-37]:* Total hours of all RAF police personnel devoted to covert field monitoring of low-flying aircraft currently amounts to the equivalent of approximately one third to one half of a single full-time RAF policemen's job. Figures for 1977 are not available, but there has been a general increase in the number of covert observations carried out since 1979. We are currently reviewing the numbers of personnel devoted to covert and non-covert monitoring.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the practice of covert monitoring of low-flying by Royal Air Force police was introduced.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 4 December 1987, c. 736-37]:* Covert monitoring of low-flying aircraft has been carried out by the RAF police at least since 1977.

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the methods used by Royal Air Force police involved in covert monitoring of low-flying activity to assess height and speed of low-flying aircraft.

Mr. Freeman *[pursuant to his reply, 4 December 1987, c. 736-37]:* Covert monitoring of low-flying aircraft is carried out visually following the survey of a suitable site noting relative heights and distances of local landmarks. Teams of two RAF police are normally made up one experienced observer and one in training.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Third World Debt

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next plans to meet representatives of the British banks to discuss Third world debt, and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Chalker: My right hon. and learned Friend regularly meets representatives of major British banks; Third world debt is often discussed. We remain very concerned about the debt problem, but debt owed to commercial banks is a matter for negotiation between the banks and debtor Governments.

Conventions and Protocols

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many conventions and

protocols of the Council of Europe have been signed on behalf of the United Kingdom; how many have been ratified; and if he will list in the *Official Report* those conventions and protocols which have been signed but not ratified.

Mrs. Chalker: We have signed and ratified 73 conventions and protocols of the Council of Europe. Nine conventions and protocols have been signed but not yet ratified. These are:

1. Protocol 4 to the Convention of Human Rights securing certain other Rights and Freedoms.
2. European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
3. European Convention on the Recognition of the Legal Personality of Non-Governmental Organisations.
4. European Convention on the Control of the Acquisition and Possession of Firearms by Individuals.
5. European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes.
6. Convention Relating to Stops on Bearer Securities in International Circulation.
7. Convention on the Establishment of a Scheme of Registration of Wills.
8. European Convention for the Protection of Animals for Slaughter.
9. European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals used for Experimental Purposes.

Bananas

Mr. Wells: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will make it his policy to continue to protect the access to the British market of those countries which are traditional suppliers of bananas; if he will support the continuation of the banana protocol to the Lomé III convention in the negotiations with the EEC for Lomé IV; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: We remain committed to provide preferential access for bananas from the United Kingdom's traditional suppliers. Following a recent review of banana policy, we have also decided that the United Kingdom market should be enabled to expand gradually, with a guaranteed minimum of licences to import dollar area bananas allocated to small independent importers. This is consistent with our general objectives of promoting competition and consumer choice. The United Kingdom will fight hard in the negotiations for Lomé IV to ensure that preferential access for these traditional supplies from Jamaica and the Windward Islands is maintained.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proportion of his Department's programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Eggar: The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

South Africa (EC Companies)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has about cases of companies in the European Community seeking to sell to the Republic of South Africa submarine propulsion technology; and if he will make a statement on what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to prevent this.

Mrs. Chalker: It is not our practice to take up with other Governments allegations of breaches of the United Nations arms embargo on South Africa. This is properly a matter for the Security Council committee established under Security Council resolution 421 of 1977.

Israel (Non-proliferation Treaty)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 25 March, columns 241-42, when he last made a specific representation to the Israeli Government to sign the non-proliferation treaty.

Mr. Mellor: My right hon. and learned Friend had a recent opportunity to raise the non-proliferation treaty with the Israeli Government. But, at his request the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office did so on 22 October 1987 with the political director of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Israel (Mordecai Vanunu)

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, 25 March, column 242, if he will now make it his policy, in the light of the 18-year prison sentence passed on Mordecai Vanunu on 27 March, to make representations to the Israeli Government for a reduction in sentence on human rights grounds.

Mr. Mellor: No.

South Africa (Rugby Tour)

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications for relations with the Commonwealth of the planned World XV rugby tour to South Africa; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear, we stand by the statement made by Commonwealth Heads of Government in June 1977—the so-called Gleneagles Agreement—which discourages sporting contacts with South Africa.

Central American Parliament

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance will be provided by Her Majesty's Government in the setting up of the Central American Parliament; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Eggar: At the San José IV meeting in Hamburg we and our European partners agreed to provide assistance in the holding of elections to the Central American Parliament. The form of the assistance is to be defined in discussion between the European Community and the Central American Governments.

Guatemala Agreement

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement about the measures being taken by Her Majesty's Government to support the Guatemala agreement.

Mr. Eggar: We and our European partners have on a number of occasions expressed our support for the agreement and urged the Central American Governments to fulfil their commitments under the agreement. We have also appealed to countries with links and interests in the region to lend constructive support for the peace efforts of the Central American countries. We have also condemned all acts of violence which might jeopardise the peace process.

Hong Kong (Vietnamese Refugees)

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many families among Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong have requested to be repatriated to Vietnam, in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: The numbers of Vietnamese who have asked to be repatriated to Vietnam in each of the last 10 years are as follows: six in 1978; two in 1979; two in 1980; two in 1981; four in 1982; three in 1984; one in 1985; one in 1987 and 21 in 1988. Fifteen have been successfully repatriated, 10 withdrew their applications and 17 applications are still being processed by UNHCR. According to Hong Kong Government records there has been only one family application, consisting of a husband and wife and their two children.

Mr. Churchill: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Vietnamese refugees have *(a)* sought sanctuary in Hong Kong and *(b)* subsequently been accepted for settlement (i) in the United Kingdom and (ii) in any other non-Communist country in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available.

Mr. Eggar: *(a)* The Hong Kong Government have accepted all Vietnamese arriving in Hong Kong in boats and has turned none away. The figures for those accepted since 1979 are: 1979 — 68,748; 1980 — 6,788; 1981—8,470; 1982—7,836; 1983—3,651; 1984—2,230; 1985—1,112; 1986—2,055; 1987—3,395; 1988 up to 15 March—716.

(b) The table gives details of departures from Hong Kong since 1979 for the United Kingdom and all other countries:

The table below gives details of departures from Hong Kong since 1979 for the United Kingdom and all other countries.

	1975-79	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988 up to 15 March*
Argentina	29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Australia	1,052	90	500	414	915	736	557	459	501	92
Austria	86	318	14	—	—	—	6	—	3	—
Belgium	125	29	6	2	2	11	1	—	42	—
Bermuda	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Canada	5,187	6,548	2,070	1,088	536	1,008	1,302	975	766	255
China	1	33	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Denmark	264	321	220	180	47	49	18	45	5	1
Finland	—	—	—	—	57	54	1	69	30	—
France	526	188	362	218	181	65	90	47	61	—
Greece	—	42	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Hong Kong	180	109	93	52	12	18	41	70	45	4
Ireland	109	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Israel	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Italy	113	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Ivory Coast	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Japan	16	36	68	11	1	34	52	5	23	—
Luxembourg	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	26	—
Netherlands	261	96	102	110	26	18	13	82	71	—
New Caledonia	32	4	12	21	8	3	—	—	—	—
New Zealand	84	217	2	99	16	20	23	26	51	5
Norway	57	180	187	78	6	27	39	114	33	—
Spain	1	250	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sweden	8	95	2	13	207	11	—	101	44	
Switzerland	91	414	97	14	3	9	—	22	8	2
Taiwan	1	4	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
United Kingdom	3,988	6,076	1,775	241	101	88	44	474	156	55
USA	16,583	21,053	12,222	1,657	2,065	1,541	1,721	1,323	333	122
Vanuatu	8	2	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—
Vietnam	8	—	2	2	2	—	—	—	1	—
West Germany	1,678	537	81	45	13	1	45	44	5	2

Panama

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice is currently being given to British citizens resident in, and travelling to, Panama.

Mr. Eggar: Our current advice is that there is no danger to British citizens resident in Panama. Visitors are advised not to travel to Panama until further notice unless on urgent business. Those who must travel should bring

sufficient cash in US dollars in small denominations to cover all expenses incurred during their stay. They should contact the embassy on arrival.

Council of Ministers (Forthcoming Business)

Sir Peter Blaker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming business in the European Community Council of Ministers.

Mrs. Chalker: The usual forecast was deposited in the House earlier today. At present five meetings of the Council of Ministers are planned for April.

The Research Council will meet on 11 April. The provisional agenda anticipates the formal adoption of the Esprit II programme (1988-1991) and the adoption of the drive, biotechnology, science, bureau of Community reference (BCR) and Delta programmes as 'A' points. Common positions on the fusion programme and the 1988-91 programme of the joint research centre (JRC) will also be discussed. The German presidency will be presenting, for first discussion, papers on the relation between EC and Eureka programmes and the contribution of research programmes to Community norms/standards.

The Economic and Finance Council meets on 18 April to consider the Commission's proposals on the liberalisation of capital movements, indirect tax approximation and the discussions on budgetary discipline with the European Parliament.

The Agriculture Council will meet on 18-19 April to discuss the 1988 price-fixing measures, and proposals on quick frozen foods, additives, materials and articles in contact with food, harmonisation of meat charges and trade in meat with third countries.

The Foreign Affairs Council meets on 25-26 April. Discussions are expected to include follow-up action to the European Council conclusions on financing the Community; EC relations with Japan; a review of progress in the GATT Uruguay round negotiations; preparations for the EC/Turkey Association Council; the 1988 guidelines for the Community's programme of aid to developing countries in Asia and Latin America; and progress made in negotiations with Hungary on a trade and co-operation agreement.

The Budget Council will meet on 28-29 April to discuss the European Parliament's amendments and modifications to the 1988 draft budget.

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

Food Labelling

13. **Mr. Andrew Smith:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he has any further proposals for the declaration of nutritional information on food products.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We are pressing manufacturers and retailers to adopt the standard approach to voluntary nutrition declarations set out in the guidelines we issued on 21 January. Proposals for legislation to set out the form in which voluntary declarations must be given, will be considered once we have experience of the operation of the system and European Community intentions on nutrition labelling are clearer.

Less-favoured Areas

17. **Mr. Speller:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when the tribunals deciding upon the final less-favoured area lines will complete their deliberations; and how long after this date he expects to make the decisions public.

Mr. Gummer: I assume that my hon. Friend is referring to the appeal panels which were set up to hear appeals from farmers whose land is currently excluded from the less-favoured areas. The panels do not themselves fix the LFA line, but advise Ministers on whether the land concerned seems likely to meet EC physical criteria for LFA designation. They have now completed their work in England and all the farmers concerned have been notified of the outcome.

Country Landowners Association

19. **Mr. Barry Field:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the president of the Country Landowners Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Gummer: I meet Mr. Gordon Lee-Steere frequently to discuss agricultural matters.

Forestry Commission

20. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Forestry Commission; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I meet the chairman of the Forestry Commission from time to time to discuss a wide range of forestry matters.

Torry Research Station, Aberdeen

21. **Mr. Wray:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what research is being undertaken by staff at the Torry research station, Aberdeen, into the processing of fish.

Mr. Gummer: The main areas of research concern the preservation of fish, the safety of fish products for the consumer and the utilisation of fish and fish products.

23. **Mr. Buchan:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the number of people employed in the Torry research station, Aberdeen; and if he will break that number down by occupational category.

Mr. Gummer: The number of staff currently employed at Torry research station is 115, of which 64 are scientific, professional and technical staff, 27 are in industrial worker grades and 24 are administration group staff.

33. **Mr. Graham:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has any plans to visit the Torry research station in Aberdeen within the near future.

Mr. Gummer: My right hon. Friend has at present no plans to do so; I visited Torry research station in 1986 and hope to do so again this year.

EC Agricultural Budget

22. **Mr. Dykes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is now satisfied with the recently agreed control mechanism for European Economic Community agricultural budget expenditure.

Mr. MacGregor: I am satisfied that it is as good as we could possibly have got it in the recent negotiations.

Sheepmeat

24. **Mr. Alex Carlile:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received in the current year on the future of the European sheepmeat regime.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We have received a number of representations on many aspects of the Commission's proposals for reform of the sheepmeat regime.

Poultry and Eggs

25. **Mr. Steinberg:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has to assist the United Kingdom poultry and egg industry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We shall continue to assist the eggs and poultry industry by promoting efficiency and ensuring that it trades under conditions of fair competition.

Rivers (Pollution)

26. **Ms. Walley:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what steps he is taking to reduce pollution in rivers arising from agricultural activities.

Mr. Gummer: My Department warns farmers of the dangers of polluting rivers and the severe fines which successful prosecution brings with it. I myself reinforced these views at a recent conference on silage effluent and my Department continues to support water authority action to encourage farmers to avoid pollution. Grants for tanks to handle silage and slurry effluent are available at the rate of 60 per cent. in the less-favoured areas and 30 per cent. elsewhere.

Milk Quotas

27. **Mr. Hardy:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the latest position on the operation of milk quotas.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given yesterday by my right hon. Friend the Minister to my hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Mr. Nicholson).

Pigs

28. **Mr. Geraint Howells:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is satisfied with the present state of the pig industry; and if he will make a statement.

40. **Mr. Cran:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next intends to meet the National Farmers Union and other representatives from the pig industry to discuss EEC import subsidies.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-West (Sir A. Grant) today.

Agricultural Policy

29. **Mr. Goodlad:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he next expects to meet his opposite number in the EEC to discuss agricultural policy.

Mr. MacGregor: The next meeting of Agricultural Ministers is scheduled for 18-19 April.

34. **Mr. Jim Marshall:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with the National Farmers Union about reforming the common agricultural policy.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh).

Food Aid

30. **Mr. Boyes:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what discussions he has had with organisations eligible to operate the EC free food scheme.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 30 March.

35. **Ms. Harman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about progress in implementing the EC free food scheme.

43. **Sir John Biggs-Davison:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the arrangements for the distribution of surplus EC food in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Gummer: I refer the hon. Member and my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) on 30 March and to the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, Central (Mr. Cousins) today.

Monetary Compensatory Allowances

31. **Mr. Livsey:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will increase beef cow hill land compensatory allowances; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The rates of hill livestock compensatory allowances to apply this year were announced in the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Miss Nicholson) on 9 December 1987 at column *157*. The allowances for 1989 will be considered later this year following the autumn review of the economic conditions in the hill and upland areas.

Tenant Farmers Association

32. **Mr. Patnick:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Tenant Farmers Association; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Gummer: I saw him on 4 March when were both at a conference discussing diversification and the tenant farmer. We are also in regular contact with tenant farmers and their representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Wool Board

36. **Mr. Knapman:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Wool Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend, the Minister, last met the chairman of the Wool Board on 1 February 1988 to discuss the prospects for the 1988 clip year.

Green Pound

37. **Mr. Nicholas Bennett:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations he has received on the green pound from the National Farmers Union and Farmers Union of Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I have received representations from both these organisations.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many representations he has received in the current year on the value of the green pound.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Rochford (Dr. Clark).

Milk Marketing Board

38. **Mr. John Carlisle:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Donald Thompson: My right hon. Friend last met the chairman of the Milk Marketing Board on 1 March when a number of issues of current concern to the dairy industry were discussed.

Freezer Trawlers

39. **Mr. Dunnachie:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the current number of United Kingdom registered freezer trawlers; what are the fishing grounds within which they operate; and which species they are allowed to catch.

Mr. Gummer: Fishing vessels are not required to state their method of operation when registering. However, there are currently five vessels which are licensed by United Kingdom fisheries departments as freezer trawlers; of these, three are licensed for the full range of stocks in Community waters for which the United Kingdom has quotas. The two remaining vessels are licensed for demersal species only. Three of the five vessels also have access to licences which enable them to fish in external waters for species for which the Community has quotas.

Farm Woodland Scheme

41. **Mr. Colvin:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what plans he has for reducing the minimum acreage to qualify for the farm woodland scheme.

Mr. Gummer: None.

Pollution

42. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he intends to introduce special help for farmers or take any other measures to combat the pollution caused by modern farming methods.

Mr. Gummer: My Department continues to encourage farmers, through the provision of assistance and advice, to adopt practices which minimise the risk of pollution. These measures are kept under continuous review to ensure they remain effective in combating pollution.

Set-aside Scheme

44. **Mr. Cryer:** To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the total estimated expenditure on set-aside payments for *(a)* 1988, *(b)* 1989 and *(c)* 1990; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: Public expenditure planning totals were increased in the last survey by £16 million for 1989-90 and £22 million for 1990-91 to cover set-aside and extensification in the United Kingdom.

Bass

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why the net sizes for the bass regulations are posed so as to exclude the standard channel mesh size.

Mr. Gummer: The measures recently proposed for the management of the bass fishery are intended to protect juvenile bass and safeguard recruitment to spawning stocks. They include mesh size restrictions for gill and other specified nets, but for this purpose we do not consider it necessary to apply these restrictions to trawls, Danish seines or similar towed nets used in the English Channel for which Council regulation (EEC) No. 2968/87 prescribes a minimum mesh size of 75mm, increasing to 80mm from 1 January 1989.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how he intends to ensure that the proposed bass regulations prevent the French from fishing spawning stock in mid-Channel; and what information he has on the amount taken from the spawning stock by French fishermen.

Mr. Gummer: As I explained on 21 March in reply to an earlier question from my hon. Friend at column *14*, I have no plans to prevent fishing for adult bass. I have no recent figures of French bass catches in the Channel, but I am advised that statistics published in France show landings of bass from the Channel area up to 1983 as between 600 and 800 tonnes a year. This includes bass from French stock caught both in French inshore waters and in mid-Channel.

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many French fishing boats were engaged in bass fishing in the English Channel last season.

Mr. Gummer: This information is not held by my Department.

Agriculture Council

Ms. Mowlam: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the outcome of the Agriculture Council meeting held at the end of March.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 30 March to my hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, North-East (Mr. Moss).

Forestry

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what consultations were held between his Ministry and timber and land-owning interests concerning the proposed new grant arrangements for forestry; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies).

Mr. John Evans: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he proposes to revise his estimate of annual new planting of trees in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: I intend that the combination of the new woodland grant scheme and the proposed farm woodland scheme will result in a significant increase in new planting in England and Wales.

Farming Unions

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he last met representatives of the farming unions; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. MacGregor: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave earlier today to my hon. Friends the Members for Fylde (Mr. Jack) and for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh).

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the agriculture, fisheries and food programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Donald Thompson: Expenditure in the inner cities under this programme is not separately recorded.

Salmon Farming

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the representations he has received from Mr. Chris Tyderman of the World Wildlife Fund on the dangers of salmon farming to wild salmon returning to rivers for spawning.

Mr. Gummer: I have received no such representations from the World Wildlife Fund (UK).

Arctic Foxes

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his Department's policy towards the farming of arctic foxes within Great Britain; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 8 March at column *130-31* to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on the subject of arctic foxes.

Food Irradiation

Mr. Thurnham: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent representations he has received about the irradiation of foodstuffs; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: I am still receiving some representations about the safety of food irradiation and the need for controls over the use of the technique. The Government have, of course, already made it clear that we need to be satisfied as to effective controls before there could be any question of lifting the present general prohibition — over which there would in addition be further consultation.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Teddy Taylor: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is his latest estimate of the amount per week which the common agricultural policy adds to the average family food bill in the United Kingdom; and if the sums spent on exporting food are additional to this amount.

Mr. Donald Thompson: The magnitude of the costs of the CAP to consumers and taxpayers depends on the nature of the alternative policy envisaged. The Government's aim is to achieve lower levels of support worldwide thereby reducing the costs borne by consumers and taxpayers.

Free Food

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent discussions he has had within the European Community about operating the free food scheme.

Mr. Gummer: The Government have requested the Commission to allocate to us a sum equivalent to £10·4 million in 1988 which the Commission has indicated is the maximum available for the United Kingdom. I await the response of the Commission.

Pig Producers

Sir Anthony Grant: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what further steps he proposes to take to help British pig producers; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Donald Thompson: We continue to be in close touch with the representatives of the pig producers. The market appears to have stabilised following the support measures which were taken earlier. Cereal prices continue to show a downward trend. We accept the objective of removing the MCAs from the pigmeat sector and will be actively pursuing this.

Farm Woodlands

Mr. Maxton: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what effects the new grant arrangements for forestry will have on his proposals for farm woodlands; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Gummer: The farm woodland scheme will be linked to the Forestry Commission's new woodland grant scheme. However, we have decided that farm woodland scheme planting will only attract increased planting grants for broadleaves. These will apply to both pure broadleaf planting and the broadleaf component of other woodlands and will increase the incentive to mixed and broadleaved planting under the scheme. The planting grants for conifers will remain unchanged.

Sheep (Radioactivity)

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many sheep have been monitored for radioactivity in each month since October 1987 in *(a)* each county of England and *(b)* the areas of the former metropolitan counties of west midlands, Greater Manchester, Greater London, Tyne and Wear, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire.

Mr. Donald Thompson *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* The information requested is set out in the table:

Sheep monitored in England 1 November 1987 to 18 March 1988

County[1]	*November 1987*	*December 1987*	*January 1988*	*February 1988*	*March 1988*	*Total*
Cheshire	25	—	—	—	—	25
Cumbria	16,759	3,974	3,508	3,177	1,620	29,038
Devon	77	—	—	—	—	77
Durham	180	—	—	—	—	180
Lancashire	101	—	40	—	—	141
Northumberland	438	—	—	229	—	667
Shropshire	50	—	—	—	—	50
Somerset	79	—	—	—	—	79
Yorkshire (North)	5,112	—	—	—	—	5,112
Yorkshire (West)	200	—	—	—	—	200
Total	23,021	3,974	3,548	3,406	1,620	35,569

[1] No sheep have been monitored in counties not included in this list.

SCOTLAND

Rating Reform

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if the police, immigration officials or staff working in Department of Health and Social Security fraud units will be able to inspect names and addresses found in the community charge register.

Mr. Lang: Under section 20(2)(a) of the Abolition of Domestic Rates Etc. (Scotland) Act 1987 certain parts of the community charges register, including addresses and names, will be made available for public inspection.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make it his policy to include in the next edition of his recent publication "You and the Community Charge" information to the effect that the name and address of individuals who appear on the community charge register may be sold without their knowledge or consent;

(2) if he will make it his policy to include in the next edition of his recent publication "You and the Community Charge" information to the effect that the name and address of individuals who appear on the community charge register may be used by the police, Inland Revenue or Department of Health and Social Security specialist squads.

Mr. Lang: My right hon. and learned Friend has at present no plans to issue a further edition of the booklet "You and the Community Charge". As to his policies in respect of the matters referred to, I refer the hon. Member to my replies of 9 February at column *63* and of 21 March at columns *14-15*.

AIDS

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will make a statement on current and future plans to prevent the spread of HIV in Scottish prisons;

(2) what is the latest number of HIV-positive prisoners in Scottish prisons.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As my right hon. and learned Friend made clear in his statement on 29 March 1988, the Government take the problems of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection very seriously. Guidance has been issued to the Scottish prison service informing staff of the nature, the effects and the modes of transmission of HIV infection and the hygiene and other precautions necessary to prevent transmission in prison.

The guidance makes it clear that there are no medical reasons for segregating inmates who are known to have HIV infection or for limiting the normal range of work or recreational activities in which they may engage. This guidance has been supplemented by local training using audio-visual material.

Medical staff have been issued with specialist guidance on testing and counselling. Testing is available on request to any inmate who may be risk. In the absence of compelling medical indications, testing would not be undertaken without prior explanation and consent or in the absence of suitable arrangements for counselling and support when the result is known. Selected nurse officers are being given training to improve their counselling techniques.

The public education campaign to draw the dangers to the attention of those at risk has been extended into prisons and will be continued as further suitable material becomes available. It will continue to be Government policy to seek to restrict situations likely to high risk of transmission of HIV infection in prison. The management of symptomless carriers and the treatment of inmates who are ill as a result of HIV infection will share the aims and principles which are applied to care in the community. Specialist advice or support is sought as required from the National Health Service through the normal system for referral.

Full annual returns for 1987 are not yet available, but the number of inmates so far confirmed as HIV positive by medical officers for penal establishments, or who have indicated that they have been positively tested prior to coming into custody, is 73.

It is impossible to estimate numbers who may have been infected prior to reception into custody but have not yet been tested either in the community or in custody.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the Library a copy of the Forestry Commission's mapped assessment of the suitability of land in the flow country of Caithness and Sutherland for afforestation.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to one of a set of indicative overlays prepared by the Forestry Commission for use by a working group of officials. It related to technical plantability only and did not show the major constraints on planting, such as the need to protect areas of high conservation value.

I will arrange for a map, prepared from that overlay, to be placed in the Library of the House.

Paper Board and Timber Mills

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list in the *Official Report* information available to him on the paper board and timber mills reliant on home-produced timber since 1980, the amount of public subsidy, assistance, grant or other inducement given to encourage the establishment of those plants and the estimated cost to public funds of each job created.

Mr. Lang: Information in the form requested is not available. However, in 1985 plants classified to the pulp, paper and timber industries* employed some 10,600 people in Scotland with sales of around £533 million. Since 1980, offers of regional selective assistance (RSA) made to firms classified to these industries have amounted to £17·5 million, associated with the creation of 1,420 jobs and the safeguarding of a further 3,140 jobs. Since the inception of the revised regional development grant scheme (RDG2), approvals to companies in the paper board and timber industries have totalled £6·4 million, and been associated with the creation of 840 jobs. It should be noted that some firms may receive both RSA and RDG2 and that where this occurs associated jobs may appear twice in the above figures.

* Pulp, paper and timber industries are defined as plants classified to the following Activity Headings on the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

4610 Sawmilling, planing, etc. of wood.
4620 Manufacture of semi-finished wood products and further processing and treatment of wood.
4710 Pulp, paper and board.

Strip Searches

Mrs. Fyfe: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many body searches and strip searches were carried out in Cornton vale prison in 1986 and 1987; and what are the comparable figures for such searches in other prisons in Scotland.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: The number of body and strip searches carried out at Cornton vale institution in 1986 was 3,270 and in 1987 it was 2,651 (the statistics kept do not differentiate between body and strip searches). Statistics are not kept on the number of strip or body searches carried out at other prisons.

Forestry

45. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to give new grants to assist forestry.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: As announced by my right hon. and learned Friend on 23 March, at columns *138-9* a new woodland grant scheme is to be introduced on 5 April 1988.

North Sea Oil

46. **Mr. McLeish:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if it is his intention to place in the Library copies of the cards which give the latest readings of suspended wellhead positions on the United Kingdom continental shelf; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Cards providing the location of suspended wellheads on the United Kingdom shelf are published on a half yearly basis by the fisheries Departments from data supplied by the Department of Energy and the Sea Fish Industry Authority. The cards are readily available and are distributed free of charge to fisheries organisations, local fishery offices and other interested parties at home and abroad, and I am arranging for copies to be placed in the Library.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Lang: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. and learned Friend's statement in the House on 29 March about urban renewal measures in Scotland.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will detail the current annual expenditure involved in the provision of *(a)* the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area office in Inverness and *(b)* the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area sub-office in Dingwall; if he will give his estimate of the anticipated annual savings which will accrue from the closure of the latter; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The current annual expenditure, including the cost of administration support staff, involved in the provision of: *(a)* the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland Area office in Inverness is £205,247 and *(b)* the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland Area sub-office in Dingwall is £35,710. The anticipated annual savings resulting from the closure of the latter is estimated to be £22,000.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide a breakdown of the number of farmers and crofters within the district covered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area sub-office in Dingwall; how many obtain their information and services from the area office in Inverness; what information and services are sought from Inverness rather than Dingwall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: A total of 1,174 farmers and crofters are located within the district presently covered by

the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area sub-office in Dingwall. All of those farmers and crofters within that district requiring information and services in relation to certain schemes obtain these from the area office in Inverness. Information and services sought from Inverness include advice and guidance from surveying staff in relation to capital grant schemes, crofting counties agricultural grant schemes, crofters building grants and loans schemes, procurement of labels under the seed potato labelling scheme, and veterinary services in relation to animal heath schemes.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received concerning the proposed closure of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area sub-office in Dingwall; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Representations concerning the closure of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area sub-office in Dingwall have been received from the Dingwall community council and also from the Dingwall and district chamber of commerce.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his policy towards the retention of Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area sub-offices; if he will list all such offices in the *Official Report*; whether he is considering any Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, territorial areas for further rationalisation; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Retention of Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area sub-offices depends on the location of the individual area sub-offices in relation to the area offices themselves and on the extent to which these offices can be justified for the maintenance of an economical and efficient service. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area sub-offices are presently located at:

Dingwall
Lerwick
Lairg
Stornoway
Benbecula
Elgin
Cupar
Stirling

The operational need for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area offices and sub-offices is kept under review on a continuing basis.

Mr. Kennedy: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the nature and extent of public consultation which took place prior to his decision to close the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Scotland, area sub-office in Dingwall; which representative public bodies were involved and what was the nature of any submissions made by them; what was the time between the commencement of such consultations and the announcement of his decision; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The decision to close the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland area sub-office in Dingwall was made in the light of the need to make the most economical use of resources without impairing the efficiency of the service provided to the agricultural community. My noble Friend, the Minister of State, had regard to the good communications between Dingwall and Inverness and to the fact that, as well as certain services provided direct from the area office of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland, the animal health divisional office and the college advisory services for the Dingwall area are already provided from Inverness. No public consultations were carried out at this time.

Mink Farms

Mr. Ron Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what is the size and location of each mink farm currently operating in Scotland;

(2) how many licences are current for the operation of mink farms in Scotland; what the figure was 12 months ago; and if he will give similar information for the number of mink farms actually in operation.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: As at 31 March 1988 there were six licences for the farming of mink covering eight farms in force in Scotland. All of these farms are currently operational. As at 31 March 1987 seven licences were in force covering eight farms.

Farms currently in operation are located in the undernoted regions of Scotland:

Region	*Number*
Central	1
Grampian	2
Lothian	1
Strathclyde	[1]2
Tayside	2

[1] The renewal of a licence for one of these farms is currently under consideration following a change of ownership.

Two of these farms carry stocks of over 5,000 mink; the remainder carry stocks of less than 5,000.

Police Inquiries (Guidelines)

Mr. Bill Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give details of the guidelines which are issued to members of local police committees on the action to be taken by individual members when they or their spouses are the subject of police inquiries into matters which may lead to criminal charges being made.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton: No such guidelines addressed specifically to members of police authorities have been issued by the Scottish Office. I shall send my hon. Friend a copy of the national code of local government conduct.

NHS (Seminar)

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total cost to public funds of the seminar arranged by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Scottish Office, the hon. Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) and held on 2 October 1987, dealing with privatisation in the National Health Service in Scotland.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: The cost of the seminar — which discussed competitive tendering not privatisation —was £263·93.

Michael Forsyth Ltd.

Mr. Harry Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to refrain from

dealings with the company Michael Forsyth Limited so long as it continues to trade under the name of a Minister in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Malcolm Rifkind: No. Government dealings with private companies are carried out in accordance with rules that are generally well understood; I do not propose to add to these rules any proposition about the name under which a company chooses to trade. The Minister for education and health no longer has an interest in Michael Forsyth Limited.

Patient Administration (Computerisation)

Mr. Allan Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress has been made regarding the computerisation of hospital patient administration systems and their introduction by health boards.

Mr. Michael Forsyth: Contracts were signed today by the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service with Honywell Bull Ltd. and McDonnell Douglas Information Systems Ltd. for the provision of systems and hardware for the following hospitals.

Company and hospital	*Health board*
McDonnell Douglas	
Huntlyburn	Borders
Dunfermline and West Fife	Fife
Raigmore	Highland
Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh	Lothian
Western General, Edinburgh	Lothian
Bangour General	Lothian
Honeywell Bull Ltd	
Royal Alexandra, Paisley	Argyll and Clyde
Vale of Leven	Argyll and Clyde
Ayrshire Central	Ayrshire and Arran
Crosshouse	Ayrshire and Arran
Dumfries Royal Infirmary	Dumfries and Galloway
Falkirk and Stirling Royal Infirmaries	Forth Valley
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary	Grampian
Law	Lanarkshire
Ninewells	Tayside
Lewis	Western Isles

The total value of the equipment, software and services provided under these contracts is £8 million.

Prisons (Alcoholism)

Mr. Worthington: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland to what factors he attributes the fall in the number of male inmates in Scottish prisons treated for alcoholism between 1985 and 1986.

Lord James Douglas-Hamilton *[holding answer 8 February 1988]:* There has been a continuous fall since 1982 in the number of male inmates in Scottish prisons treated for alcoholism. Inmates who are diagnosed by prison medical officers as suffering from alcoholism fall into two groups: those convicted of crimes related to drunkenness and those convicted of other crimes who may, coincidentally, have drink problems. This continuous fall in numbers treated for alcoholism is attributable in some degree to changes in police practice and court sentencing patterns over recent years and in the Aberdeen area, particularly to the establishment, with substantial Government financial support, of Albyn house as a designated place. This has been a major factor in the reduction of prosecutions for drunkenness in the Aberdeen area. Thus, in the five-year period between 1981 and 1986, there was a 67 per cent reduction in the number of persons in Scotland proceeded against for drunkenness and a 54 per cent. reduction in the number of persons received into prison either directly or by default following convictions for drunkenness. Between 1985 and 1986 in Scotland there was a particularly marked fall of 57 per cent. in the number of fine defaulters convicted and fined for drunkenness.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by the Scottish Development Agency in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* In 1987-88 (to 31 March 1988) the Scottish Development Agency commissioned 113 management or computer consultancies of a value of £5,000 or more. Several hundred consultancies to a lesser value were also commissioned: these were not exclusively management or computer consultancies. A detailed breakdown comprising the names of companies which have successfully tendered for contracts and the subject of these contracts cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate expense.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total amount spent by the Scottish Development Agency in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Lang *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The amount spent by the Scottish Development Agency on consultants' fees in 1987-88 (to 31 March 1988) was £6,851,863.

This includes fees for research and development, advisory services, appraisal and administration, such as tax and accountancy advice, pension and legal consultancies, as well as management and computer consultancy.

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Rifkind: The information requested is as follows:

Firm and Subject of Assignment

J. B. Schofield & Partners — To develop a fully integrated database system for monitoring the design, construction, inspection, and maintenance of highway structures.

Babtie Shaw & Morton — To develop a computer programme for estimating the cost of alternative designs for new bridges.

J. M. P. Consultants Ltd. — To develop a system for recording and storing results of materials testing carried out during the construction of new bridges.

BP International—Development of a Procurement Manual.

A. Macdonald Associates — Review of Building Regulations: Intelligent Information Systems

Frank Griffiths Associates Ltd. — Overview of Roads Procurement Procedures.

IBM—Systems Engineering Services.

Ashford Associates — Investigation into document storage and retrieval for the Scottish Office ELGIN project.

Ashford Associates — Evaluation of text processing packages.

Ashford Associates — Construction of a text storage data base for the Scottish Police College library.

IBM—Systems Engineering Services.
MSA — Installation of the MSA Accounts Payable and Receivable packages.
CIPFA Services — To develop a specification of user requirements to assist local authorities in Scotland with the preparation for the community charge.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Housing Benefit

Mr. Hinchliffe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many people of pensionable age in England and Wales were in receipt of housing benefit during 1987;

(2) how many people of pensionable age in England and Wales were in receipt of housing benefit during 1975, 1979, 1983 and 1986.

Mr. Portillo: Table A shows the number of pensioners in receipt of housing benefit in 1979, 1983, 1986 and 1987. Information for 1975 is not available, and from 1983 onwards information can be provided only for Great Britain. These figures refer to rate rebate only to avoid the risk of double-counting.

Table B indicates the more detailed position of pensioners gaining or losing entitlement as a result of the April 1988 changes. These modelled figures encompass gains and losses in rate rebates, and in rate rebates or allowances.

Table A
Numbers of pensioners receiving rate rebates[1]

	'000s
1975	n/a
1979	[2]2,000
1983	[3]4,100
1986	[3]3,990
1987	[4]4,040
1988	[5]3,390

[1] The figures relate to rate rebates only to avoid the risk of double counting. They understate the numbers of recipients by the very small numbers getting rent allowance or rent rebate only.
[2] Figure derived from the Department of the Environment, which had policy responsibility for housing benefit until 1982, and based on a small sample for England and Wales only. This figure excludes those who then received help with rates via supplementary benefit.
[3] Source: DHSS statistical enquiries, Great Britain.
[4] Source: Table 15.14 to the 1988 Public Expenditure White Paper, Great Britain.
[5] Estimate derived from DHSS model, based on the Family Expenditure Survey, related to expected caseload in the 1988-89 fiscal year and refers to tax units in which the head or spouse is aged 60 or above.

The estimated figures for pensioners gaining or losing housing benefit (rate rebate, rent rebate and rent allowance) as a result of the social security reforms are illustrated in the following table:

Table B

		Thousands
a.	(i)Gain from existing entitlement	970
	(ii)Gain from new entitlement	20
b.	(i)Lose some housing benefit, retain entitlement	2,570
	(ii)Lose all housing benefit entitlement	750
c.	Total on housing benefit after April 1988	3,560

Notes:
1. Figures relate to expected claimant caseload from April 1988, taking the effect of the Budget into account.
2. Figures denote tax-units, rather than households, in which the claimant or spouse is aged 60 or above.
3. These tables include in the gains and losses those losing, or gaining less than 50p per week.

General Practitioners (Charges)

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his estimate of the annual yield, excluding administration cost, from requiring all patients to pay £5 for each consultation with a general practitioner;

(2) what is his estimate of the annual yield, excluding administration costs, from requiring all patients, except the chronically sick, to pay £5 for each consultation with a general practitioner;

(3) what is his estimate of the annual yield, excluding administration costs, from requiring all patients, except those in receipt of retirement pension, to pay £5 for each consultation with a general practitioner;

(4) what is his estimate of the annual yield, excluding administration costs, from requiring all patients, except those in receipt of supplementary benefit, to pay £5 for each consultation with a general practitioner;

(5) what is his estimate of the annual yield, excluding administration costs, from requiring all patients, except the chronically sick and those in receipt of retirement pensions or supplementary benefit, to pay £5 for each consultation with a general practitioner.

Mr. Newton: The figures requested are as follows. Broad estimates only are possible, as the Department does not collect any data on a routine basis on consultations with general medical practitioners. The only information which is available is derived from the general household survey which is an annual inquiry based on some 12,000 households. It gives consultation rates by age and sex, but does not identify separately the consultation rates applying to specific groups such as the chronically sick or those in receipt of retirement pension or supplementary benefits; and an assumption has therefore been made that the consultation rates for these groups are the same as for the population as a whole in the relevant age group for each sex. The figures give the estimated annual gross yield on this basis before deduction of administration costs, and assume no change in present consultation patterns.

Estimated annual yield in England assuming a payment of £5 for each consultation with a general medical practitioner applying to:

	£ million
All patients	980
All patients except the chronically sick[1]	670
All patients except those in receipt of retirement pensions[2]	760
All patients except those in receipt of supplementary benefit[3]	840
All patients except the chronically sick and those in receipt of retirement pensions and supplementary benefit[1 2 3 4]	470

Notes:
[1] The chronically sick are defined as those reporting a long-standing illness in the General Household Survey.
[2] Those receiving retirement pensions are assumed to be all men aged 65 and over, and all women aged 60 and over.
[3] It is assumed that partners and dependents of people in receipt of supplementary benefits would also be excepted.
[4] It is assumed that the same proportion of chronically sick people are in receipt of supplementary benefit as the population as a whole in each age group for each sex.

No estimate has been made of the administration costs involved in collecting such charges but these costs would not be insignificant.

Cleveland Child Abuse Inquiry

Mr. Devlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to reimburse North Tees health authority for the costs of representation at the Cleveland child abuse inquiry.

Mr. Newton: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to him on 25 March 1988 at column *248*.

Spending Power

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish tables similar to those published in reply to the hon. Member for Kensington, *Official Report*, 4 February, columns *737-42*, but taking account of changes proposed in the Budget.

Mr. Scott: I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) on 30 March 1988.

Mentally-ill People

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many mentally-ill people received treatment *(a)* as in-patients and *(b)* as out-patients in the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority in (i) Calderstones, (ii) Brockhall and (iii) other hospital sites in the last 12 months.

Mrs. Currie: In 1986, the latest year for which information is available, the table shows the number of in-patient admissions and out-patient attendances at NHS mental illness hospitals/units in Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale health authority.

Hospital	*In-patient admissions*	*Out-patient attendances*
Burnley General	847	9,447
Rossendale General	345	2,189

These figures include patients who have been admitted or attended hospital on more than one occasion during the year.

Brockhall and Calderstones hospitals are mental handicap hospitals. Central information shows very few admissions to these hospitals of mentally handicapped residents with an associated mental illness diagnosis.

Community Health Councils

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a list of the community health councils in England together with their expenditure of public funds in the latest available year.

Mr. Newton: Following is the information requested derived from the 1986-87 annual accounts of the relevant health authorities.

Community health councils
Total expenditure 1986-87

	£
Northern region	
Hartlepool	27,139
North Tees	33,682
South Tees	34,299
East Cumbria	38,068
South Cumbria	59,044
West Cumbria	36,831
Darlington	32,488
Durham	31,981
North West Durham	34,921
South West Durham	30,417
Northumberland	40,008
Gateshead	24,399
Newcastle upon Tyne	33,438
North Tyneside	30,974
South Tyneside	32,409
Sunderland	31,844
Districts total	551,942
Trent region	
North Derbyshire	37,280
Southern Derbyshire	61,320
Leicestershire	47,589
North Lincolnshire	35,304
South Lincolnshire	44,866
Bassetlaw	30,109
Central Nottinghamshire	34,268
Nottingham	46,320
Barnsley	32,947
Doncaster	34,596
Rotherham	29,717
Sheffield	53,522
Districts total	487,838
Yorkshire region	
Hull	38,184
East Yorkshire	41,402
Grimsby	28,499
Scunthorpe	31,906
Northallerton	31,827
York	29,852
Scarborough	32,963
Harrogate	36,248
Bradford	31,633
Airedale	31,141
Calderdale	31,569
Huddersfield	29,971
Dewsbury	31,901
Leeds Western	38,325
Leeds Eastern	35,005
Wakefield	27,603
Pontefract	30,649
Districts total	558,678
East Anglian region	
Cambridge	34,446
Peterborough	43,568
West Suffolk	29,705
East Suffolk	31,872
Norwich	41,481
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	35,451
West Norfolk and Wisbech	43,055
Huntingdon	37,424
Districts total	297,002
North-West Thames region	
North Bedfordshire	37,924
South Bedfordshire	47,919
North Hertfordshire	33,311
East Hertfordshire	55,551
North-West Hertfordshire	42,937
South-West Hertfordshire	48,711
Barnet	43,959
Harrow	38,901
Hillingdon	57,656
Hounslow and Spelthorne	49,568

	£
Ealing	55,821
Brent	42,130
Paddington and North Kensington	47,522
Riverside	47,663
Districts total	649,573
South-East Thames Region	
Brighton	30,973
Eastbourne	35,906
Hastings	29,077
South-East Kent	30,061
Canterbury and Thanet	32,706
Dartford and Gravesham	33,095
Maidstone	27,773
Medway	30,825
Tunbridge Wells	23,110
Bexley	32,651
Greenwich	30,480
Bromley	30,145
West Lambeth	47,033
Camberwell	33,160
Lewisham and North Southwark	52,925
Districts total	499,920
South-West Thames region	
North-West Surrey	28,103
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	36,919
South-West Surrey	29,188
Mid Surrey	34,018
East Surrey	33,533
Chichester	30,088
Mid Downs	35,749
Worthing	31,365
Croydon	56,434
Kingston and Esher	39,666
Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton	53,741
Wandsworth	63,655
Merton and Sutton	38,496
Districts total	510,955
North-East Thames region	
Basildon and Thurrock	37,504
Mid Essex	36,153
North-East Essex	32,899
West Essex	33,762
Southend	45,433
Barking/Havering/Brentwood	45,658
Hampstead	38,715
Bloomsbury	46,082
Islington	40,441
City and Hackney	42,075
Newham	31,984
Tower Hamlets	33,372
Enfield	34,098
Haringey	43,313
Redbridge	35,367
Waltham Forest	39,379
Districts total	616,235
Wessex region	
East Dorset	35,334
West Dorset	28,090
Portsmouth & S E Hants	34,993
Southampton & S W Hants	32,906
Winchester	27,798
Basingstoke & N Hants	27,524
Salisbury	28,693
Swindon	31,498
Bath	30,689
Isle of Wight	31,013
Districts total	308,538
Oxford region	
East Berkshire	40,505
West Berkshire	42,252
Aylesbury Vale	29,235
Wycombe	39,600
Milton Keynes	34,893
Kettering	37,311
Northampton	34,461
Oxfordshire	56,138
Districts total	314,395
South Western region	
Bristol & Weston	61,351
Frenchay	40,723
Southmead	38,243
Cornwall/Isles of Scilly	57,514
Exeter	37,901
North Devon	32,359
Plymouth	39,301
Torbay	43,074
Cheltenham	37,132
Gloucester	50,617
Somerset	44,541
Districts total	482,756
West Midlands region	
Bromsgrove and Redditch	30,056
Herefordshire	39,971
Kidderminster	32,368
Worcester	31,208
Shropshire	54,823
Mid Staffordshire	32,832
North Staffordshire	34,934
South-East Staffordshire	32,877
Rugby	31,108
North Warwickshire	32,557
South Warwickshire	33,726
Central Birmingham	39,452
East Birmingham	33,820
North Birmingham	27,943
South Birmingham	36,694
West Birmingham	36,464
Coventry	37,808
Dudley	33,675
Sandwell	34,905
Solihull	36,724
Walsall	33,309
Wolverhampton	35,546
Districts total	772,800
Mersey region	
Chester	35,536
Crewe	34,871
Halton	41,715
Macclesfield	36,413
Warrington	35,096
Liverpool	80,248
St. Helens and Knowsley	34,589
Southport and Formby	35,828
South Sefton	29,657
Wirral	36,399
Districts total	400,352
North Western region	
Lancaster	39,275
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	35,037
Preston	43,613
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	38,559
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	38,446
West Lancashire	28,476
Chorley and South Ribble	42,127
Bolton	52,086

	£
Bury	29,192
North Manchester	43,242
Central Manchester	42,297
South Manchester	43,194
Oldham	32,419
Rochdale	30,802
Salford	33,137
Stockport	42,080
Tameside and Glossop	30,406
Trafford	26,472
Wigan	32,000
Districts total	702,860

Note:
In addition to the figures for district health authorities the 1986-87 annual accounts of the Northern Regional Health Authority show similar expenditure totalling £10,710.

Prostaglandin Abortion (Poison)

Mr. Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will introduce legislation to prohibit the use of poison in the case of prostaglandin abortion; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: Successive Governments have accepted since the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act that legislation in this field is initiated by private Members. The Government's position is that the method by which a legal abortion is performed is a matter for the clinical judgment of the doctor concerned, having regard to all the circumstances of the particular case.

District Health Authorities (Land)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the ability of a district health authority to cede land to a voluntary housing society.

Mrs. Currie: Health authorities are required to dispose of surplus land in a publicly acceptable manner and, in general, to obtain the full market price. There are provisions under which with Ministers' agreement, surplus land can be leased to voluntary bodies on concessionary terms, provided the use to be made of the land complements a NHS service. Land cannot be gifted without the approval of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of the health budget is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Newton: Total expenditure for 1986-87 (the latest year for which figures are available) in health districts and family practitioner committee areas, which cover inner city areas, was as follows:

	£ million
Hospital and Community Health Services[1] (Revenue and Capital)	4,449
Family Practitioner Services[2]	1,222

[1] Includes an element of £158 million (estimated on a pro-rata to total population basis) for revenue and capital expenditure incurred by regional health authorities for their regions as a whole.
[2] Expenditure on family practitioner services cannot strictly be attributed to particular regions or districts. Total expenditure has been estimated pro-rata to the total population of each region with expenditure assigned to each region geographically (ie from the annual accounts of the family practitioner committees which account for it).

This was a total of £5,671 million within a total expenditure of £14,745 million. However, it should be noted that many of these districts and FPCs serve a geographical area considerably wider than the inner city and, in particular, that a number of the inner city districts contain teaching hospitals and provide regional specialty services, in addition to their local services. It is not possible to disaggregate those elements of expenditure which relate directly to the inner city areas.

Social Fund

Mr. Alfred Morris: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he and his Department have received from Councillor Sam Darby and the town clerk of Manchester in regard to social fund allocations for 1988-89; what reply he is making; if there is any action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The Permanent Secretary of the Department and I have received letters dated 21 March from the town clerk, and Councillor Darby of Manchester city council, respectively. Replies will be sent shortly.

Project 2000

Mr. Millan: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions he has had on the proposals in Project 2000 relating to nurse training and education; and what conclusions he has reached.

Mr. Newton: All four health Departments have undertaken widespread consultation on the "Project 2000" proposals put forward by the United Kingdom Central Council for the reform of nurse education and training. We hope to be in a position to make a response to the proposals in the near future.

Hepatitis B

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made against the spread of hepatitis B infection; what groups of people are being inoculated against it; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie: The number of cases of acute hepatitis B reported to the public health laboratory service has declined from approximately 2,200 in 1985 to approximately 800 in 1987. During this period there has been not only an increase in vaccination against the disease but the issue of detailed advice to health authorities on preventing the spread of both hepatitis B and HIV infection in specific high risk situations, as well as widespread publicity on the risks of AIDS and HIV infection.

The current memorandum from the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation (JCVI), which advises the health Departments on all aspects of immunisation, recommends that specific groups of health care personnel, patients, and family contacts should be considered for vaccination against hepatitis B. We hope shortly to make an announcement about a review of this guidance which has been undertaken by the JCVI.

Chlamydia

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress is being made to diagnose, treat and counter the spread of the chlamydia infection within the community.

Mrs. Currie: Facilities exist in every district to diagnose chlamydia, and the disease responds readily to the appropriate antibiotics.

The public information campaigns about AIDS by the Department and the Health Education Authority should not only help to reduce the risks of HIV infection but should assist, with other work on public education, in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia.

Nurses (Professional Conduct)

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what complaints have been received by the professional conduct committee of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting on allegations of poor nursing practice and negligence in each year since 1979;

(2) how many of the complaints of poor nursing practice and negligence brought to the attention of the professional health conduct committee of the Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting have been settled by mutual agreement without conducting a hearing in each year since 1979;

(3) what has been the cost to his Department of the settling of cases of complaints of poor nursing practice and negligence brought to the attention of the professional conduct committee of the Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting but which were settled by mutual agreement without conducting a hearing in each year since 1979;

(4) what assessment has been made by his Department of the proportions of cases of allegations of poor nursing practice and negligence brought to the attention of the professional conduct committee of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting which arise from instances of low staffing levels and low morale.

Mr. Newton: The work of the professional conduct committee is the responsibility of the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) which was formally established in 1983. I understand from the council that most of the information sought is not available in the form requested.

It is the committee's function to determine the outcome of the cases brought before it. None are settled by mutual agreement and there is no cost to the Department. Information on the work of the professional conduct committee may be found in the annual report of the UKCC which is in the Library.

Community Care

Mr. Wigley: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many placements of people who have been transferred from long-stay mental handicap hospitals into community-based settings have proved unsuccessful due to *(a)* lack of funding, *(b)* poor service design and *(c)* neighbourhood hostility.

Mrs. Currie: This information is not available centrally. However, the Department is not aware of any significant number of unsuccessful transfers of residents from mental handicap hospitals to community-based settings, although there may be initial difficulties for a number of reasons in such placements.

South Manchester Health Authority

Mr. Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Stretford of 28 March, he will give precise details of the date on which the Minister for Health the right hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton) decided to refuse to meet a delegation of hon. Members about South Manchester health authority, having been asked to reconsider his decision to refer the matter to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary;

(2) if, pursuant to his answer of 28 March, he will give details of the circumstances, including the means of communication by which he learned of the refusal of the hon. Member for Stretford to meet the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State about South Manchester health authority.

Mr. Newton: My decision not to see a delegation of hon. Members about South Manchester health authority after they had refused to meet my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary was made on 14 March 1988. It was conveyed over the telephone by my private office the same day to the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley), who had requested the meeting on behalf of hon. Members and from whom my office learnt of the delegation's refusal to meet the Parliamentary Under-Secretary.

Strontium 90

Mr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the average levels of strontium 90 present in the bone marrow of children of the same age, born and raised in the United Kingdom, at intervals of five years from 1975 to the present; and whether the figures are based on actual measurements or from estimates from air and food levels.

Mrs. Currie: I am not aware of measurements or estimates which provide the information requested. Strontium 90 if found principally in bone rather than the bone marrow. The National Radiological Protection Board has made estimates for adults of radiation dose from strontium 90; these estimates are of notional lifetime dose from a particular year's intake. They are derived, using mathematical models, from measurements of levels of Strontium 90 in the diet.

Sheltered Housing (Rents)

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what response he has made on the representations from the hon. Member for Woolwich dated 19 February about the decision of Greenwich council to raise rents for its frail elderly tenants in sheltered housing schemes.

Mr. Portillo: My office wrote to the hon. Member on 7 March explaining that the correspondence was forwarded to the Department of the Environment as the matters raised are the responsibility of that Department.

Tranquillisers

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what discussions he has had with other European countries about problems associated with benzodiazepines; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Newton: We have had no such discussions.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services how many representations he has received since 1 January 1987 about suspected adverse drug reactions involving benzodiazepines; and how many of these have been from *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* voluntary organisations counselling patients who claim to have suffered adverse effects and *(c)* general practitioners.

Mr. Newton: Since 1 January 1987, we have received 22 letters from hon. Members or members of the public on this matter. None has been from a voluntary organisation or a general practitioner.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the number of prescriptions for each type of benzodiazepines dispensed by community pharmacists in Great Britain in each of the years 1978 to 1986 inclusive, giving the cost to the National Health Service in each case.

Mr. Newton: Information on the number of prescriptions for benzodiazepines in each of the years 1978 to 1986 and on the net ingredient cost in 1986 is set out in the table. Information on the costs for earlier years is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Benzodiazepines
Number of Prescriptions 1978-1986
Great Britain (Thousands)

Drug Group	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*Net Ingredient Cost £000 1986*
Temazepam	314	736	1,329	2,151	3,088	3,628	4,222	6,279	7,160	13,756
Nitrazepam	10,174	10,148	9,014	8,371	7,861	7,048	6,403	5,974	5,541	1,147
Diazepam	11,096	10,488	8,819	8,023	7,077	6,222	5,407	5,402	5,235	754
Lorazepam	1,826	2,094	2,390	2,921	3,466	3,528	3,240	3,117	3,149	3,251
Triazolam	—	175	544	1,043	1,147	1,093	1,274	1,646	1,994	5,833
Chlordiazepoxide	2,942	2,638	2,156	1,996	1,806	1,550	1,347	1,165	1,081	1,321
Oxazepam	724	736	688	785	759	712	645	721	766	808
Lormetazepam	—	—	—	38	202	406	521	146	191	472
Clonazepam	37	48	47	54	65	80	90	107	113	461
Loprazolam	—	—	—	—	—	2	66	24	80	185
Clobazam	—	132	326	404	457	466	487	130	45	222
Alprazolam	—	—	—	—	—	171	339	83	1	6
Flurazepam	2,100	2,295	2,300	2,233	2,241	2,045	1,970	459	—	—
Clorazepate Dipotassium	1,042	1,045	1,181	1,139	1,186	1,189	1,255	267	—	—
Flunitrazepam	—	—	—	—	8	112	241	69	—	—
Bromazepam	—	—	—	—	10	95	188	43	—	—
Ketazolam	—	—	49	127	168	174	158	36	—	—
Medazepam	331	336	230	210	183	161	126	29	—	—
Prazepam	—	—	—	—	14	66	65	14	—	—
Total	30,586	30,871	29,073	29,495	29,738	28,748	28,044	25,711	25,356	28,216

Note:
These estimates are based on a sample of prescriptions of approximately 1 in 200 in England and Wales and 1 in 100 in Scotland which were dispensed by community pharmacists.

Mr. Wareing: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received from the Council on Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction on Merseyside about problems associated with benzodiazepines; and what his response has been.

Mrs. Currie: I have received an invitation to visit the Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction which I have regretfully had to decline. I have also received representations on the council's behalf from the hon. Member, to which I responded today.

Northern RHA (Performance Indicators)

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what criteria will be used in the proposed use of performance indicators to assess the Northern regional health authority.

Mr. Newton: Health Service indicators show each regional and district health authority's position in relation to other health authorities on a whole range of issues. The purpose of the indicators is, using local knowledge, to stimulate questions and enquiry about the reasons behind the variations across the country and between districts within regions. Northern region and its districts are being asked, like all other authorities, to analyse their indicators for the past four years and present the results to their authorities. Regions are specifically asked to look at variations across the region and at progress over time in addressing performance issues raised by the analysis. The results of these regional analyses will be discussed during this year's accountability reviews between the Department and regions.

Social Security Advisory Committee

Mr. Carttiss: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Social Security Advisory Committee will be publishing its next annual report.

Mr. Scott: I understand that the SSAC's sixth report will be published on Wednesday 6 April 1988. Copies will be available in the Vote Office on that day.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the eligibility criteria for applications to the Independent Living Fund.

Mr. Scott: Broadly, the fund will be open to severely disabled people on low incomes who receive attendance allowance and who have to pay for domestic care.

The detailed criteria are as follows:

THE INDEPENDENT LIVING FUND

Target Group

People who are severely disabled, whether physically, mentally or sensorially, to the extent that they need help with their domestic duties and/or personal care to enable them to live independently in their own homes.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The applicant is living in the UK either:
   a. alone; or
   b. with a partner, or parent or parents, or other person or persons who are unable because of old age, ill-health, disability, other responsibilities, or the extent of the care need, to provide the total amount of personal care and domestic assistance required.

For this purpose paid or voluntary support on a live-in basis does not disqualify an applicant from receiving help.

2. The applicant is:
   a. receiving attendance allowance or constant attendance allowance; or
   b. has claimed and been found to satisfy the attendance allowance eligibility criteria, but the six months qualifying period has not yet been completed.

If the applicant has submitted a claim to attendance allowance which has still to be decided but which the Trustees consider is likely to succeed, they may make an interim payment until decision of the claim if that would prevent the applicant's admission to institutional care.

3. The applicant is severely restricted in his ability to perform normal personal care and/or domestic tasks because of his disablement without extensive help.

4. The applicant or partner, or parent in the case of a dependent child, is:
   a. in receipt of income support; or
   b. not in receipt of income support but has net income in excess of income support level of less than the amount needed to pay for his essential personal care or domestic assistance and has capital of less than £6,000 (the Trustees may disregard capital earmarked for specific uses such as for adaptations or a car as they see fit.)

5. That part of personal care and domestic assistance provided by a close relative who incurs only minimal expenses, or provided by a local authority, is not normally eligible for help from the fund.

6. Personal care and domestic assistance has to be paid for.

7. The above criteria having been satisfied the Trustees may give such assistance with the cost of provision of personal care and domestic assistance, having regard to receipt of attendance allowance, invalid care allowance, the income support severe disablement premium, excess income under 4(b), net housing costs, to other care needs and to such other factors as they think fit.

8. Notwithstanding that the above criteria may not all be met, the Trustees may exceptionally make payments as they think fit if such payments would prevent a severely disabled person's admission to institutional care.

9. In the case of payments from the fund being taken into account for the assessment of housing benefit, payment may be made from the Fund to make good the housing benefit reduction, retrospectively, once legislation has been made to disregard payments from the Fund for the purposes of assessing housing benefit.

Notes

1. Domestic duties are taken to be normal household duties such as cleaning and tidying; cooking and preparing meals and washing up; essential laundering and ironing, and essential shopping.

2. Personal care duties are taken to be those personal duties that a fit person would normally do for himself such as dressing, eating, washing and bathing, helping in and out of bed and with general mobility around the home.

NHS (Compensation Payments)

Miss Widdecombe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now publish the outturn figures for 1986-87 for compensation payments to National Health Service staff in respect of redundancies and early retirements in the manner described in the Government's reply to the first report from the Social Services Committee of Session 1984-85, breaking down the figures to distinguish between competitive tendering and other cases.

Mrs. Currie: The outturn figures for 1986-87 are as follows:

	Number of cases	*Compensation cost* £	*Total cost including superannuation* £
Competitive tendering			
New cases	1,935	3,999,000	8,808,000
Continuing cases	1,479	1,487,000	2,099,000
Other cases			
New cases	1,767	6,100,000	16,401,000
Continuing cases	7,790	12,098,000	24,185,000

Social Security Reform

Mr. Ken Hargreaves: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what progress has been made in each of the social security regions on converting existing supplementary benefit claims to income support; and when he expects the conversion to be completed.

Mr. Portillo: We plan to complete the conversion of current supplementary benefit claims to income support by 11 April in all offices although a small number of offices still have some way to go. The table shows the position in each of the seven regions on 11 March 1988.

Region	*Percentage local converted*[1]
Scotland	89
North East	83
North West	84
Midlands	82
Wales and South Western	85
London North	74
London South	70

[1] Staff are using the conversion to update claims records. The exercise has shown that some claims are still recorded as live even though the person is no longer receiving supplementary benefit. This means that some recent counts of the number of current

supplementary benefit claims on which these percentages are based have not reflected the fall in the number of people receiving supplementary benefit.

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide for employee families with children, figures similar to those in table 9B of "Impact of the Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits" showing average changes in disposable income after housing costs *(a)* below gross earnings levels ranging from £75 to £200 and *(b)* below present disposable income levels after housing costs ranging from £75 to £200, the figures all to be displayed in £25 steps.

Mr. Portillo: The figures are in the table:

All income related benefits:
Average change in disposable income after meeting housing costs:
Employee families with children in real terms

Gross weekly original income, less than (£)	*Average change £ per week*	*Present disposable income after housing costs, less than (£)*	*Average change £ per week*
75	+4·10	75	+12·60
100	+3·10	100	+3·70
125	+3·60	125	+3·40
150	+3·40	150	+3·50
175	+3·40	175	+3·50
200	+3·40	200	+3·40

The estimates are consistent with assumptions in "Impact of The Reformed Structure of Income Related Benefits," October 1987, cover survey families of all sizes, ages and tenure types and include both couples and lone parents who are employees in employment working 24 or more remunerative hours. No adjustments have been made for the 1988 Budget changes.

Adjudication Officers' Guide

Mr. Amos: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services when the adjudication officers' guide will be published; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Portillo: The adjudication officers' guide will be published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office today. Its 10 volumes contain detailed guidance on the full range of adjudicable social security benefits including the new benefits of family credit and income support. Previous guidance on other benefits, most of which was not published, has been completely rewritten. The guide will be invaluable both to adjudication officers in determining social security claims and questions and to outside agencies in providing help and advice to claimants. Copies have been placed in the Library.

NHS Finance

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each district health authority, regional health authority and special health authority and for England as a total the amount of income to the National Health Service from *(a)* charitable appeals, *(b)* subscriptions, *(c)* donations and grants, *(d)* legacies, *(e)* dividends and interests and *(f)* the total trust fund income for the latest available year.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 1 March 1988]:* Tables showing information for National Health Service trust funds and derived from the 1986-87 accounts of health authorities in England have been placed in the Libarary.

Children in Care

Mr. Rowe: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the annual figures for the number of children received into care by reason of homelessness; if he will give this information for England as a whole and for each local authority area; what are the latest figures for the number of children in local authority care where the reason for their admission into care was homelessness; if he will give this information for England as a whole for each local authority area for the years ended 31 March 1985, 1986 and 1987 or the three most recent years; and if he will make a statement.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* A child may be taken into care for a number of reasons of which homelessness may be a contributory factor, although not identified as a specific cause in the statistics.

Information on children in care where the specific cause was that their family was homeless is given in the tables for 1984, 1985 and 1986 for each local authority in England.

Table 1 Children received into care of local authorities because family homeless (eviction or other cause) during the year ending 31 March, 1984, 1985 and 1986[2]

Numbers

	1984	*1985*	*[2]1986*
England	244	212	204
Cleveland	0	6	0
Cumbria	0	3	5
Durham	4	3	3
Northumberland	6	0	0
Gateshead	0	0	0
Newcastle upon Tyne	8	6	10
North Tyneside	0	6	1
South Tyneside	3	0	1
Sunderland	0	0	1
Humberside	10	8	2
North Yorkshire	11	2	0
Barnsley	3	0	3
Doncaster	3	3	9
Rotherham	1	1	0
Sheffield	1	[1]1	[1]1
Bradford	18	11	4
Calderdale	1	0	2
Kirklees	8	2	5
Leeds	3	14	6
Wakefield	1	0	0
Cheshire	5	0	2
Lancashire	10	11	14
Bolton	2	1	0
Bury	0	3	0
Manchester	3	11	9
Oldham	0	0	0
Rochdale	1	1	2
Salford	4	0	8
Stockport	6	0	2
Tameside	[1]0	1	1
Trafford	0	0	0
Wigan	0	0	0
Knowsley	4	0	0
Liverpool	2	0	2
Sefton	2	11	2
St. Helens	4	0	0
Wirral	2	4	4
Hereford and Worcester	0	2	0
Shropshire	2	0	0
Staffordshire	4	2	2
Warwickshire	0	0	1
Birmingham	9	3	4
Coventry	5	2	1
Dudley	0	1	0
Sandwell	1	0	1

	1984	*1985*	[2]*1986*
Solihull	1	0	2
Walsall	3	3	7
Wolverhampton	2	0	0
Derbyshire	0	0	3
Leicestershire	0	4	1
Lincolnshire	3	10	2
Northamptonshire	1	0	3
Nottinghamshire	7	5	2
Bedfordshire	6	2	1
Berkshire	1	3	5
Buckinghamshire	0	0	2
Cambridgeshire	4	0	0
Essex	4	7	3
Hertfordshire	2	0	1
Norfolk	0	2	2
Oxfordshire	6	0	4
Suffolk	0	1	1
Camden	0	0	3
Greenwich	0	3	1
Hackney	0	0	0
Hammersmith	2	0	1
Islington	[1]2	[1]2	[1]2
Kensington	1	0	0
Lambeth	0	0	0
Lewisham	0	0	[1]0
Southwark	1	1	2
Tower Hamlets	[1]1	[1]1	[1]1
Wandsworth	4	5	4
Westminster	0	0	0
City of London	0	0	0
Barking	2	0	1
Barnet	0	0	0
Bexley	2	2	0
Brent	0	2	2
Bromley	0	1	1
Croydon	7	1	2
Ealing	0	2	0
Enfield	0	2	0
Haringey	2	0	0
Harrow	0	0	0
Havering	0	0	0
Hillingdon	1	3	1
Hounslow	1	0	0
Kingston upon Thames	1	0	0
Merton	0	1	0
Newham	0	8	13
Redbridge	0	0	0
Richmond upon Thames	0	0	0
Sutton	3	0	3
Waltham Forest	1	0	0
Dorset	2	0	2
Hampshire	2	11	0
Isle of Wight	1	0	0
Kent	4	[1]4	[1]4
Surrey	3	2	3
East Sussex	1	3	1
West Sussex	0	0	0
Wiltshire	0	2	0
Avon	8	0	4
Cornwall	0	0	4
Devon	3	0	[1]0
Gloucestershire	2	0	1
Somerset	0	0	1

[1] Estimated from information for previous years.
[2] 1986 figures are provisional.

Table 2
Children received into care of local authorities because family homeless (eviction or other cause) as at 31 March 1984, 1985 and 1986[2]

Numbers

	1984	*1985*	*1986*[2]
England	713	598	513
Cleveland	4	3	3
Cumbria	6	8	7
Durham	12	11	10
Northumberland	4	3	1
Gateshead	3	3	2
Newcastle upon Tyne	11	10	9
North Tyneside	7	10	9
South Tyneside	8	5	5
Sunderland	3	2	3
Humberside	9	10	9
North Yorkshire	10	5	3
Barnsley	12	12	12
Doncaster	3	8	9
Rotherham	2	2	2
Sheffield	16	[1]16	[1]16
Bradford	23	19	4
Calderdale	2	2	1
Kirklees	9	8	7
Leeds	3	7	8
Wakefield	12	9	8
Cheshire	16	14	9
Lancashire	21	19	18
Bolton	2	1	0
Bury	2	4	0
Manchester	13	15	12
Oldham	0	0	0
Rochdale	5	3	3
Salford	8	6	10
Stockport	7	3	3
Tameside	[1]0	0	0
Trafford	3	1	0
Wigan	6	5	5
Knowsley	4	4	4
Liverpool	25	0	0
Sefton	7	6	4
St. Helens	5	5	3
Wirral	5	6	4
Hereford and Worcester	7	8	6
Shropshire	15	9	6
Staffordshire	21	13	12
Warwickshire	8	8	8
Birmingham	7	4	4
Coventry	11	7	5
Dudley	6	6	5
Sandwell	3	7	4
Solihull	1	0	0
Walsall	6	6	7
Wolverhampton	4	2	2
Derbyshire	2	3	2
Leicestershire	4	3	2
Lincolnshire	5	1	3
Northamptonshire	9	6	6
Nottinghamshire	12	9	10
Bedfordshire	15	12	8
Berkshire	14	15	9
Buckinghamshire	2	2	2
Cambridgeshire	6	4	4
Essex	15	12	9
Hertfordshire	12	12	10
Norfolk	2	2	1
Oxfordshire	4	3	1
Suffolk	8	6	6
Camden	0	0	0
Greenwich	0	2	1
Hackney	5	5	3
Hammersmith	7	5	3
Islington	[1]0	[1]0	[1]0
Kensington	8	7	5
Lambeth	2	0	0
Lewisham	1	1	[1]1
Southwark	2	1	3
Tower Hamlets	[1]24	[1]24	[1]24
Wandsworth	5	4	4
Westminster	4	4	2
City of London	0	0	0
Barking	0	0	0
Barnet	0	0	0
Bexley	0	0	0

	1984	1985	1986[2]
Brent	3	5	4
Bromley	4	4	2
Croydon	5	4	1
Ealing	5	5	4
Enfield	0	2	0
Haringey	5	4	3
Harrow	1	0	0
Havering	0	0	0
Hillingdon	0	1	1
Hounslow	2	1	1
Kingston upon Thames	0	0	0
Merton	0	0	0
Newham	0	1	11
Redbridge	0	0	0
Richmond upon Thames	0	0	1
Sutton	2	1	3
Waltham Forest	0	0	0
Dorset	13	10	9
Hampshire	40	32	26
Isle of Wight	1	0	0
Kent	13	[1]13	[1]13
Surrey	3	4	5
East Sussex	9	4	6
West Sussex	8	7	6
Wiltshire	13	12	5
Avon	12	11	10
Cornwall	0	0	2
Devon	20	14	[1]14
Gloucestershire	5	3	3
Somerset	4	2	2

[1] Estimated from information for earlier years.
[2] The 1986 figures are provisional.

Motor Cyclists

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the annual cost to the National Health Service of the treatment of leg injuries sustained by motor cyclists in road traffic accidents.

Mrs. Currie *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The annual cost to the National Health Service of treating injuries to motor cyclists and their passengers is estimated to be £22 million (England 1986). Information is not available on the cost of particular types of injury.

District Health Authority Staffing

Mr. Favell: To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in respect of each district health authority *(a)* the total number of full-time equivalent employees and *(b)* the total number of full-time equivalent management employees above the level of department head or ward sister.

Mr. Newton *[holding answer 4 February 1988]:* Such information as is available centrally is shown in the tables. Information on management employees in the form requested is not held centrally.

NHS directly employed staff[1 2] in post 30 September 1986

Region	*Whole-time equivalent[3] 1986*
Northern	53,510
Yorkshire	59,570
Trent	74,310
East Anglia	30,490
North West Thames	54,810
North East Thames	69,060
South East Thames	61,860
South West Thames	45,660
Wessex	43,520
Oxford	33,210
South Western	52,370
West Midlands	84,230
Mersey	42,870
North Western	74,080
England[4]	801,590

Source:
DHSS(SR7) Annual censuses of NHS medical and non-medical manpower.

[1] Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum medical and dental staff.
[2] Includes agency nursing and midwifery staff.
[3] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten(10) whole-time equivalents.
[4] Includes staff in London Post Graduate Special Health Authorities, Dental Estimates Board, Prescription Pricing Authority, London Ambulance Services Staff, and Family Practitioner Committees' directly employed staff.

NHS directly employed staff[1 2 3] in post 30 September 1986

	[4]Whole-time equivalents
Northern RHA	
Total	53,510
Hartlepool	1,570
North Tees	2,490
South Tees	5,020
East Cumbria	2,980
South Cumbria	2,060
West Cumbria	2,050
Darlington	2,270
Durham	2,440
North West Durham	1,370
South West Durham	2,690
Northumberland	5,190
Gateshead	2,680
Newcastle (T)	9,600
North Tyneside	1,840
South Tyneside	1,770
Sunderland	5,000
Yorkshire RHA	
Total	59,570
Hull	5,180
East Yorkshire	2,960
Grimsby	2,460
Scunthorpe	2,040
Northallerton	970
York	4,370
Scarborough	1,660
Harrogate	2,190
Bradford	5,090
Airedale	2,500
Calderdale	2,600
Huddersfield	3,650
Dewsbury	1,910
Leeds Western (T)	6,940
Leeds Eastern (T)	6,430
Wakefield	3,770
Pontefract	1,940
Trent RHA	
Total	74,310
North Derbyshire	3,750
Southern Derbyshire	7,510
Leicestershire (T)	12,460
North Lincolnshire	4,620
South Lincolnshire	3,600
Bassetlaw	1,210
Central Nottinghamshire	4,200

	*Whole-time equivalents
Nottingham (T)	11,200
Barnsley	2,900
Doncaster	4,060
Rotherham	3,200
Sheffield (T)	12,740
East Anglia RHA	
Total	30,490
Cambridge (T)	5,140
Peterborough	3,050
West Suffolk	2,860
East Suffolk	5,050
Norwich	7,140
Great Yarmouth and Waveney	2,580
West Norfolk and Wisbech	2,160
Huntingdon	1,370
North West Thames RHA	
Total	54,810
North Bedfordshire	2,780
South Bedfordshire	3,360
North Hertfordshire	1,950
East Hertfordshire	1,840
North West Hertfordshire	5,440
South West Hertfordshire	2,200
Barnet	5,250
Harrow	2,660
Hillingdon	3,900
Hounslow and Spelthorne	3,550
Ealing	2,930
Brent	4,020
Paddington and North Kensington (T)	4,040
Riverside (T)	8,760
North East Thames RHA	
Total	69,060
Basildon and Thurrock	4,110
Mid Essex	3,920
North East Essex	5,130
West Essex	2,910
Southend	3,760
Barking Havering and Brentwood	5,820
Hampstead (T)	4,640
Bloomsbury (T)	7,850
Islington	3,200
City and Hackney (T)	5,760
Newham	2,260
Tower Hamlets (T)	5,050
Enfield	2,730
Haringey	2,790
Redbridge	2,710
Waltham Forest	4,560
South East Thames RHA	
Total	61,860
Brighton	4,680
Eastbourne	3,330
Hastings	2,400
South East Kent	2,970
Canterbury and Thanet	4,570
Dartford and Gravesham	3,780
Maidstone	2,690
Medway	3,650
Tunbridge Wells	3,640
Bexley	2,800
Greenwich	4,070
Bromley	3,820
West Lambeth (T)	5,440
Camberwell (T)	4,530
Lewisham and North Southwark (T)	7,730
South West Thames RHA	
Total	45,660
North West Surrey	2,960
West Surrey and North East Hampshire	3,020
South West Surrey	2,450
Mid Surrey	3,100
East Surrey	3,540
Chichester	2,420
Mid Downs	3,140
Worthing	2,830
Croydon	4,390
Kingston and Esher	2,920
Richmond Twickenham and Roehampton	2,440
Wandsworth (T)	5,740
Merton and Sutton	4,940
Wessex RHA	
Total	43,520
East Dorset	5,570
West Dorset	3,190
Portsmouth and SE Hampshire	6,520
Southampton and SW Hampshire (T)	7,970
Winchester	2,820
Basingstoke and N Hampshire	3,080
Salisbury	2,490
Swindon	3,300
Bath	5,430
Isle of Wight	1,900
Oxford RHA	
Total	33,210
East Berkshire	4,040
West Berkshire	5,650
Aylesbury Vale	3,080
Wycombe	2,310
Milton Keynes	1,360
Kettering	2,650
Northampton	4,400
Oxfordshire (T)	8,180
South Western RHA	
Total	52,370
Bristol and Weston (T)	7,170
Frenchay	4,680
Southmead	3,870
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	5,380
Exeter	6,370
North Devon	1,820
Plymouth	5,480
Torbay	3,130
Cheltenham and District	2,380
Gloucester	4,640
Somerset	5,790
West Midlands RHA	
Total	84,230
Bromsgrove and Redditch	2,150
Herefordshire	2,100
Kidderminster and District	2,200
Worcester and District	3,590
Shropshire	5,310
Mid Staffordshire	3,530
North Staffordshire	7,430
South East Staffordshire	3,330
Rugby	840
North Warwickshire	2,400
South Warwickshire	3,540
Central Birmingham (T)	6,100
East Birmingham	2,700
North Birmingham	2,630
South Birmingham	4,980
West Birmingham	4,950
Coventry	5,000
Dudley	4,120
Sandwell	2,960
Solihull	2,140
Walsall	3,450
Wolverhampton	4,320

	*Whole-time equivalents
Mersey RHA	
Total	42,870
Chester	3,570
Crewe	3,070
Halton	1,100
Macclesfield	2,700
Warrington	3,920
Liverpool (T)	10,430
St. Helens and Knowsley	4,690
Southport and Formby	2,080
South Sefton	4,130
Wirral	5,030
North Western RHA	
Total	74,080
Lancaster	3,800
Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde	4,290
Preston	5,390
Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	4,900
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	4,420
West Lancashire	1,780
Chorley and South Ribble	1,060
Bolton	3,410
Bury	1,830
North Manchester	4,680
Central Manchester (T)	4,610
South Manchester (T)	6,540
Oldham	2,790
Rochdale	2,190
Salford (T)	6,340
Stockport	3,750
Tameside and Glossop	2,500
Trafford	2,350
Wigan	3,810

Source: DHSS annual census of National Health Service medical and non-medical manpower.

Notes to all regional tables:

1. Includes permanent paid, honorary and locum medical and dental staff. Excludes consultants in non-teaching district health authorities and senior registrars in all district health authorities — these staff have their contracts with regional health authorities.
2. Includes agency nursing and midwifery staff.
3. Regional totals including regional headquarters and headquarters units staff, and staff whose contracts are held by regional health authorities.
4. Figures are independently rounded to nearest ten (10) whole-time equivalents.

(T)—Denotes teaching authority.

EMPLOYMENT

Consultative Documents

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will make it his policy that responses received to consultative documents issued by his Department be made publicly available in his Department's library, except where the respondent has specifically asked that this be not done; and if he will arrange for this procedure to be made clear when future consultative documents are issued.

Mr. Lee: The Department of Employment operates a system whereby responses to consultative documents issued by my Department are made available in the Library for public inspection, on request. Responses are not made available when the respondents have stated that they do not wish their comments to be made public.

Deaf People (Training Schemes)

Mr. Sims: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment (1) what plans he has to increase the supply of properly qualified communicators with deaf people on training schemes;

(2) whether he intends to establish further courses along the lines of that run at Bournville further education college, Birmingham, to train communicators with deaf people.

Mr. Cope: The Manpower Services Commission is committed to assist in increasing the supply of trained communicators for deaf people in order to support deaf trainees in the commission's youth and adult training programme. Plans include the setting up and running of a number of courses over the next year to 18 months based on the experiences of the Bournville course, which was itself funded by the commission.

Telephone Communications

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment why telephone callers to his Department's advertised number of 213 3000 are being asked successively to redial two further numbers, the last of which is mainly engaged; what action he proposes to take to improve telephone communications with his Department; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Lee: The 213 3000 number for this Department was changed to a new number on 18 January 1988 as part of the modernisation programme of the Whitehall telephone exchange system which is run by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA), as part of the common service to Government Departments.

After the changeover, a recorded message was placed on the 213 number and callers were asked to phone a central switchboard where they are told the new number of the person or section they want to contact. Provided the extension is not busy the call is then transferred, avoiding the need to dial an additional number.

However, the passport office was also on the old 213 exchange and because of the large number of people who ring there the number has sometimes become overloaded. At such times operators have asked callers to dial the new number directly in order to deal more quickly with new inquiries.

The CCTA has recently installed a new intercept recorded announcement message, which gives more prominence to the new number of the passport office. This should reduce the number of callers erroneously ringing the number used by this Department. The volume of callers on the 213 number is also decreasing as people are becoming aware of the new numbers. The CCTA is also ensuring that all callers who ring the 273 number are transferred to the new extension number and are not being asked to make a further call.

Adult Training Scheme

Mr. Dunnachie: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking him to reconsider his decision to require those participating in the adult training scheme to pay the first £5 of their travel expenses.

Mr. Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what representations he has received asking

him to reconsider his decision to require those participating in the adult training scheme to pay the first £5 of their travel expenses.

Mr. Nicholls: None. It was the unanimous recommendation of the Manpower Services Commission that only participants' travel expenses in excess of £5 should be met, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has accepted this.

Dock Workers

Mr. Summerson: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the East Anglia labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent workers *dismissed* for offence justifying summary dismissal	—	—	—	2	—	—	—
Reinstated by order of East Anglia Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dismissal upheld by East Anglia Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	—	—	—	2	—	—	—

Training Schemes

Mr. Janner: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many school leavers were on YTS/YOPs schemes during 1987; and hos many and what percentage of these school leavers obtained work on completing their time on the scheme.

Mr. Cope: There were on average about 400,000 young people training on YTS at any one time in 1987. The youth opportunities programme ended in 1983. The latest Manpower Services Commission follow-up surveys of YTS leavers show that of those who completed their training programme between April 1986 and September 1987, 73 per cent. were in work at the time of the surveys.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of the employment programme is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Cope: In 1987-88 it is estimated that approximately one third of the expenditure by this Department and the Manpower Services Commission on employment, training and enterprise programmes in England is in the inner cities.

Health and Safety Executive

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what consideration he has given to privatising the Health and Safety Executive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Nicholls: The Government have no plans to privatise the Health and Safety Executive.

Wages

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment if he will delineate the average, in percentage and real terms, increase in wage levels in all regions of the United Kingdom from 1979 to the latest available date.

Mr. Lee: I am sending the hon. Member the information requested, which is also available in the Library.

Industrial Tribunals

Mr. Batiste: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment what proportion of applications to industrial tribunals in each of the last three years for which figures are available have been subject to a pre-hearing assessment; in how many cases a warning as to costs was issued; and following such warning how many applications were withdrawn.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 7 March 1988, c. 37]:* I regret that there were some errors in my original reply. The correct information should read as follows:

	12 months ending		
	31 December 1984	*31 March 1986*	*31 March 1987*
Proportion of applications subject to pre-hearing assessment (per cent.)	9·4	3·7	2·5
Number of costs warnings issued	1,266	672	517
Number of applications withdrawn or settled after costs warning	1,004	510	403

National Dock Labour Scheme

Mr. Jacques Arnold: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the London labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 14 March 1988, c. 448-49]:* The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent Workers dismissed for an offence justifying summary dismissal	9	7	10	2	—	1	—
Reinstated by order of London Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	9	5	8	2	—	1	—
Dismissal upheld by London Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	—	2	2	—	—	—	—

Mr. John Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the Hull and Goole dock labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 14 March 1988, c. 448-49]:* The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent workers dismissed for an offence justifying summary dismissal	7	—	1	2	1	1	—
Reinstated by order of Hull and Goole Dock Labour Board Appeal Tribunals	7	—	1	1	1	1	—
Dismissal upheld by Hull and Goole Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	—	—	—	[1]—	—	—	—

[1] The second man in this year left the industry without his case being resolved by the Local Board.

Mr. Roger King: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the Tyne and Wear local dock labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 14 March 1988, c. 448-49]:* The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent workers dismissed for an offence justifying summary dismissal	2	1	—	1	—	—	—
Reinstated by order of Tyne and Wear Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Dismissal upheld by Tyne and Wear Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	1	—	—	1	—	—	—

Mr. Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the Grimsby and Immingham local dock labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions on the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 14 March 1988, c. 448-9]:* The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent workers dismissed for an offence justifying summary dismissal	5	1	—	1	—	—	—
Reinstated by order of Grimsby and Immingham Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals.	5	—	—	1	—	—	—
Dismissal upheld by Grimsby and Immingham Dock Labour Board and Appeals Tribunals	—	1	—	—	—	—	—

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Employment how many permanent registered dock workers in the West Scotland local dock labour board area in each year from 1980 to 1986 have been dismissed by their employer for an offence justifying summary dismissal under the disciplinary provisions of the dock labour scheme; and how many of these men have been reinstated by order of the local dock labour board and appeal tribunals.

Mr. Nicholls *[pursuant to his reply, 14 March 1988, c. 448-9]:* The figures requested are as follows:

	1980	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Permanent workers dismissed for an offence justifying summary dismissal	8	9	3	1	2	2	1
Reinstated by order of West Scotland Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	7	9	3	1	2	1	1
Dismissal upheld by West Scotland Dock Labour Board and Appeal Tribunals	1	—	—	—	—	1	—

HOME DEPARTMENT

Community Programme

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many places have been allocated under the community programme for crime prevention.

Mr. Hurd: On 29 February 1988, the latest available date for which information is available, 8,637 community programme places had been approved on 323 crime prevention schemes.

Charities

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to amend the law governing charities so as to give the Charity Commission power to take action against a charity operating contrary to the law.

Mr. Hurd: Charities are subject to the criminal law in the normal way. In addition, the Charity Commission has powers under sections 6 and 20 of the Charities Act 1960 to investigate any charity and where necessary take action to protect its property. The Government have accepted that the commission's powers for dealing with abuse should be strengthened in line with the recommendations of the Woodfield report, and will introduce legislation accordingly.

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to amend the law governing charities to ensure that greater importance is attached to the methods by which the charity fulfils its objects.

Mr. Hurd: Trustees are under a clear obligation to ensure that the method by which a charity fulfils its objects are within the law. Action can be taken against a charity wherever there is evidence that its activities are not in the public interest.

Mr. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to ensure persons with convictions for dishonesty are not permitted to become charitable trustees.

Mr. Hurd: One of the recommendations of the Woodfield report is that provision should be made that no person should, without the permission in writing of the commissioners, act as the trustee of a charity if they have been convicted of any offence involving fraud or dishonesty. The Government intend to introduce legislation to implement the Woodfield report's recommendations before the end of the life of this Parliament.

Prisoners (Education)

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prison daytime and evening education classes were held; what was the average number of prisoners in each class, and what was the total number of hours of education in the most recent convenient week, at each of the following prisons: Birmingham, Leeds, Pentonville, Manchester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information for the week commencing 14 March 1988 is as follows:

	Number of classes		*Average number of inmates in each class*	*Total number of class hours*
	Day	*Evening*		
Birmingham	33	0	8·3	66
Leeds	75	36	7·2	222
Pentonville	64	33	6·5	193
Manchester	44	15	7·6	109
Wandsworth	47	49	7·8	209·5
Wormwood Scrubs	21	39	8·3	120
Holloway	[1]102	20	8·6	244

[1] Figure includes vocational training.

As the Government's recent reply to the second report from the Select Committee on Education, Science and Arts on prison education makes clear, very positive efforts are being made to improve both the quantity and the quality of education in Prison Department establishments. The figures for a small selection of prisons, including some of our most overcrowded local establishments, should not be regarded as representative. At Birmingham, for instance, where the level of overcrowding makes movement to classes very difficult, considerable work has been done on the development of learning packs for use in cell.

Data Protection

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many subject access requests under the terms of the Data Protection Act the Metropolitan police and police national computer unit have received; what

were the anticipated number of requests; and whether he is reconsidering the subject access fee charged by the police as a result; and whether he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that from 11 November 1987 to 24 March 1988, the Metropolitan police have received subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 1984, as follows:

	Number
i. for disclosure from the police national computer	34
ii. for disclosure from data registered in common on the police national computer and on force systems	45
iii. for disclosure from Metropolitan police systems only	10

The Metropolitan police had anticipated some 4,000 applications per annum.

Over the same period, the subject access office of the National Identification Bureau, which deals with requests for access to data on the police national computer, has received 404.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will provide information to the Data Protection Registrar in a way that does not compromise national security, on the number, scope and extent of the certificates that he has signed under section 27 of the Data Protection Act.

Mr. Hurd: Such arrangements are not required by the Data Protection Act and would not be in the interest of national security.

Mr. Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the benefits for the public of the code of practice covering personal data used for police purposes.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The public benefit from the procedures set out in the code of practice since they seek to ensure that personal data held on police computer systems are properly obtained, maintained and secured in all forces, and comply with the data protection principles laid down in the Data Protection Act 1984.

Prison Workshops

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many workshops there are; and for how many hours they were open in the most recent convenient week at each of the following prisons: Birmingham, Leeds, Pentonville, Manchester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: In the week ending 28 February 1988 the following numbers of industrial workshops were in operation in each of the listed prisons:

Number of Workshops	*Opening Hours*
Birmingham	
Laundry	23.50
Heavy Textiles I	13.75
Heavy Textiles II	9.75
Leeds	
Heavy Textiles I	21.75
Heavy Textiles II	21.00
Heavy Textiles III	21.00
Light Textiles	21.00
Engineering	8.00
Assembly	Nil
Pentonville	
Tailoring	13.50
Assembly	7.15
Manchester	
Tailoring	30.00
Laundry	29.00
Textiles	27.50
Assembly I	20.50
Assembly II	20.35
Wandsworth	
Laundry	19.50
Heavy Textiles	17.50
Dry Cleaning	16.00
Leather	15.75
Brushmaking	15.00
Tailoring	14.75
Carpenters	8.50
Wormwood Scrubs	
Engineering	12.85
Tailoring	12.10
Cutting	11.25
Binding	9.25
Sewing Machine Repairs	9.25
Assembly	7.50
Light Textiles	2.50
Holloway	
Light Textiles	18.00

Prisoners (Employment)

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum number of prisoners who can be employed; and how many prisoners were actually employed *(a)* in workshops and *(b)* on other tasks in the most recent convenient week, at each of the following prisons: Birmingham, Leeds, Pentonville, Manchester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The information is as follows:

	No. of Employment Places		*Average number Employed in w/e 28 February 1988*	
	Industrial Workshops and Farms and Gardens	*Domestic Catering and Maintenance Duties*	*Industrial Workshops and Farms and Gardens*	*Domestic Catering and Maintenance Duties*
Birmingham	160	158	126	154
Leeds	280	170	149	147
Pentonville	124	135	45	119
Manchester	195	227	102	227

	No. of Employment Places		Average number Employed in w/e 28 February 1988	
	Industrial Workshops and Farms and Gardens	Domestic Catering and Maintenance Duties	Industrial Workshops and Farms and Gardens	Domestic Catering and Maintenance Duties
Wandsworth	451	288	202	288
Wormwood Scrubs	228	204	137	173
Holloway	52	97	14	90

In addition to those employed in work as defined above, significant numbers of prisoners were also engaged in other out of cell activities including full or part-time education, vocational training and construction industry training courses.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of his Department's expenditure is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Hurd: Much Home Office expenditure goes to inner city areas without being specifically targeted to them. It would involve disproportionate cost to calculate the sums involved.

Police Officers (Firearms)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what guidance he has issued to chief constables about the use by police officers of firearms to shoot animals;

(2) what was the number of operations in which firearms were issued to police officers in England and Wales in 1987 where the firearms were used to shoot animals; how many animals were so killed; and if he will list the species involved.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The guidance issued to chief constables about the use of firearms to destroy dangerous animals is contained in a comprehensive booklet prepared by the West Yorkshire police force in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers. I am arranging for a copy of that guidance to be placed in the Library.

Firearms were issued to police officers on 41 operations in England and Wales in 1987 for the destruction of animals; 44 beasts were destroyed. The species included bullocks, bulls, cows, deer, dogs, horses and pigs.

Passports

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it is now taking his Department's office at Peterborough to process legitimate passport applications.

Mr. Renton: Correctly completed non-urgent applications are now being dealt with within 26 working days. Urgent applications are given priority.

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many requests for the urgent return of passports were received by his Department during February from people whose passports had been sent to the Home Office before 31 December 1987 in connection with applications for British citizenship.

Mr. Renton: No comprehensive statistics are available concerning the number of such requests. The practice is to undertake searches when urgency is established.

Mr. Curry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there has been an increase in demand for passports; what action is being taken to avoid delays in the handling of passport applications in advance of computerisation of the passport offices; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Renton: So far this year overall demand for new passports and for amendments to existing passports has been over 25 per cent. up on the corresponding period of 1987. In anticipation that this heavy demand will continue throughout the summer months a number of special measures are being taken to help reduce delays at the passport offices. These include:

(1) the recruitment of additional staff at all offices;
(2) overtime working at weekends;
(3) the immediate grant of free short-term extensions to expired passports for personal callers;
(4) issuing emergency travel documents to personal callers whose postal applications cannot readily be traced.

In addition, Governments of countries to which British citizens travel most frequently have been approached and invited exceptionally to accept travellers using uncancelled United Kingdom passports which have expired within the last five years, or British visitor's passports, where these are not already accepted. British visitor's passports, which are already accepted by all countries in Western Europe, are currently available from the 1,500 main post offices in Britain from Monday to Friday only. It is hoped to extend this service shortly to Saturday mornings.

To date, the following countries have either agreed, or have indicated their willingness in principle, to accept expired passports and British visitor's passports under these arrangements:

USA
Israel
Netherlands
Hong Kong
Antigua and Barbuda.

Information about these arrangements, including the operative dates of agreements with other countries, will be made available through the travel trade, on Prestel, and through the media.

The phased programme of computerisation of the United Kingdom passport offices is due to begins in July this year. Glasgow will be the first, and arrangements are in hand to disperse work on postal applications now done in London to that office as soon as practicable following computerisation, to relieve the pressures on the London office. Computerisation of the remaining five passport offices should be completed by the end of 1989.

Computerisation is designed to enable the passport offices to cope with the anticipated rises in future demand

for passport services without the excessive and unacceptable delays that have arisen in recent years with the present outdated manual system of passport production.

Prisoners (Drug Addicts)

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has of the percentage of prisoners in Her Majesty's prisons who have a drug addiction and who have their habit sustained while they are in prison custody.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: The number of inmates reported by medical officers as having some degree of dependence on drugs at the same time of their reception into custody is included in the medical statistics on page 70 of the "Report On The Work of the Prison Service 1986-87" (Cm. 246), a copy of which is in the Library. It shows that 3,051 were so reported during that year. Information is not available on which to estimate how many sustain their addiction while in custody. The House was informed in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) on 14 December 1987, at column 342, of measures taken in Her Majesty's prisons to prevent and detect illicit drugs.

Sir Dudley Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what treatments and counselling services are provided for those receiving prison sentences who are found to be hard drug addicts;

(2) what survey is made of those prisoners serving sentences who have a hard drug addiction; and what clinical and psychological efforts are made to get them off the habit and to attempt to dissuade them from returning to drug taking, either in prison or after their release.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: As the House was informed in answer to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Pembroke (Mr. Bennett) on 14 December, at columns 342-43, the possibility of a history of drugs misuse is one of the factors medical officers inquire into during the course of their examination of inmates being received into prison custody. Where indicated, medical help in withdrawing is offered, its nature and extent determined by the medical officer's clinical assessment of the individual case. Additionally, at a number of establishments personal support continuing after withdrawal is provided by members of staff or drug counselling agencies from the community.

Guidelines prepared in discussion between the Prison Department and probation service for the introduction at all establishments of a more co-ordinated response to drug misusers were issued on 25 September 1987. These describe the responsibility of the Government to ensure the development of a coherent system and the complementary roles of medical and probation officers in the provision of care and support. The use of suitable drug counselling agencies from the community is encouraged. The particular advice offered an inmate prior to discharge will depend upon individual circumstances but progressively as the system is introduced will include the issue of a brief advisory card with which all establishments have been supplied. A copy of the guidelines and card are in the Library.

Traffic Wardens (London)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many traffic wardens were deployed in each London borough during the last three completed years.

Mr Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the information in the form requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. The traffic warden service was restructured under the reorganisation of the force and responsibility for operational matters devolved to areas. The number of traffic wardens in each of the areas at the end of the last two years was as follows:

	31 December 1986	*31 December 1987*
No. 1 Area (North)	185	154
No. 2 Area (East)	89	100
No. 3 Area (South East)	169	156
No. 4 Area (South)	189	153
No. 5 Area (South West)	75	77
No. 6 Area (West)	176	156
No. 7 Area (North West)	196	187
No. 8 Area (Central)	429	413
	1,508	1,396

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has, pursuant to his reply of 11 March, *Official Report*, column *357*, on the reasons for the reduction of traffic wardens in London between 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1987.

Mr Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the fall in the number of traffic wardens is due to a high level of resignations and a shortfall in recruitment. Dissatisfaction with pay and conditions are given as the main reasons for resignation. A scrutiny of the traffic warden service has made recommendations for improvements which are being considered.

London Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why he refused to allow the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority to maintain the Greater London co-ordinating centre; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. John Patten: The Greater London co-ordination centre (GLECC) has been maintained by the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority by virtue of temporary sanctions under section 19 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982. The authority sought primary legislation which would enable it to maintain GLECC on a permanent basis. We concluded, in the light of expert advice, that there was no role for GLECC that could not otherwise be met and that primary legislation would not be justified. The London boroughs have the necessary powers to fund the authority to maintain GLECC if they consider there is a need.

Police Act 1964

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases in 1987 damages

have been paid after judgment under section 48(2)(a) of the Police Act 1964; what was the average settlement figure; and what was the average level of damages awarded.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Metropolitan Police (Wrongful Acts)

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the amounts paid in out-of-court settlements of claims arising from the wrongful acts of Metropolitan police officers in 1987; and what were the amounts paid under awards made by courts in 1987 and the number of cases concluded in 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg: I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that in 1987 the total amount paid by the Metropolitan police in settlements out of court arising from allegations of wrongful acts by Metropolitan police officers (whether or not formal proceedings were instituted) was £173,714. A total of £11,233 was paid under awards made by the courts. In all, 133 cases were concluded.

BBC Hulton Picture Library

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement about the future of the BBC Hulton picture library.

Mr. Renton: I understand that it is the BBC's intention to sell the Hulton picture library. There are likely to be certain conditions attached to its sale, however, which might include a requirement for it to remain in the United Kingdom and for it to retain its title.

Immigration Officers (Birmingham)

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration officers were based at the Birmingham immigration office at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Renton: Twenty-four.

Entry Clearance Applications

Mr. Terry Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many entry clearance applications had been referred to his Department by entry clearance officers but had not yet been allocated to an immigration office at 31 December 1987.

Mr. Renton: I regret that the information requested is not available.

Summer Time

Mr. Harry Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government have in mind for the future of summer time.

Mr. Hurd: An order has been laid before Parliament to continue the present arrangements for 1989. Departments are being asked to consult interested groups on the merits of three options which emerged with the most support from a preliminary survey towards the end of last year. These are the continuation of the present position: the harmonisation of the date for ending summer time to bring it into line with the rest of the Community; or the introduction of Greenwich mean time plus one hour in the winter, with Greenwich mean time plus two hours from the end of March to the end of September. The last option would mean that the United Kingdom would be in the same time zone as most other EC countries throughout the whole year. Copies of the consultation document have today been placed in the Library of the House. After this consultation process has been completed the Government will canvas public and parliamentary opinion more generally with a view to testing the degree of support for change.

Lunar House, Croydon

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average and maximum recorded delay before members of the public are able to get through by telephone to the passport and immigration departments, respectively, at Lunar house, Croydon.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* Information is not available on the number of calls to Lunar house which receive an engaged tone. Information is available on the average and maximum recorded delays for calls from members of the public who have been connected to the nationality telephone inquiry bureau at Lunar house but whose calls have not yet been answered. This does not, however, distinguish between calls that are answered and those that are terminated by the exchange equipment or the callers.

Over the three months from December 1987 to February 1988 the average and maximum recorded delays described above were three minutes and 14 minutes respectively.

Similar information about calls answered by the immigration telephone inquiry bureau is not available. However, on the afternoon of 22 March, the average waiting time was six minutes. The longest delay was nine minutes.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are currently employed answering telephone calls from the public in the passport and immigration departments at Lunar house, Croydon; and what was the comparable figure 12 months ago.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* The nationality telephone inquiry bureau has nine staff answering telephone calls from the public compared to six, 12 months ago.

The immigration telephone inquiry bureau has an average of 10 staff carrying out this duty compared to 17 a year ago. The reduction reflects the priority given to providing staff for the public inquiry office which deals with those who call in person.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to improve telephone access to the public of the facilities at Lunar house, Croydon.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* The matter is being given urgent consideration.

Mr. Speed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many outside telephone lines are

currently available to receive calls from the public at the passport and immigration departments at Lunar house, Croydon.

Mr. Renton *[holding answer 25 March 1988]*: The nationality telephone inquiry bureau has 14 telephone lines available to receive calls from the public. There are 30 lines in the immigration telephone inquiry bureau.

Michael Ryan

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to what procedure was used by the late Michael Ryan to deliver his original firearms form 1 application to Thames Valley police;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and procedure used by the late Michael Ryan to deliver firearms form 1 applications for variation to Thames Valley police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that this information is not available.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the date and procedure used to deliver the original firearms certificate to the late Michael Ryan and the registration identification number;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the date and procedure used to deliver the varied firearms certificates to the late Michael Ryan, and the registration identification number.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that records relating to the delivery of firearm certificates are destroyed after six months. The information requested is therefore not available. However, the normal practice is to send firearm certificates by recorded delivery through the post.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to which of the chief constable, deputy chief constable or assistant chief constable personally authorised the original grant of the firearms certificate to the late Michael Ryan, or the rank to which they delegated that responsibility;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which either the chief constable, deputy chief constable or assistant chief constable personally authorised the variations to the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan or the rank to which that responsibility was delegated.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's application for a firearm certificate was authorised at assistant chief constable level and that his variation applications were also authorised at that level on 30 April 1987 and 30 July 1987.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the ranks of police officers or civilians receiving the late Michael Ryan's application for the original grant of a firearms certificate at police headquarters;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the date on which the original firearms form 1 application was received and recorded at local station level and by what rank of police officer or civilian acting for the police in the case of the application of the late Michael Ryan;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and the rank of police officers or civilians recording receipt of the grant fee of £25, the receipt number and date in respect of firearms certificates issued to the late Michael Ryan by Thames Valley police.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's application for the grant of firearms certificate was received at Hungerford police station on 26 November 1986 by a police constable who issued a receipt (number 472484) for the fee paid. The application was received at police headquarters by the assistant chief constable on 10 December 1986.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the contents of the statement made by the ex-manager of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, to the police, into the status of the late Michael Ryan's membership on 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 December 1986; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: No. It is not the practice to disclose the contents of statements obtained during police inquiries into criminal offences.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the police have located or seized a 7·65mm/0·32 Scorpion machine pistol alleged to have been held at any time by the late Michael Ryan on a firearms certificate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that they have no knowledge of the weapon in question.

Firearms

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many firearms certificates had been granted on, or prior to, 11 December 1986 by the Thames Valley police to applicants giving their good reasons as *(a)* probationary or *(b)* full membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that no firearm certificates were issued on or before the date in question to applicants giving probationary membership of the Dunmore shooting centre as their good reason for possessing a firearm. Information in respect of applicants having full membership at that time is not known.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will place a copy of the original home approval certificate for the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, and any subsequent amendments or additions to, and renewals of it in the Library;

(2) if he will *(a)* list and *(b)* place in the Library copies of all relevant documents relating to inquiries made and completed by his Department and Thames Valley or other police forces into the applications by the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, for consideration for the issue, amendment, additions to, or renewals of, his Department's approval certificates;

(3) if he will *(a)* list and *(b)* place in the Library a copy of all documents submitted in the course of the applications by the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon to the police or his Department for the issue, amendment, addition to, or renewal of, his Department's approval certificates;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on which date the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, was first granted his Department's approval and on which subsequent dates this approval was reviewed and certificates reissued or renewed.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* The club in question was approved for the use of small and full-bore pistols on 16 September 1986 and approval was extended to small and full-bore rifles on 15 February 1988.

It is not the practice to place documents of this kind in the House Library.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of Home Office form coded PSL 4381 Firearms 20. (Rev. 5/69) and all such amended variations since 1968 to include draft and any final copies of those forms recommended by his recent working parties.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* We have been unable to identify the form requested with either the Home Office stationery branch or Her Majesty's Stationery Office. If the hon. Member would care to send further details of the form requested we will look into the matter further.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will place in the Library *(a)* a copy of Thames Valley police form FIR 25(9/74), *(b)* all such previous variations of copy since 1968, *(c)* all amended variations of copy form since 19 August 1987 and *(d)* a copy of the questionnaire completed by police officers or civilians after interview of the late Michael Ryan upon receipt by Thames Valley police of his original firearms form 1 application for a firearms certificate;

(2) if he will place in the Library *(a)* a copy of Thames Valley police form FIR 25(9/74) and *(b)* a copy of the questionnaire completed by police officers or police civilian employees after interviewing the late Michael Ryan upon receipt by Thames Valley police of his firearms form 1 variations applications to his firearms certificate;

(3) if he will place a copy of the Thames Valley force's standing orders concerning the administration of the Firearms Act 1968 with dates of issue and all amendments to it, with dates, in the Library.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable that the documents requested are essentially for operational use and I do not think it right to place a copy of them in the Library.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) who holds *(a)* the provisional and *(b)* full membership cards for the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, issued to the late Michael Ryan; and if he will place copies in the Library;

(2) who holds the firearms certificate issued to the late Michael Ryan; and if he will place a copy in the Library;

(3) who holds the provisional membership card for the Wiltshire shooting centre issued to the late Michaal Ryan; and if he will place a copy in the Library.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's firearm certificate has never been found. It is believed that it was destroyed in the fire at his home together with his club membership card.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many entries were made by the late Michael Ryan in the register of users of the range facilities of the Wiltshire shooting centre;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many visits were made by the late Michael Ryan, and on what dates, to the Wiltshire shooting centre.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan attended the Wiltshire shooting club on at least 10 occasions between 13 July and 19 August 1987. Further details of the visits made are not known.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the firearms form 1 variations applications were received from the late Michael Ryan and recorded at *(a)* local station and *(b)* division; and by what rank of police officer or civilian police employee;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and the ranks of police officers or civilian police employees receiving the late Michael Ryan's applications for variations of his firearms certificate at police headquarters.

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the rank of police officer or civilian recording receipt of the variation fee of £20, the receipt number and date, in respect of each variation of the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's applications for a varitation of his firearm certificate were received on 24 March 1987 and 17 July 1987 at Hungerford police station by a police sergeant who issued receipts for the variation fee paid (numbers 503378 and 508185). The applications were received at police headquarters by the assistant chief constable on 2 April 1987 and 30 July 1987.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and rank of all police officers or civilians *(a)* involved in and *(b)* authorising by means of signature each stage of inquiries relating to the variation applications by the late Michael Ryan on his firearms certificate; and which stages did not contain a request for a signature, rank, or date by inquiring police officers and-or civilians;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and the rank of police officers and/or civilian police employees completing the processing at *(a)* local station and *(b)* divisional level and passing the applications to vary his firearms certificate by the late Michael Ryan to force headquarters.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's first application to vary his firearm certificate was submitted by a police constable on or about 28 March 1987 to a superintendent who forwarded it on 1 April 1987. It was received by the assistant chief constable the following day for approval. His second application was submitted by a police constable to an acting inspector on or about 25 July 1987 who forwarded it on the same day to a chief inspector. The application was received on 30 July 1987 by the assistant chief constable for approval.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and ranks of police officers or civilian police employees completing the checks with special branch for the variations to the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and the ranks of police officers or civilians completing the checks with special branch for the original grant of a firearms certificate for the late Michael Ryan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that no checks other than those made with the criminal records office were made.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on which dates and by what rank of police officer or civilian police employee the late Michael Ryan was advised concerning storage security arrangements upon applications for variations to his firearms certificate;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on which dates and which rank of police officers or civilian police employees inspected the storage and security arrangements at the house of the late Michael Ryan upon applications for variations to his firearms certificate;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the dates and ranks of police officers or civilians first recording the information regarding the possession by the late Michael Ryan of a firearms security cabinet;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to what ranks of police officers or civilians inspected the storage and security arrangements at the house of the late Michael Ryan; and on which date each visit took place;

(5) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on what date and by what rank of police officer or civilian acting for the police the late Michael Ryan was advised concerning storage security arrangements and obtaining a security cabinet.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that a police constable visited Michael Ryan's house on 30 November 1986 to inspect his storage and security arrangements in respect of his application for a firearm certificate. Further inspections were carried out on 28 March 1987 and 25 July 1987 by a police officer of the same rank in respect of applications made to vary the original certificate. A survey was also carried out by a police constable from the community liaison department as a crime prevention officer.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to date on which the late Michael Ryan signed and dated his original firearms form 1 application for a firearms certificate; and if he will place a copy of it in the Library;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan signed and dated his firearms form 1 application for variations of his firearms certificate; and if he will place copies of it in the Library.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that the dates on which Michael Ryan signed his original application form and applications for a variation of a firearm certificate were 23 November 1986, 23 March 1987 and 14 July 1987 respectively.

The requested documents are essentially for police operational use, and I do not think it right to place them in the Library.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date and the ranks of police officers or civilian police employees completing the checks with the criminal records office for the variations to the firearms certificate of the late Michael Ryan;

(2) If he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date completed and ranks of police officers or civilians completing the checks with the criminal records office for the original grant of a firearms certificate for the late Michael Ryan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police detailed records of checks made with the Criminal Record Office are not kept.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan was granted provisional membership of the Wiltshire shooting centre; by whom; after what assessment; and by what procedure:

(2) If he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan made written application for membership of the Wiltshire shooting centre;

(3) If he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan's application was received by the Wiltshire shooting centre; and by whom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan joined the club in question on 13 July 1987 but that further details of his application for membership are not known.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date procedure used and ranks of police officers or civilians involved in the checks to verify the late Michael Ryan's *(a)* provisional and *(b)* full membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon; and with whom they have been verified by the police at the club and on behalf of that club;

(2) If he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the dates, procedures used and ranks of police officers or civilian police employees involved in the checks to verify the late Michael Ryan's *(a)* provisional and *(b)* full membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon; and with whom they had been varified at the clubs, upon his application for variation to his firearms certificate;

(3) If he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the dates and ranks of police officers and-or civilians involved in the checks to verify the late Michael Ryan's provisional membership of the Wiltshire shooting centre; and with whom they had been verified at the club, upon his application for variations to his firearms cerficate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that it is common practice for reporting officers to telephone club secretaries to confirm membership of a club and to discuss an application with the secretary. Available police records indicate that the secretaries of both clubs in question were contacted but not the dates on which inquiries were made.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on what dates police officers or civilians acting for the police discussed the application for the original grant of a firearms certificate with the late Michael Ryan;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to on which dates police officers or civilian police employees discussed the applications for variations of his firearms certificate with the late Michael Ryan.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that interviews with Michael Ryan about his applications for the grant and variation of a firearm certificate took place on 30 November 1986, 28 March 1987 and on or about 25 July 1987.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the good reasons written by the late Michael Ryan on his firearms form 1 variations applications for each firearm requested in his applications for variations of his firearms certificate;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the good reason written by the late Michael Ryan on his original firearms form 1 for each firearm, requested in his application for a firearms certificate.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that the good reason given by Michael Ryan on his firearm application and renewal forms was target shooting on approved ranges.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many Thames Valley police officers were involved in giving any form of instruction or guidance in *(a)* the use of firearms or *(b)* related matters, to the late Michael Ryan, giving ranks and dates.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that this information is not available.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to what procedures or requirements have been amended by the Wiltshire shooting centre in respect of applications for membership since 19 August 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that inquiries made of the Wiltshire police indicate that no changes in the rules regarding membership of the Wiltshire shooting centre have been made since the date in question.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan was granted provisional membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon; by whom; what assessment was made; and by what procedure;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan was granted full membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon; by whom; what assessment was made; and by what procedure;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan made written application for membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon;

(4) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date on which the late Michael Ryan's application for membership of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon was received; and by whom.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]*: I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's applications for

provisional and full membership of the club in question were granted by its manager on August bank holiday 1986 and 8 December 1986 respectively. Details relating to the consideration given to these applications is not known. Nor is it known whether the applications were made in writing.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the date of purchase, sale or transfer by the late Michael Ryan of all firearms, giving the make and model and quantity of each calibre of ammunition in each case and the names of all firearms dealers involved.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that details of Michael Ryan's firearm transactions are as follows:

Date of purchase or date of notification where date of sale not known	*Make or model of firearm*	*Date of sale or transfer*	*Firearm dealer*
23 December 1986	Beretta 9 mm pistol	—	Dunmore shooting centre
8 January 1987	Smith and Wesson ·38 pistol	2 May 1987	Dunmore shooting centre
6 May 1987	Bernadelli ·22 pistol	—	Dunmore shooting centre
3 May 1987	CZ 32 pistol	—	Sportique
6 August 1987	7·762 Kalashnikov rifle	—	Westbury Guns
8 August 1987	·30 Underwood rifle	—	Wiltshire shooting centre

I further understand that Michael Ryan was authorised to possess, at any one time, 500 rounds of each calibre, but restricted to acquiring only 200 rounds at any one time of each calibre. Information relating to the amount of ammunition he purchased is not known as this is recorded on the firearm certificate presumed destroyed at the fire at his home.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many entries were made by the late Michael Ryan in the register of users of the range facilities of the Dunmore shooting centre;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many visits were made, and on what dates, by the late Michael Ryan to the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that range records for the club in question show Michael Ryan attended the range facilities on the following dates:

29 September 1986
6 October 1986
8 October 1986
17 October 1986
20 October 1986
21 October 1986
11 November 1986
18 November 1986
20 November 1986
25 November 1986
28 November 1986
1 December 1986
10 December 1986
6 January 1987
21 January 1987
7 February 1987
16 February 1987
23 February 1987
24 February 1987
5 March 1987
9 April 1987

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to what procedures or requirements have been amended by the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, in respect of applications for membership since 19 August 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that since September 1987 the club in question requires a minimum period of six months probation before full membership may be conferred.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to the dates and ranks of all police officers or civilians *(a)* involved in and *(b)* authorising by means of signature each stage of inquiries relating to the original grant of the application by the late Michael Ryan of a firearms certificate; and which stages did not contain a request for a signature, rank, or date by inquiring police officers;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the ranks of police officers or civilians completing inquiries at *(a)* local station and *(b)* divisional level into the application by the late Michael Ryan for the original grant of a firearms certificate;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police as to the date on which completed, and rank of police officers or civilians completing the processing at *(a)* local station and *(b)* divisional level and passing the original application for a firearms certificate by the late Michael Ryan to force headquarters.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that Michael Ryan's application for a firearms certificate was submitted by a police constable on or after 30 November 1986 to a chief inspector and that it was received by the assistant chief constable on 10 December 1986 for approval.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many Thames Valley police officers were members of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, on the date the late Michael Ryan applied for membership;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many Thames Valley police officers are currently members of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police force as to how many Thames Valley police officers were members of the Dunmore shooting centre, Abingdon, on 19 August 1987.

Mr. Douglas Hogg *[holding answer 25 February 1988]:* I understand from the chief constable of the Thames Valley police that the information requested is not known.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Mentally Ill People

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many residential places have been provided in the community for patients discharged from mental hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years;

(2) how many residential places have been provided in the community for patients discharged from mental hospitals in Northern Ireland with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses in each of the last 10 years;

(3) how many residential places in the community have been provided for patients with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses discharged from mental hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years.

Dr. Mawhinney: This information is not held centrally. Local provision of living accommodation available for those discharged from mental hospitals comprises a wide range of residential types including hostels, group homes, residential and nursing homes and private accommodation run by individual carers. This range of accommodation is operated by the statutory, private and voluntary sectors and is not necessarily solely for those discharged from mental hospitals.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients with a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia psychoses have been discharged from mental hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years.

Dr. Mawhinney: The available information is given below:

Year	*Number of discharges*
1986	981
1985	1,120
1984	1,096
1983	1,037
1982	985
1981	1,015
1980	1,078
1979	983
1978	1,063
1977	1,040

These figures may include patients discharged more than once in the same year.

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many long-stay mental patients he expects there will be in Northern Ireland in each of the next seven years.

Dr. Mawhinney: This information is not available centrally.

Mental Hospitals

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many mental hospital beds have been opened in Northern Ireland in each of last 10 years;

(2) how many mental hospital beds have been closed in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years.

Dr. Mawhinney: This information is not available in the form requested.

The net figures for beds available in mental illness hospitals (that is adjusted to take account of beds opened and closed) for the period from 1977 to 1986 are:

Year	*Beds*
1986	4,330
1985	4,478
1984	4,599
1983	4,732
1982	[1]
1981	4,760
1980	4,777
1979	4,889
1978	4,903
1977	4,999

[1] Not available due to industrial action.

Protestants and Roman Catholics

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are the most recent percentages available for the Protestant and Roman Catholic sections of the community; what percentage of Protestants and Roman Catholics are known to be employed by *(a)* the Bank of Ireland and *(b)* Allied Irish Banks plc; and which departments of the Northern Ireland Office employ either the Bank of Ireland or Allied Irish Banks as their bankers.

Dr. Mawhinney: It is estimated that 36·8 per cent. of the population of Northern Ireland aged 16 and over in 1987 were Roman Catholic and 60·9 per cent non-Roman Catholic. In the survey from which these figures are taken 2 to 3 per cent. of those surveyed did not state a religion.

The latest available figures published by the Fair Employment Agency in March 1986 show the percentages of Protestants and Catholics employed in the banks referred to as follows:

	Protestant per cent.	*Catholic per cent.*
Bank of Ireland	42	58
Allied Irish Banks plc	28	72

The Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland employs Allied Irish Banks plc as its banker. No other Northern Ireland Department employs either bank as its principal banker, although several have isolated accounts with one or the other.

Psychiatric Nurses

Mr. Goodlad: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many community psychiatric nurses there were in Northern Ireland in 1979; how many there are now; and how many he estimates there will be in 1991.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is as follows:

Community psychiatric nurses in the health and personal social services

Year	Number
1979	30
1987	115
[1]1991	169

[1] Estimated.

International Investments Ltd.

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the progress of inquiries into the losses incurred by Northern Ireland investors with International Investments Ltd. of Gibraltar.

Mr. Stanley: The Royal Ulster Constabulary's fraud squad has been conducting an investigation into the financial affairs of International Investments Ltd. following the collapse of the company in June 1984. I can confirm that papers on the case have been passed to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who directed no prosecution against agents employed by the company in Northern Ireland. The police investigation is continuing into other aspects of the case and it is likely to be some time before it is concluded.

Radioactive Fallout

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will give details of the medical consequences of the radioactive fallout in Northern Ireland *(a)* as anticipated following the fire in No. 1 Pile at Windscale in October 1957 and *(b)* by today's standards.

Dr. Mawhinney: No medical consequences were anticipated in 1957 nor have the Government any evidence to suggest that the health of people in Northern Ireland has been adversely affected by this incident.

Housing

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dwellings were constructed in each of the past five years by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; and how many architectural staff were employed by the Executive in each of those five years.

Dr. Mawhinney: This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive but I am advised by the chief executive that the number of dwellings constructed and the number of architectural staff employed by the Housing Executive in each of the last five years is as follows:

Year	Number of dwellings	Number of architectural staff[1]
1983	4,044	174
1984	3,588	173
1985	3,233	169
1986	2,580	161
1987	1,764	160

[1] Architectural work is also undertaken by consultants.

Environmental Health and Building Control Staff

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which district councils are within each group system for the employment of environmental health and building control staff; in each group, which council has the authority to make the individual appointments; and what roles or authority the other councils have in each group when new appointments are being made.

Dr. Mawhinney: The district councils which are within each group system for the employment of environmental health and building control staff are prescribed in article 3 of the Local Government (Employment of Environmental Health Officers) Order (NI) 1973 (SR & O (NI) 1973 No. 168) and the Local Government (Employment of Building Control Staff) Order (NI) 1973 (SR & O (NI) 1973 No. 167) copies of which are available in the Library. Article 4(1) of those orders identifies those councils, known as employer councils, which have authority to make individual appointments.

Other councils within each group have a representative role in relation to appointments. They are represented on a group committee which advises the employer council on staffing levels and they may also be present on shortlisting and interviewing panels for new appointments although they have no voting rights.

Community Programme

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the guidelines set out for entrance on the community programme in the Province; and whether consultations are held with relevant representatives of commerce and business prior to community programme schemes being undertaken.

Dr. Mawhinney: Guidelines for the action for community employment scheme are contained in leaflet CP1 published by the Department of Economic Development. These guidelines place a responsibility on ACE sponsors to consult with relevant bodies, including industry and commerce, whose interest may be affected by a proposed project.

Harland and Wolff

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has of how many jobs outside Harland and Wolff are directly related to the activities of the company *(a)* in Northern Ireland and *(b)* in Great Britain.

Dr. Mawhinney: Based on a number of recent studies the number of jobs in Northern Ireland directly related to the activities of Harland and Wolff is about 500. There are insufficient statistical data available to provide an accurate assessment of the numbers in Great Britain.

Residential and Commercial Property

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to have replaced the use of site value as a basis of compensation for residential or commercial property compulsorily required for redevelopment by a more equitable arrangement for compensation through market value payments.

Dr. Mawhinney: Legislation to abolish the site value rule for residential property in article 91(1) of the Housing (NI) Order 1981 will be brought forward as soon as practicable in line with a similar proposal for Great

Britain. The current site value rule does not apply to commercial properties for which compensation is already assessed on the basis of market value.

Ministerial Private Office (Staff)

Mr. John D. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether any members of the staff of the Private Office of the Minister responsible for agriculture, Lord Lyell, was absent on leave on 24 January 1987.

Dr. Mawhinney: No.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what percentage of tenants in houses in multiple occupation in Northern Ireland receive housing benefit;

(2) in how many cases housing benefit is paid directly to the landlords of houses in multiple occupation in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney: The information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Government Offices (Relocation)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what are his intentions about the relocation of central Government offices into South Down in the light of the level of unemployment in that constituency.

Mr. Stanley: I cannot at present add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Gentleman on 10 November 1987, at column *165*.

Housing Associations

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list all the housing associations in Northern Ireland and give details of the number of habitations provided by each of them.

Dr. Mawhinney: The attached table lists all the housing associations registered with the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland and indicates the number of dwellings managed by them at 31 December 1987.

Information on unregistered housing associations is not held centrally.

Registered Housing Associations—stock in management at 31 December 1987

Association	*Stock*
Abbeyfield NI Development Society	8
Ballymacarrett Housing Association	9
Ballynafeigh Housing Association	161
Baptist Union of Ireland Housing Association	32
Belfast Community Housing Association	138
Belfast Improved Houses	1,079
Ben Madigan Housing Association	31
Botanic Housing Association	56
Broadway Housing Association	Nil
Church of Ireland Housing Association (NI)	63
Clonard Housing Association	37
Connswater Housing Association	203
Coral Crescent Housing Association	21
Covenanter Residential Association	32
Craigavon and District Housing Association	202
Craigowen Housing Association	2
Derry Housing Association	236
Donacloney Housing Association	92
Down and Connor Housing Association	Nil
Dungannon and District Housing Association	68
Flax Housing Association	Nil
Fold Housing Association	1,314
Gosford Housing Association (Armagh)	41
Grove Housing Association	373
Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster)	294
Hearth	58
James Butcher Housing Association (NI)	736
Latharna Housing Association	21
Lisnagarvey Housing Association	18
Malone Housing Association	66
Masonic Housing Association (NI)	93
McGarel Housing Association	21
Newington Housing Association (1975)	158
Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association	5,999
Nih Housing Association	242
North Belfast Mission Housing Society	9
Open Door Housing Association (NI)	38
Presbytarian Housing Association (NI)	286
Royal British Legion Housing Association (NI)	389
Students' Housing Association Co-op	164
St. Matthew's Housing Association	136
Tennent Street District Housing Association	144
Triangle Women's Housing Association	33
Ulidia Housing Association	84
Ulster Homemaker	Nil
Willowfield Parish Church Housing Association	50
Woodvale and Shankill Housing Association	247
Total	13,484

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of his Department's budget is spent in the inner cities.

Mr. Stanley: There is no formal definition of inner city areas for Northern Ireland. However, several measures are specifically designed to promote urban regeneration and the budget for these schemes in 1988/89 is £15·4 million.

Royal Ulster Constabulary

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the role of Royal Ulster Constabulary informants and paid agents, and the control over payments made to them and as to what sums were used for these purposes in the latest available year; what was the largest sum paid to one individual in the latest available year; when changes were last made in the financial controls; what were the last changes made in procedures; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Tom King: It is not the practice to comment on such matters.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what form of declaration of secrecy officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary are required to sign; and what guidance is given to them on the extent to which this permits or obliges them to conceal material evidence from investigating officers or the courts.

Mr. Tom King: All RUC officers are subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act 1911, 1920 and 1939. No guidance of the type mentioned by the hon. Member is given.

Mr. Livingstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Royal Ulster Constabulary personnel are also members of the Orange Order, Freemasons, Royal Black Preceptory and the Apprentice Boys; if he will initiate an investigation into the effects of this membership and compatibility of such membership with service in the Royal Ulster Constabulary; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* The information requested is not available. There are no plans to initiate such an investigation.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civilians have been killed by members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary since 1969.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 29 February 1988]:* Forty, including civilians believed to have been terrorists and civilians who were not.

Urgent Needs Payments

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on recovery of urgent needs payments made as a result of flood damage in Strabane, indicating what consideration was given to the questions referred to in 58602 (2) of the urgent cases regulation 25 under the Supplementary Benefit Act 1976, section 4(2).

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The recovery of urgent needs payments made as a result of flood damage in Strabane is being considered in accordance with regulation 25 of the urgent cases regulations and with paragraph 8602 and other relevant paragraphs of the supplementary benefit manual.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the procedure instructions in code AX to adjudication officers in Northern Ireland regarding the manner and rate of recovery of an urgent needs payment and whether to abandon recovery.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* The procedures for both the recovery and abandonment of recovery of urgent needs payments in Northern Ireland follow those in operation in the rest of the United Kingdom. They provide for recovery to be abandoned where the claimant's resources are at or below supplementary benefit level and there is no, or is unlikely to be, available capital or disregarded income from which recovery may be made. In those cases where recovery action is appropriate, repayment may be made either by a lump sum payment, where the claimant has available capital, or by instalments, or deduction from supplementary benefit or other prescribed benefits. In each case the rate of recovery is determined in relation to the claimant's resources and requirements. Where supplementary benefit is in payment the weekly rate of recovery is subject to an overriding limit of £10 where there is available capital, or half the weekly amount of disregarded income.

Where supplementary benefit is not in payment, the weekly rate of recovery is limited to the amount by which resources exceed supplementary benefit requirements plus half of any disregarded income or £10 where there is available capital, subject to an overriding limit of one third of the claimants' personal benefit rate.

Homes (Insulation)

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating the total financial allocation to the new homes insulation scheme.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* The allocation for this scheme for the 1988-89 financial year is £297,000.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available to indicate the numbers of insulation grants made in each of the past three years to people who were not on housing benefit, supplementary benefit, or family income supplement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* No such information is available.

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information is available to indicate the numbers and total values of supplementary benefit single payments for insulation or draught-proofing in Northern Ireland in 1986 and 1987.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 30 March 1988]:* Information in the precise form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, the annual statistical inquiry shows that the following payments were made for draughtproofing during the preceding 12 months to people on supplementary benefit at the time of the inquiry:

Inquiry	*Single Payments*	
	Numbers	*£*
February 1986	8,307	468,718
May 1986	11,776	502,319

Source: 5 per cent. sample.

Chernobyl

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what investigations have taken place into the presence of radioactive materials deposited in Northern Ireland as a result of the accident at Chernobyl; what is his assessment of the period which will pass before restrictions on the affected areas will be lifted; and if he will make a statement.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Following the accident at Chernobyl the Departments of Agriculture and Environment undertook Province-wide investigations into the levels of radioactivity in milk and milk products, meat, fish, forage, fruit, cereals, migratory birds, air and water. Experimental investigations were carried out on the transfer of radio caesium from forage to milk, milk products and sheepmeat.

It is not possible at this time to predict when the controls on the movement and slaughter of sheep from the three restricted areas could be lifted.

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what sums have been paid, for how many sheep, and to how many farmers in Northern Ireland for each year or financial year as a result of the Chernobyl accident.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* To 28 March 1987 in the current financial year, £951·85 was paid to three farmers in respect of market loss on 121 sheep and £11,688·30 was paid to 83 farmers in respect of handling costs of 8,991 sheep.

Extraditions (Irish Republic)

Mr. William Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will now list the names of the persons for whom extradition warrants were sent from Northern Ireland to the Irish Rebublic in each of the last five years, indicating in each case which persons were extradited, which warrants were held to be defective, and the manner in which they were defective in each case, and whether the persons being sought were to be charged with terrorist-type activity.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* As I indicated to the hon. Gentleman on 9 February, at column 165, it would not be in the public interest to give details of individual cases prior to Irish court proceedings, Furthermore, it must be remembered that an extradition application can consist of many individual warrants and be the subject of extensive discussion with the Irish authorities.

Against this background, the available information is as follows:

Table A
Terrorist-type offences

Year of request	*Number of requests*	*Granted*	*Held to be defective while before Irish courts*	*Other outcome*[3]
1983	6	2	[1]1	3
1984	0	0	0	0
1985	5	0	[2]1	4
1986	6	0	0	6
1987	21	0	0	21

[1] B. Burns—warrants defective owing to irregularity in issue.
[2] J. G. O'Reilly—warrants defective primarily because it could not be proved that the person issuing them was a judicial authority.

Table B
Non terrorist-type offences

Year of request	*Number of requests*	*Granted*	*Held to be defective while before Irish courts*	*Other outcome*[3]
1983	22	10	0	12
1984	10	1	0	9
1985	28	5	0	23
1986	0	0	0	0
1987	1	1	0	0

[3] Includes cases where the warrants were subsequently withdrawn, the fugitive was arrested in the United Kingdom, cases rejected by the Irish courts for other reasons and cases as yet uncompleted.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what was the total amount spent by his Department in 1987 on management and computer consultancy contracts, excluding hardware and software purchases.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* Total expenditure under this head in 1987-88 is estimated at £2,862,000.

MV Saga Moon

Mr. Prescott: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will call for a report from the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on the incident on the vessel Saga Moon in the port of Belfast, on 14 March; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* No. The officers involved in the alleged incident on the Saga Moon were members of the Belfast harbour police and as such do not come under the jurisdiction of the Chief Constable of the RUC.

Sinn Fein

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement about his policy towards proscription of Sinn Fein and organisations which may pose a threat to the state.

Mr. King *[holding answer 28 March 1988]:* As I made clear in the House on 17 March, at columns 1247-48, in response to questions from the hon. Member for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (Mr. Maginnis) and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), we keep such matters under review.

Homelessness

Mr. Hume: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what figures are available to indicate the number of homeless households in a given week in Northern Ireland.

Dr. Mawhinney *[holding answer 24 March 1988]:* Information on the exact number of homeless households

in Northern Ireland is not available. However, the following information gives some indication of the extent of homelessness in Northern Ireland.

At 31 December 1987 26 homeless families and 75 homeless single people were living in temporary accommodation arranged or provided by area health and social services boards and voluntary organisations.

At the same date the total number of applicants who had been awarded A1 status — that is, in need of accommodation because of homelessness or threatened homelessness or other emergency situations—under the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's housing selection scheme was 601. Few, if any, of these applicants were without shelter of some form.

Civilians (Deaths)

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civilians have been killed by members of the British armed forces in Northern Ireland since 1969.

Mr. Stanley *[holding answer 29 February 1988]:* Two hundred and forty, including civilians believed to have been terrorists and civilians who were not.

Nurses

Mr. Robin Cook: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the establishment figures, *(b)* the funded establishment figures and *(c)* the in post figures of each of the health and social services boards in Northern Ireland for the following nursing grades; regional nursing officer 1 and 2, regional nurse 1 and 2, district nursing officer grades 1 to 7, director of nursing services grades 1+ to 6, senior nurse grades 1+ to 8, sister I, sister II, health visitor, deputy nursing sister, staff nurse, senior enrolled nurse, enrolled nurse and nursing auxiliary/assistant; and if he will public, for each grade category, the number of employees in full-time posts, the number of part-time employees and the whole-time equivalents of those part-time employees.

Dr. Mawhinney: The establishment and funded establishment figures are not held centrally and cannot be obtained in the time available. My hon. Friend with responsibility for these matters will write to the hon. Members.

The in-post figures are as follows:

Northern Ireland nursing staff by board at 31 December 1987

	Eastern board			Northern board			Southern board			Western board			All boards		
	Full time	Part time	WTE of part time	Full time	Part time	WTE of part time	Full time	Part time	WTE of part time	Full time	Part time	WTE of part time	Full time	Part time	WTE of part time
CANO[1]	1	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	1	—	—	4	—	—
SANO[1]	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
ACANO[1]	5	—	—	3	—	—	3	—	—	3	—	—	14	—	—
Director of Nursing Services[2]	14	—	—	3	—	—	3	—	—	4	—	—	24	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 1+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 3	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 6	9	—	—	6	—	—	1	—	—	9	—	—	25	—	—
Senior Nursing Grade 7	46	—	—	20	—	—	39	—	—	32	1	0·64	137	1	0·64
Senior Nursing Grade 8	62	—	—	23	1	0·88	9	—	—	2	—	—	96	1	0·88
Health Visitor[3]	537	53	28·47	248	58	37·23	218	26	14·2	198	27	15·81	1,201	164	95·71
Staff Nurse[4]	2,191	1,655	945·59	561	499	330·85	519	629	388·55	963	215	134·58	4,234	2,998	1,799·57
Senior Enrolled Nurse	51	10	7·37	3	—	—	10	—	—	8	—	—	72	10	7·37
Enrolled Nurse	785	748	459·52	438	345	231·22	354	236	152·92	384	50	31·72	1,961	1,379	875·38
Nursing Auxiliary	525	716	491·61	304	124	88·3	193	158	105·15	203	20	11·42	1,225	1,018	696·48
Nursing Assistant	248	407	104·37	—	—	—	222	4	2·8	168	13	8·66	638	424	115·83
Sisters[5]	811	24	18·27	199	4	3·05	219	16	8·32	171	4	3·23	1,400	48	32·87

[1] Chief administrative nursing officer; senior administrative nursing officer; assistant chief administrative nursing officer—There are no regional nursing officers or regional nurses employed in the health and personal social services. The grades shown equate to district nursing officer grades 1-7.

[2] Director of nursing services—Information on numbers by grades is not held centrally.

[3] Health visitor includes—Health visitor, health visitor/fieldwork teacher, District nurse, School nurse, District midwife, District nurse/midwife.

[4] Staff nurse includes—Staff nurse, State registered nurse, Staff midwife, Staff nurse/midwife, Staff nurse (RFN).

[5] Sister includes—Community sister (psych), Departmental sister, category B, Night charge nurse, Nursing sister charge nurse 2, Sister-in-charge, Nursing sister-charge nurse 1, Ward sister, Departmental charge nurse category C, Departmental sister category C, Deputy charge nurse, Home sister category A, Midwifery night sister, Occupational health sister, Senior night sister.

Consultancy Contracts

Mr. Tim Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list each management or computer consultancy contract awarded by his Department in 1987, giving in each case the name of the consultancy firm and the subject of the assignment.

Mr. Stanley: The information is as follows:

Firm and subject of assignment

Aims Training — Structured Systems Analysis Design Methodology (SSADM) Consultancy Systems Development.

Charles Allison—Auditing Development Systems.

Professor J. Alty—To evaluate the potential contribution of a Northern Ireland Software Engineering Institute to the Local Software Industry.

Arthur Andersen — Information Technology Resourcing Study.

A. Manning & Associates—Management Training.

Beecom—Roads Service Integrated Systems, Water Service Integrated Systems, Systems Development, User Awareness.
Belfast IT Services—User Awareness.
Belmin Systems—Videotext software for local sourcing and performance indicators.
BIC Systems—Microcomputing, Systems Development.
BIS Applied Systems—Telecommunications, Management Training.
Brennan & Simmons—New Leadership Initiative—Women and Men Together.
British Telecom—Government Network.
Capita Ltd. — Feasibility Study on use of software packages, Strategy Review, Superannuation.
CCTA — Technical Data Flow System (TDFS), Strategy Study—DFP, Enabling Study, Project Support, Strategy Study—DANI, Strategy Study—DED.
Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy — Financial Skills Training.
Coopers and Lybrand Associates — The development and implementation of a departmental information technology strategy for social security benefit payments. Financial Management Surveys of 3 Education and Library Boards. IDB Review. Clerical Work. Measurement Training. To advise on the Technical and Economic aspects of Private Sector Electricity Generation
D. E. Barnard Systems — NI0 Prison Officers Payroll — SSADM. Land Registry. Telecoms. Print Unit Review. Systems Development.
Deloitte, Haskins and Sells — To examine the Financial Systems of the NI Training Authority Financial Management assignment (Harland and Wolff).
Denham-Nash—User Awareness.
Denton Hall Burgin and Warrens—To negotiate and draft Contractural Arrangements with Private Sector Electricity Generators.
Dianne Bailey Associates—New Staff Appraisal Training.
Digital—Office Automation.
Elston Computer Services Ltd. — Development of Payroll System Under VME (Virtual Machine Environment).
Ernst Whinney—Review Internal Audit.
EOSYS—Data Communications Strategy Review.
Frost and Sullivan—Computer Related Training.
Gilpin Black — Strategy Setting. Objective Setting. Management Skills for Professionals.
Health Economics Consortium of the University of York—Investment Appraisal Training.
ICL — Mainframe Upgrade; Technical Support; Programming; Systems Development.
Industrial Training Service Ltd.—Assistance with new YTP Workscheme; Enterprise Training in Community Workshops; Evaluation of Selected Community Workshops
Institute of Manpower Studies — Ongoing advice on the application of Equal Opportunity across the Northern Ireland Civil Service
International Systems Corp of Lancaster (ISCOL)—Review the role and functions of Management and Manpower Review Division (MMRD)
IT Services Ltd. — Evaluation of Pilot Job Training Programme
Learmouth and Burchett Management Systems — Implementation of PROMPT (Project Resources Organisation Management and Planning Techniques); DED Training Division; SSADM
Management Development Services (NI) Ltd. — The provision of Training and Consultancy Services to Enterprise Allowance Participants
Mary Moran—Assertiveness Skills; Management Training for Women
K McDowall—Review GIS
R A McLaughlin — To assist in the Management of the European Community STAR Programme
NCC—SSADM Manuals
Netherlands Economic Institute — Enquiry into the proposals of Economic Development in Northern Ireland
NI Council on Alcohol—Alcohol in the Workplace
Northern Bank Ltd.—Pre-Retirement
Otto Gold GMBH & Co. KE—Otto Gold is retained by DED to provide Technical Advice on the Assessment of work carried out under the Lignite Prospecting Licences and Related Mining Feasibility Studies
PA Management Consultants—Review of Work Study
Pauline Farrell—New Leadership Initiative
Phillips Diane—Review functions of Historic Monuments and Buildings Branch
Price Waterhouse — Assistance with statutory audits; Investment Appraisal; Financial Skills; To review the Pilot Manpower Training Scheme
Printing and Packaging Industry Research Association — Disposal of Waste Paper
Purchasing Index (UK) Ltd. — Purchasing studies for DANI, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the General Supplies Index
Queen's University of Belfast—Professional Qualifications of Internal Audit offered by Institute of Internal Auditors; Investment Appraisal; Basic Book-keeping; Judicial Review Training
N M Rothschild & Sons Ltd.—To advise on the viability of the Financial Structure underlying Private Sector Electricity Generating Proposals
Simdell Ltd.—Register of Student Nurses
Software Ireland — Computerisation of Valuation and Lands Officer Microcomputing Systems Development User Awareness Development of Payroll System Under VME
South West Regional Health Authority — Implementation of National Child Health Computer System
The Mindweeks Partnership—Business Analysis training
Time Manager International—Time Management
Touche Ross—Assessment of audit needs, development of audit processes and assistance with computer audit, both for Departmental Internal Audit and the Statutory Audit function
Touche Ross Management Consultants — Provision of Consultancy Services in the Department of Economic Development in respect of Harland and Wolff
University of Ulster at Jordanstown—Investment Appraisal Policy Analysts
Xentec Ltd. — Consultancy — Including Analysis of Technical Design specification for Transit Project

ENVIRONMENT

Water Supplies

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce his decision on the allocation of responsibility for water pipes up to the meter.

Mr. Moynihan: An announcement will be made shortly on this and other aspects of the water and sewerage law review.

Mr. Rathbone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to report on water board monitoring of the chemical content of water supplies; and what steps he will take if the chemical content is found to be too high.

Mr. Moynihan: If the chemical content of a public water supply exceeds concentrations permitted under the EC drinking water directive, the water authority must take steps to reduce the concentrations to an acceptable level. If this will take time, the water undertaker must submit an action programme to the Department for approval. My right hon. Friend has no plans to report on monitoring by water undertakers.

Ms. Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if there has been any official communication from Her Majesty's Government to the European

Commission that the United Kingdom will comply with the European Community drinking water directive; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: The information contained in my statement of 20 January 1988, at column 742, about the withdrawal of nitrate derogations, and in the statement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 21 December 1987, at column 915, about the interpretation of the term "maximum admissible concentration" in the drinking water directive has been officially communicated to the European Commission by Her Majesty's Government.

Non-governmental Organisations (Grants)

Mr. David Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the non-governmental organisations in receipt of grants from his Department during 1986-87 and 1987-88 together with the size of each grant.

Mr. Ridley: I have placed in the Library a list of some 185 bodies in receipt of grant from the Department in the relevant years. The Department also operates schemes for providing revenue support to housing associations; assisting companies and other organisations with the cost of reclaiming derelict land; assisting with the provision of water supply and sewerage in assisted areas; and assisting statutory water companies with civil defence costs. The list excludes organisations in receipt of local authority or non departmental public body contributions supported by grant from the Department.

Housing Investment Programme

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list at 1988-89 prices his Department's initial housing investment programme allocations *(a)* to English local authorities, *(b)* to local authorities in Greater London, *(c)* to metropolitan authorities outside London, *(d)* to non-metropolitan authorities in the south-east and *(e)* to English non-metropolitan authorities (i) for 1978-79, (ii) for 1980-81, (iii) for 1982-83 (iv) for 1984-85 (v) for 1986-87 and (vi) for 1988-89.

Mrs. Roe: The figures are in the table:

Local authorities' housing investment programme allocations: England

£ millions: 1988-89 prices

	1978-79	*1980-81*	*1982-83*	*1984-85*	*1986-87*	*1988-89*
London boroughs and GLC	1,785	1,177	820	648	469	372
Metropolitan districts	1,339	909	783	579	407	300
Non-metropolitan districts in South East	756	420	389	308	228	150
Other non-metropolitan districts	1,386	864	856	610	435	305
Total	5,266	3,370	2,848	2,145	1,539	1,127

Notes:
1. Figures include the basic allocations and homes insulation scheme allocations, also additional retrospective allocations for 1982-83.
2. South-east is the standard region comprising the authorities in the Department of the Environment administrative eastern (excluding East Anglia) and south-eastern regions.

Local Authority Housing

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, at 1986-87 outturn prices, local authorities housing capital expenditure *(a)* on new building, *(b)* on renovation of local authority stock, *(c)* on renovation grants, *(d)* on loans to housing associations and *(e)* on other purposes during (i) 1976-77, (ii) 1978-79, (iii) 1980-81, (iv) 1982-83, (v) 1984-85 and (vi) 1986-87; and if he will give this information (1) for England as a whole, (2) for Greater London, (3) for metropolitan authorities outside Greater London, (4) for non metropolitan authorities in the south-east and (5) for non metropolitan authorities in England.

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether regulation 4(1)(e) of the Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations 1988 applies to capital receipts arising from the disposal of assets acquired by councils from development corporations under the new towns transfer agreements; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to the hon. Members.

North Sea Conference

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline the reasons for the United Kingdom's rejection of the European Commission proposal of December 1987 to implement the results of the North sea conference at European Community level.

Mr. Moynihan: Far from rejecting any formal proposal, the United Kingdom agreed with all other member states of the Environment Council on 3 December 1987 on conclusions welcoming the significant progress made at the second international conference on the protection of the North sea. The council recalled the need to combat fresh water and marine pollution, and expected to pursue Community action in this field on the basis of appropriate proposals by the Commission.

McDonald's Hamburgers Ltd.

Ms. Richardson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning applications submitted by McDonald's Hamburgers Ltd. have been turned down by local authorities since 1979, which have been the subject of an appeal to him; how many appeals have been successful; and from which local planning authority each application has been made.

Mrs. Roe: The information requested is not readily available from departmental records, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Westminster Council (Sale of Cemeteries)

Mr. Jim Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many complaints he has received about the actions of Westminster city council in respect of the sale of cemeteries owned by the authority.

Mr. Chope: Since 4 January we have received 74 letters from members and 39 direct from members of the public.

Chlorofluorocarbon Gases

Mr. McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will be meeting the management of ICI to discuss the phasing out of chlorofluorocarbon gases production.

Mr. Moynihan: I have no plans to do so. Officials in the Department keep in close touch with both United Kingdom producers of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) on the steps they are taking to develop suitable and safe substitutes for the CFCs controlled by the Montreal protocol. ICI has recently reaffirmed its commitment to the development of such alternatives and has scheduled a rapid increase in its investment in this field.

Rating Reform

Dr. Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met representatives of English local authorities regarding the poll tax; and what matters were discussed.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend and I frequently meet representatives of English local authorities in the course of official business and discuss many aspects of the proposed community charge.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the average community charge and the national non-domestic rate that would be levied in 1988-89 if the Local Government Finance Bill were in force.

Mr. Howard: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received any analysis from the Association of District Councils regarding the costs of collecting and administering the poll tax in Nottingham.

Mr. Howard: The Association of District Councils undertook a survey last year of the preparation and collection costs of the community charge. From this survey the association extrapolated national estimates but did not supply figures for individual authorities nor offer analysis of their estimates. Nottingham is one of the sample authorities included in the study now being undertaken by Price Waterhouse for my Department.

Mr. Gow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the initial costs which will be incurred by Eastbourne borough council in setting up the administrative machinery for the proposed community charge in each of the two years ending 31 March 1989 and 1990 and of the annual administrative costs thereafter; and what financial assistance is proposed to be made by his Department towards those costs.

Mr. Howard: My right hon. Friend included estimates of these costs for all charging authorities in the financial memorandum to the Local Government Finance Bill. I have announced initial capital allocations totalling £25 million towards these costs in 1988-89, which will be distributed to authorities including Eastbourne borough council within the next few days. We shall reflect the further resources needed in 1989-90 and subsequent years in future capital allocations and grant settlements.

Mr. Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received from member of religious orders seeking exemption from the community charge; and what response he intends to make.

Mr. Ridley: I have received a number of representations from members of religious orders. The Government propose to table amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill which will have the effect of exempting from the community charge members of religious orders the principal occupation of which is devoted to prayer, contemplation, the relief of suffering, education or such other activities as may be prescribed. The exemption will be limited to those who are dependent on their communities for their material needs, and who have no income or capital of their own.

Dr. Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the average cash figure paid by the lowest paid 5 per cent. of households under the present system towards the cost of local services; what this amount is as a percentage of their average after-tax income; and what these figures will be when the community charge is implemented;

(2) what is the average cash figure paid by the highest paid 5 per cent. of households under the present system towards the cost of local services; what this amount is as a percentage of their average after-tax income; what these figures will be when the community charge is implemented; and what the above figures will be when the income tax changes proposed in the Budget are implemented.

Mr. Ridley: *[holding answer 23 March]:* Households contribute to the cost of local services both directly via local taxation and indirectly via national taxation. Assessments of the size of contributions rely on data from the family expenditure survey. Limitations in the sample size prevent reliable estimates of the relative contribution of the highest and lowest paid 5 per cent. of households.

Local Authority Publicity

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to include in the forthcoming code of recommended practice on local authority publicity a provision to the effect that a local authority should not engage in publicity in order to promote the use of services offered by a particular private business, to the detriment of other businesses offering similar services to the public in the authority's area.

Mr. Chope: The draft code of recommended practice makes it clear that there should be no discrimination in favour of, or against, persons or groups in the compilation and distribution of local authority publicity material.

South Africa (Rugby Tour)

Mr. Pendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to uphold the

Gleneagles agreement by seeking to ensure that the planned World XV rugby tour to South Africa does not take place.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister confirmed the Government's continuing commitment to the Gleneagles agreement during Prime Minister's questions on 29 March. I welcome the efforts of English Rugby Union to discourage players from taking part in the projected tour.

Bed-and-breakfast Accommodation

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the numbers of *(a)* children and *(b)* pensioners living in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for each local authority in England and Wales.

Mrs. Roe: At 31 December 1987 there were 10,370 households temporarily placed in bed-and-breakfast accommodation by English local authorities under the homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1985. Information on the number of children and pensioners in these households is not collected by my Department. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has responsibility for these matters as they affect the Principality.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest cost of keeping a family in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for each local authority in England and Wales.

Mrs. Roe: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Cardiff, West (Mr. Morgan) on 16 March, at column *601*.

Inner Cities

Mr. Gould: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of the expenditure of his Department is spent in inner cities.

Mr. Ridley: Spending from my Department's programmes specifically targeted at inner cities is expected to be about £1,070 million, 16 per cent. out of a public expenditure total of £6,833 million in 1988-89 for the housing and other environmental services. Inner city areas will also benefit from my Department's other countryside programmes which spend some of their resources in these areas; separate figures for inner cities are not available. Expenditure from these programmes which is not incorporated in the 16 per cent. includes: water authorities, heritage, recreation, local environmental services, other local authority current, most local authority spending on housing.

British Canoe Union

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total amount of Sports Council grants to the British Canoe Union in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and what information he has as to what estimate was made of the total membership of the British Canoe Union in the years in question.

Mr. Moynihan: Sports Council grant-in-aid to the British Canoe Union for the last three years for which figures are available was as follows:

Year	*£*
1984-85	269,614
1985-86	239,410
1986-87	196,789

Estimates of membership as supplied by the BCU are from November to October in each of those years:

Year	*Numbers*
1984-85	11,377
1985-86	12,733
1986-87	13,667

Amateur Rowing Association

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total amount of Sports Council grant to the Amateur Rowing Association in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and what information he has as to what estimate was made of the total membership of the Amateur Rowing Association in each of the years in question.

Mr. Moynihan: Sports Council grant-in-aid to the Amateur Rowing Association for the last three years for which figures are available was as follows:

Year	*£*
1984-85	288,540
1985-86	382,546
1986-87	439,850

Estimates of membership for the calendar years 1984, 1985 and 1986 are as follows:

Year	*Number*
1984	24,910
1985	25,173
1986	24,842

Water Authorities

Mr. Onslow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to monitor the performance of water authorities in England and Wales in their compliance with discharge concerns.

Mr. Moynihan: Details of discharges from sewage treatment works are contained in the public registers which water authorities are required to maintain. In addition, since 1986 the authorities have made annual reports to the Department detailing works which have failed to comply with consent conditions. The reports for 1987, which are now being received, will be followed-up by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution to establish the reasons for non-compliance and the remedial measures which the water authorities propose to deal with the problems. The Department will also examine water authority plans to improve the performance of their sewage treatment works in the context of their corporate plans.

EC Harmonisation Programme

Mr. Latham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the programme of work in which his Department is involved

with the construction and allied industries relating to the European Community's harmonisation programme in 1992 under the Single European Act.

Mr. Ridley: The Department leads the negotiations on the draft construction products directive as part of the agreed Community programme for the completion of the single market by the end of 1992. The directive, when implemented, should benefit the United Kingdom construction products industry by requiring the removal of non-tariff barriers to trade between member states. Although negotiations on the draft directive are at an advanced stage it is not yet possible to say when it will be implemented.

The Department is also involved in the development of European technical standards in support of the directive.

Nuclear Waste

Dr. Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will acquire for his departmental library a copy of the paper presented by M. E. Ginniff of United Kingdom Nirex Ltd. to the Waste Management '88 conference in Tucson, Arizona, on future nuclear waste management strategies for the United Kingdom.

Mr. Moynihan: A copy of the paper to which the hon. Member refers has been acquired for the departmental library.

West Midlands (Nitrogen Dioxide)

Mr. John M. Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a summary of the findings of the investigation of atmospheric concentrations of nitrogen dioxide in the west midlands commissioned by the air and noise division of his Department in collaboration with west midlands local authorities and in particular regarding emission from domestic balanced flue gas appliances, which investigations were the subject of a report in 1987.

Mr. Moynihan: The contractors for the west midlands survey of nitrogen dioxide concentrations, Midland Environment Ltd., will be presenting a summary paper on all aspects of the study to the investigation of air pollution standing conference, in Birmingham on 7 June this year. The Department, in line with normal practice, has also encouraged Midland Environment to publish papers on the survey results in the appropriate scientific and technical journals.

Boundary Changes

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if, pursuant to changes in county boundaries following the passage of the Local Government Act 1972, he will list those areas in England and Wales which have subsequently been transferred from one economic planning region to another, and the dates on which such changes formally occurred.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

House Prices

Mr. Adley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list what information he has on those areas in England where major new housing development has resulted in reductions of house prices.

Mrs. Roe: I regret that information is not available in sufficiently fine detail to identify such areas.

Planning System

Mrs. Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to propose changes in the working of the planning system.

Mrs. Roe: We keep the planning system under constant review to ensure that it operates efficiently to enable development which contributes to the growth of the economy while protecting and enhancing the urban and rural environment. We are at present consulting about proposals to amend and consolidate the general development order, and about proposals for incorporating EC requirements on environmental assessment into the planning system. We also intend shortly to introduce revised procedure rules for planning inquiries.

Rented Housing

Mr. Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what proposals he has to increase the supply of rented housing.

Mrs. Roe: The main aim of the deregulation proposals in part I of the Housing Bill is to increase the supply of rented accommodation. We are confident that the relaxation of rent controls over new lettings, backed up by the generous tax relief under my right hon. Friend's proposed extension of the business corporation scheme, will provide a powerful incentive to invest in rented property.

The Local Government Act 1988 also included an explicit new power for local authorities to assist in the provision of privately let accommodation.

We are also helping housing associations to provide more new homes for rent and to repair some empty properties to bring them back into rented use. We have both increased the Housing Corporation's programme by some £50 million in 1988-89 rising to a total of £850 million in 1990-91 and announced major increases in the grant rates available for schemes using private finance to make public money stretch further in providing new homes.

Basildon (Debt Burden)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what account he took of Basildon district council's debt burden in deciding to rate-cap that authority for 1988-89.

Mr. Howard: As required by statute, my right hon. Friend selected Basildon district council for rate limitation for 1988-89 by reference to the best information available to him about its likely total expenditure for 1987-88, which reflected among other things the costs falling that year on Basildon's ratepayers as a result of the council's debt.

Industrial Installations (Radiation)

Mr. Cran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to change the legal dose limits for acceptable levels of exposure to radiation for those working in, or living in the vicinity of, industrial installations.

Mr. Moynihan: My right hon. Friend has no plans for changing legal dose limits for acceptable levels of exposure to radiation. Dose limits, for workers and for members of the general public, are contained in the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985, which are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Commission has set up a working group on ionising radiations, which is reviewing the subject and will be reporting to the commission in due course.

Local Government Act 1988

Mr. Patnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will announce his final decisions on the timing of implementation of the competition provisions of the Local Government Act 1988.

Mr. Chope: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that my hon. and learned Friend gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Harrogate (Mr. Banks) yesterday.

Council Houses (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment which private company is carrying out research into tenants' views on the sale of council estates on behalf of his Department in Nottingham; and what other work the company has done for his Department.

Mrs. Roe: I shall write to the hon. Gentleman.

Local Authorities (Property Assets)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to monitor the performance of local authorities in ensuring that their real property assets are managed efficiently and cost effectively.

Mrs. Roe: The Audit Commission has recently published a report which recommends measures for the improvement of local authorities' management of their property. The auditors will be following up the recommendations of the report with individual local authorities during the next audit round. My Department will be discussing with the local authority associations and the commission ways in which councils can be encouraged to adopt the report's recommendations.

Property Services Agency Board

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Offical Report* the terms of reference of the Property Services Agency Board; when the scope of its functions and powers was last reviewed; and what steps the board is currently taking to encourage greater competition and private sector involvement in the management and execution of its duties so far as they relate to the real property assets of each Government Department.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Property Services Agency

Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment how many buildings the Property Services Agency rents for Government Departments in central London; and what is the annual cost and the rent per square metre.

Mr. Chope: The Property Services Agency leases 159 buildings for occupation by Government Departments in the following central London postal districts: WC1 and 2, W1, SW1, SE1 and EC1 to 4. The rent bill for these properties is currently some £80 million, representing an annual rental of a little over £100 per sq m.

Glanville Fritillary

Mr. Barry Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make a decision on the Glanville fritillary; if he will list the representations he has received; and what information he has on where in the United Kingdom this butterfly is found.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to my hon. Friend.

Greenwich (Rents)

Mr. Cartwright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what response he has made to the representations dated 19 February from the hon. Member for Woolwich about the decision of Greenwich council to raise rents for its frail elderly tenants in sheltered housing schemes.

Mrs. Roe: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Crown Suppliers

Mr. Boyes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether, after privatisation of the Crown Suppliers, any staff wishing to remain in the Civil Service will be found equivalent employment elsewhere in the Civil Service, with retraining and regrading where necessary;

(2) whether, after privatisation of the Crown Suppliers, staff nearing retirement or with long service not wishing to transfer out of the Crown Suppliers will have the option of going to the new organisation on secondment or taking early retirement;

(3) whether staff of the Crown Suppliers will be able to transfer out of the organisation prior to privatisation and will have equality of opportunity with other staff to apply for other jobs within the Civil Service;

(4) what are the expected financial savings to Government of privatising the Crown Suppliers;

(5) which parts of the Crown Suppliers organisation will be retained within the Civil Service;

(6) whether, after privatisation of the Crown Suppliers, any changes to the terms and conditions of service of staff will be subject to the same consultation with the trade union side as at present;

(7) whether, following privatisation of the Crown Suppliers, any staff will be made redundant compulsorily.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to the hon. Member.

County Hall

Mr. Tony Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement concerning the future use of the former headquarters of the Greater London council at county hall, SE1.

Mr. Chope: The future use of county hall is a matter for the London residuary body and any future owner taking into account planning and listed building considerations. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be

considering the recent High Court judgment on his planning decisions of 20 October 1987, when the transcript becomes available.

Warrington-Runcorn New Town

Mr. Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give for each year since 1981 the square footage of factory space vacated by tenants of Warrington-Runcorn new town.

Mrs. Roe: The information requested is as follows:

Factory space vacated

	[1]*gross square footage*
1985-86	259,000
1986-87	291,500
1987-88	296,750

[1] Estimated.

Note: These figures do not take account of re-allocations or other re-lettings. Information for 1984-85 and previous years is not readily available.

I should emphasise that a significant proportion, about a third, of vacations arise from expansion, and that these figures do not therefore reflect the success of the corporation's role in the industrial development of the north-west.

Non-Metropolitan County Councils

Mr. Robert B. Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish for each non-metropolitan county council in England *(a)* the outturn expenditure for 1986-87, *(b)* the current expenditure for 1987-88 and *(c)* the percentage increase between the two;

(2) if he will publish for each non-metropolitan county council in England *(a)* the current expenditure for 1987-88, *(b)* the budgeted expenditure for 1988-89 and *(c)* the percentage increase between the two.

Mr. Chope: I shall write to the hon. Member shortly.

Hackney

Mr. Nicholas Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has come to a decision on the future of Hackney's building direct labour organisation following his request to the borough to submit a special report.

Mr. Chope: My right hon. Friend has considered Hackney's special report and subsequent correspondence and has today informed the borough, in accordance with his powers under S17(5) of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, that with immediate effect its direct labour organisation shall not have power to undertake major new building work except as necessary to complete work already awarded to it, and that its power to carry out this work will cease completely a year from now.

The borough claimed to have made a surplus on its major new works account in 1985-86 following losses of £3·2 million in 1983-84 and £1·75 million in 1984-85. My right hon. Friend is now satisfied, however, that the claimed surplus is spurious.

Brompton Hospital

Mr. Faulds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make it his policy to accept the advice tendered on architectural and historical grounds by English Heritage that the Brompton hospital be added to the statutory list; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan: I shall write to the hon. Member.

Local Authorities (Expenditure)

Mr. Heddle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on English local authorities' expenditure plans for 1988-89; and what amount of block grant he estimates will be payable to them.

Mr. Ridley: On the basis of information received by 21 March, English local authorities are budgeting for an aggregate total expenditure in 1988-89 of about £27,610 million, compared with £26,569 million provided for in the RSG settlement. On this basis, the amount of block grant payable will be £8,955 million, £516 million less than provided in the settlement.

Ozone Layer

Mr. Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his policy on the initiatives to reduce damage to the ozone layer.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 29 March 1988]:* In September 1987 the United Kingdom signed the Montreal protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer and we are currently working with other member states on proposals for implementing the protocol within the European Community. The Department is also discussing with representatives of producers and users of chlorofluorocarbons and halons steps to reduce consumption of these chemicals through the development of suitable and safe substitutes and measures such as recycling and recovery.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Dr. David Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list any sites of special scientific interest that have been ploughed up for cereal growing in the last 12 months showing their habitat type; and if he will make a statement.

Mr. Moynihan *[holding answer 25 March 1988]:* The NCC's 13th annual report shows that 27 SSSIs notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 suffered damage (mainly superficial) from agricultural activities. Another 21 awaiting or proposed for notification suffered similarly. The Nature Conservancy Council is compiling the information requested in respect of cereal growing. I shall write to the hon. Member with the details shortly.

INDEX TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

SIXTH SERIES **VOLUME 130**

SESSION 1987–88

21st March-31st March 1988

SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc, between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

Scope and arrangement of the Index

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc, under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speaker's rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions*.

Abbreviations

Bills 1R = first reading, 2R = second reading, Money res = money resolution, Com = Committee stage, Rep = Report stage, 3R = third reading, amendt/amendts = amendment/amendments, * = matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

A2
Cost benefit analysis 354w
Road traffic 129-30w

A6
616w

A13
263w

A38
Road works 556w

A50
Road traffic 267w

A51
554w
Speed limits 616w

A55
Road works 27w

A96
Road works 144w

A256
Road accidents 261-2w

A258
Road accidents 261-2w

A320 airbus
25w

A330 airbus
25w

A340 airbus
25w

Abbott, Ms Diane
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 759, 769-70
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 327
Questions
Ministerial duties, Dept of Transport 456w

Abolition of Domestic Rates etc (Scotland) Act 1987
Questions
Orders & regulations 143w

Abortion
89-92w
Drugs 655w
Finks, Arnold 245w
Foreign patients 451-2w
Mental illness 542w

ABSA
see Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts

ABTA
see Association of British Travel Agents

Academic freedom
(24:03:88) 534-621

Access Committee for England
447w

Access to buildings
Government departments 45-6w
Handicapped 447w

Access to Parliament
House of Commons catering 296-7w

Access to Personal Files Act 1987
Questions
507w

Accident & emergency departments
219w
Northern Regional Health Authority 550-1w
South East Thames Regional Health Authority 154-6w

Accidents
Agriculture 434w

Accountability
Computers in National Health Service 32w

ACE
see Association for the Conservation of Energy

Acid rain
Pollution control 508w
Scotland 508w

ACMD
see Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

"Action for Cities"
586w

Action for Community Employment
563w
Northern Ireland 700w

Acute beds
219w
Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 173-80
NHS finance 35w

Adams, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 910
Questions
Business statements 1283-4
Health services, Northern Ireland 220w
Merksworth School, Paisley, Official engagements 232-3w, 255w
Merksworth School, Paisley, School closures 142w
Ministry of Defence, Central London 110w

Adaptation to premises & equipment scheme
258w

ADAS
see Agricultural Development & Advisory Service

ADC
see Association of District Councils

Addresses to the Crown
Election expenses (23:03:88) 339

Adjournment debates
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 334, (31:03:88) 1333

Adley, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1171, 1183, 1189, 1205-7, 1214, 1225, 1227-9
Questions
Economic regions 717w
House prices 717-8w
Hulton Picture Library 685w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 1080

Administration of justice
European Court of Justice 181-2w
South Africa 512w

Administrative costs
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland 644w
Local government pensions 367w
Northern Regional Health Authority 453w
Road tax 556w
Sunderland Health Authority 453w

Administrative delays
Aids for handicapped 256w
Community health councils 35w
Entry clearances 132w
Housing benefits 207w
Industrial injury benefit 160w
Members' correspondence 14w, 120w
Passports 231w, 681-3w, 686w
Retirement pensions 88w
Road construction 617w

Advertising controls
Dog fighting 494w

Advertising Standards Authority
Exhibitions 383w

Advice & Assistance (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 198, (30:03:88) 1250

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
453-5w

Advisory services
AIDS 37w
Arts 720
Congenital abnormalities 217w
Debts 234-5w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland 644-5w
Loans 234-5w

Aerosols
Palace of Westminster 18, 20

AEU
see Amalgamated Engineering Union

Afcor Investments
1266

Afghanistan
Ministers' visits abroad 511w
USSR 511w

Africa
Capital movements 124w

African National Congress
South Africa 1077

Age
Community charges register 340

Age allowances
Pensioners 605-6w, 611w

Age Concern
Wales 341w

Agricultural Development & Advisory Service
Farmers 279w, 568-9w
Fees & charges 13w
Income 279w
Manpower 279-80w
Wales 279-80w
Welsh language 279w

Agricultural Inspectorate
164-5w
Manpower 419w

Agricultural land
Farm woodland scheme 1267
Land values 51-2w
Wales 51-2w

Agricultural marketing
Agricultural products 1270

Agricultural products
Agricultural marketing 1270
River pollution 635w

Agricultural research
Research finance 1267
Scotland 1267-8
Torry research station 634w

Agricultural stabilisers
571w, 1264-5, 1268-9

Agricultural subsidies
Potatoes 568w

Agriculture
Accidents 434w
Income 51w
Official engagements 639w
Pollution control 637-8w
Scotland 644-5w
Wales 51w

AIDS
159w
Advisory services 37w
Death 32-3w
Disease control 503-4w
Drug abuse 406-8w, 453-5w, 1273, (31:03:88) 1294-300
Prisoners 641-3w
Scotland 406-8w, 503-4w, 641-3w, (31:03:88) 1294-300

AIDS—continued
Screening 236w
Wales 1-2, 29w

Aids for handicapped
Administrative delays 256w
Handicapped workers 256-8w

Air accidents
Military aircraft 622-3w

Air conditioning
Research 208-9w

Air force
Cruise missile sites 114w
Maple Flag exercises 9w
Military aircraft 100w
Scotland 411w

Air force bases
Treaties 180w

Air freight transport
Arms trade 91-2w
Prestwick Airport 91-2w

Air pollution
Nitrogen dioxide 717w
Ozone layer 366w
West Midlands 717w

Air pollution control
Power stations 196
Scotland 507-8w

Air routes
Manchester Airport 131w

Air safety
Departmental publications 614w
Light aircraft (31:03:88) 1287-93
Near misses 458w

Air traffic
Airports 355w

Air traffic control
London airports 557w

"Airbase"
135-6w

Airbus Industrie
64w

Airbuses
25w
Subsidies 64w

Aircrew
USA 135-6w

Airedale Health Authority
Perinatal mortality 247-8w

Airports
Air traffic 355w
Fees & charges 619w
Passengers 353w

Aitken, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1208-9, 1216
Questions
Business statements 515

Alcoholic drinks
Cancer hazards 330w
Visual arts 444w

Alcoholism
Armed forces 8w
Prisoners 647-8w

Alexander, Mr Richard
Questions
Business statements 513-4
Health service staff, Trent Regional Health Authority 82-3w
Independent Living Fund 661-2w

Alexander, Mr Richard—continued
Newark bypass, Road construction 460w

Alison, Rt Hon Michael, Second Church Estates Commissioner
Questions
Church Commissioners, Education 13
Religion, Books 13-4

Allen, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 361
Elderly, Nottingham (25:03:88) 697-702, 703, 704-5, 706, 707
House of Commons broadcasting (25:03:88) 694
House of Commons times of sittings (25:03:88) 660-2
Television licences, Public petitions (25:03:88) 631
Questions
Bees, Privatisation 1268
Civil service agencies, Civil service unions 725
Community care 571w
Community Care Review, Departmental circulars 333-4w
Community charge, Nottingham 713w
Council house sales, Nottingham 719w
Council tenants, Nottingham 298w
Dept of the Environment, Market research 299w
Economic League, Company accounts 119w
Economic League, Police 275w
Pink, Angela, Prosecutions 485w
Public Accounts Committee, Public Accounts Commission 14
Religion, Books 13-4
Tax allowances, Ministers 496w

Allied Irish Banks
698w

Alternative energy
719
Research finance 293-4w

Alton, Mr David
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 29-30
Questions
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 494-5
Young offenders, Northern Ireland 219w

AMA
see Amateur Rowing Association

Amalgamated Engineering Union
193

Amateur Rowing Association
Sports Council 716w

Ambulance services
Armed forces medical services 103w

Amersham International
Government shareholding 371w

Amess, Mr David
Debates etc.
Horses Ponies & Donkeys Bill, 1R (29:03:88) 918-9
Questions
Procedure Select Committee, Publishing 524-8w
Rate limitation, Basildon District Council 718w
"Training for Employment White Paper" 432w
Young offenders 230-1w
Young offenders, Custodial treatment 274w
Young offenders, Habitual offenders 231w
Young offenders, Parent & child 183w

Amnesty International
1274

Amos, Mr Alan
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 770-3
Questions
Abortion, Finks, Arnold 245w
Abortion, Mental illness 542w
INF Treaty 103-4w
Smoking 246w
Social security appeals tribunals 663w

Anaesthetics
Maternal mortality 245w

ANC
see African National Congress

Ancient monuments
Scotland 141w

Anderson, Mr Donald
Questions
Maternity services, Wales 26w

Anglo-Irish Agreement
81w, 218w, 497-8
Devolution 222w
Disclosure of information 218w

Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
225w, 495-7, 518w

Angola
South Africa 512w

Angus
202w

Animal cruelty
Dogs 10w

Animal experiments
Chemical weapons 368w
Laboratories 184-5w
Netherlands 368w
Tax evasion 497w

Animal feed
Food contamination 312w

Animal husbandry
Foxes 639w
Mink 190-1w, 200w, 206w, 646w
Pigs 635w, 640w
Planning permission 190-1w, 200w

Animal welfare
Horses (29:03:88) 918-9

Antarctic
Minerals 133w

Antisubmarine warfare
Navy 108w, 184-6

Antrim
Nursing homes 166w
Residential care 166-7w

Antrim Hospital
Construction 500-1

Appeals
Medicines Commission 34-5w
Rates & rating 478-9w

Apprentice Boys of Derry
703w

ARA
see Amateur Rowing Association

Arbitration schemes
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 169w

Arbuthnot, Mr James
Questions
Armenia, Human rights 516w
Royal College of Nursing 880
Submarines, USSR 105w

Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1089
Questions
Child minding, Child workers 151w
Child workers, Pay 12w
Child workers, Working hours 84-5w
Education welfare officers 126-7w
Motor vehicle safety, Retail trade 352w
Palestine, Israel 1074
Persian Gulf, Shipping safety 515w
Social security reform, Social security recipients 882

Architects
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 699w

Armed forces
Alcoholism 8w
Non-alcoholic drinks 8w
Resignations 191

Armed forces casualties
412w
Compensation 411-2w
Death 412w
Negligence 505

Armed forces catering services
Privatisation 411w

Armed forces deployment
Belize 191w
Exercise Arrowhead Express 623-4w
Falkland Islands 180w
Fire prevention 112w
Mediterranean Sea 520w
Northern Ireland 136w
Persian Gulf 186
Ter[illegible]n 571w

Armed forces medical services
Ambulance services 103w
Hospital patients 467w

Armed forces pensions
Widows' benefits 111w

Armed forces recruitment
191
Armed forces strength 191

Armed forces strength
Armed forces recruitment 191
Territorial Army 105w

Armed forces training
Army in Northern Ireland 362w
Bangladesh 180-1w
Navy 363-4w
Psychology 359w

Armenia
Human rights 516w

Armilla patrol
Persian Gulf 515w

Arms control negotiations
Chemical weapons 517-8w, 1070-1
European Proliferation Information Centre 242w
Mutual & balanced force reductions 53w, 113-4w
NATO 132w
Nuclear weapons 114w
Verification Technology Information Centre 242w

Arms exports
Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w, 317w, 356w

Arms trade
Air freight transport 91-2w
Libyan Arab Republic 78w
Northern Ireland 78w
South Africa 629-30w

Armstrong, Ms Hilary
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 109
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:83) 227-8, 261, 274, (23:03:88) 375, 448, (24:03:88) 546-9

Armstrong, Ms Hilary—continued
Questions
Employment training 415w
F111 aircraft 108-9w
Health services, Northern Ireland 220w
Nurses' training, Expenditure 149-50w

Army
Blood sports 114w
Medical examinations 360-2w
Psychiatry 360-1w

Army in Northern Ireland
112w, 1274-5
Armed forces training 362w
Castledillon 361-2w
Forgery 359-60w
Homicide 438w, 707w

Arnold, Mr Jacques
Debates etc.
Exercise Fire Focus (31:03:88) 1333-4
Hospital Consultants (Transfer & Revision of Contracts) Bill, 1R (23:03:88) 362-3
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 667
Questions
Dock labour scheme, Greater London 674-6w
Job release scheme, Training allowances 537w
Local enterprise agencies 431-2w
Nicaragua 1068
Territorial Army, Armed forces strength 105w

Arnold, Mr Tom
Questions
Block grant, Stockport 308-9w
Civil service dispersal 612-3w
Disley bypass, Road construction 616w

Arrests
Belgium 520-1w
South Africa house 492w

Arson
Wales 5-6

Arthritis
Medical research 175w

Artillery
112w, 364w
BAOR 111w

Arts
Advisory services 720
China 573-4w
Enterprise allowance scheme 348w, 720
Inner city areas 350w
Marketing 349w
Ministers 725

Arts Council
351w

Arts Council grants
Liverpool 720-1

Arts Council of Great Britain
see Arts Council

Arts finance
722
Community charge 161w
Cultural heritage 349w
Greater London 227w
Haymarket Theatre Leicester 722
Libraries 349-50w
Northern region 227w
Photography 721-2

Arts sponsorship
347-8w, 350w

ASA
see Advertising Standards Authority

Asbestos
Housing estates 121w

Ashby, Mr David
Questions
Manufacturing industries 878

Ashdown, Mr Paddy
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 163-5
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 204-76 passim, (23:03:88) 377-80, 447, (24:03:88) 537, 544-6, 557, 558, 578, 588-92, 596, 617-8
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 789-91, 801, 809-11

Ashford Remand Centre
(30:03:88) 1083-98

Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Questions
Armed forces casualties 412w
Armed forces casualties, Compensation 411-2w
Armed forces casualties, Death 412w
Armed forces casualties, Negligence 505
Benzodiazepines, Drug abuse 247w
Drug side effects, Disclosure of information 446-7w
Handicapped workers, Disablement schemes 431w
Loans, Advisory services 234-5w
Medicines Commission, Appeals 34-5w
Nepal, Political prisoners 273w
Road traffic, Stoke-on-Trent 267-8w
Road traffic, Urban areas 267-8w
Stoke-on-Trent, Transport supplementary grants 266-7w

Ashwell Prison
Prison escapes 232w

Aspartame
243-4w

Assisted areas
Cornwall 876

Associated British Ports (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts
347-8w

Association for the Conservation of Energy
308w

Association of British Travel Agents
357-8w

Association of District Councils
713w

Assured tenancies
Business expansion scheme 607-8w

Atkins, Mr Robert, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
Debates etc.
Rover Group (31:03:88) 1304-7
Questions
A320 airbus 25w
Airbuses 25w
Airbuses, Subsidies 64w
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 585w
Horizon 2000, Space technology 357w
Industrial development, Lewisham 585w
Nissan, Trade unions 357w

Atkins, Mr Robert—continued
Plastics, Upper waiting hall 356w
Regional aid, Houghton 595-6w
Spacecraft, USA 356-7w

Atkinson, Mr David
Questions
Arts sponsorship 347-8w
Coastal protection, Capital investment 1269
Palestine, Peace negotiations 1073-4
Tourism, Government grants 424w

Attorney-General
Consultants 371w

Audit
Public companies (22:03:88) 199-200

Austria
1069
EC external relations 519w
Foreign policy 1068-9

Availability for work
259w, 424w
Restart programme 163w
Unemployment benefits 424w

Average earnings
Income support scheme 663w
Supplementary benefits 338w

Azerbaijan
Human rights 516w

***Baker, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Secretary of State for Education and Science*
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 159
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 206-17, 232-6, (23:03:88) 375, 419-26, 444, 448-53, (24:03:88) 574-9, 584-7, 596, 597, 613-7
Education Reform Bill, Allocation of time motion (23:03:88) 364-5
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 734, 740-1, 742, 798-810, 818, 826
Questions
Council For National Academic Awards, Public appointments 176w
Educational finance, Capital investment 176w
Inner London Education Authority, Departmental publications 235w
School administration, Educational policy 235w
School discipline, Inquiries 176w

Baker, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Business statements 1281
Fish farming 1259
Nuclear weapons deployment, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 7-8w
USSR, Educational exchanges 132w

Balance of trade
UK trade with EC 372w

Baldry, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 821-30
Questions
Chemical weapons, Arms control negotiations 517-8w
Community charge, Religious orders 714w
Electricity Council, Official engagements 291w
Empty property, Ministry of Defence 236w
House of Commons Works of Art Advisory Committee 192-3w
Museums & galleries, Management 351-2w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 102w
South Bank Centre 575w

Ball, Tony
6-7

Bananas
Overseas trade 629w
Treaties 629w

Bangladesh
Armed forces training 180-1w

Bank of Ireland
698w

Bankruptcy
93w

Banks
Tax yields 501w

Banks, Mr Robert
Questions
Company registration, Yorkshire & Humberside 22-3w
Income tax, Tax burden 315w
Knaresborough bypass, Public inquiries 60w
Local government services, Competition 479-80w
NATO, Mines 187
Trident 99w
White Hart Training Centre, Cost per student 84w

Banks, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Business questions interventions (24:03:88) 516-7
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 201
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 734-828 passim
House of Commons chamber, Litter (22:03:88) 331
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 475-9, 480, 482
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 309-10, 322-4, 327
Oral question time intervention (24:03:88) 508, (31:03:88) 1268
Prime Minister, Northern Ireland (24:03:88) 530
Questions
Arts finance, Community charge 161w
Business statements 528-9, 1281-2
Central America, Democracy 630w
Central America, Peace negotiations 631w
Civil service retirement, Government contracts 726-8
Complaints against police, Damages 684-5w
Complaints against police, Metropolitan Police 685w
Conservative Party, Police 186w
County hall 720-1w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Central America 591w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Nicaragua 591w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces deployment 180w
Fida 88, Government grants 591w
Hospital waiting lists, Brighton Health Authority 454-8w
House of Commons annunciator system 16
Inner cities initiative, Publicity 591w
Lance missiles, Modernisation 102w
Litter, Publicity 278w
London Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Greater London Coordination Centre 684w
National Theatre 349w
Nicaragua, Technical assistance 602w
Panama, British residents abroad 631-3w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1081-2
South Bank Board, Jubilee gardens 161w
Tax burden, Single people 496-7w, 614w
Theatre Royal Stratford 721
Traffic wardens, London boroughs 684w

BAOR
Artillery 111w
National Audit Office 110w

Barnes, Mr Harry
Questions
Guided weapons 112w
Industrial health & safety, Health & Safety Executive 413w
Social security reform 1274

Barnes, Mrs Rosie
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 773-5
Questions
NHS, Medical treatments 194

Barristers
Professional misconduct 176-7w

Barron, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 45, 46
Questions
Capital gains tax, Tax allowances 496w
Exchange rates, Mark 317w
Exchange rates, Retail price index 613w
Gas disconnections, Codes of practice 289w
Income tax, Economic models 398w
Inheritance tax, Tax rates & bands 496w
Interest rates 316w
Tax rates & bands, Pay incentives 316w

Barter trading
Local authorities 1w

Basildon District Council
Rate limitation 718w

Basingstoke
Unemployment 417w

Bass
Fish conservation 14w
Fishery protection 638w
Fishing gear 638w
Fishing quotas 13-4w
Fishing vessels 638w
France 14w

Batiste, Mr Spencer
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 581, 583-4, 590, 593
Questions
Airports, Air traffic 355w
Airports, Passengers 353w
Industrial tribunals, Compensation 674w

Battered wives
Voluntary organisations 239-40w

Battle, Mr John
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 481
Questions
Air force, Military aircraft 100w
MacBride principles, Foreign investment in UK 224w
Ritalin, Narcolepsy 453w

BBC
(22:03:88) 197-8, 685w

BBC external services
Falkland Islands 510w

BCU
see British Canoe Union

Beaches
Bye laws 9-10w

Beaumont-Dark, Mr Anthony
Questions
Funerals, Northern Ireland 194
Tourist industry, Industries 434-5w

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 479
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 310-8, 326

Beckett, Mrs Margaret—continued
Questions
Free school meals, Family credit 342w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 216-7w
Income support scheme, Pregnant women 36w

Bed & breakfast accommodation
715w

Beekeeping
Official engagements 260w

Bees
Privatisation 1268

Beggs, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 36
Questions
Action for Community Employment, Northern Ireland 700w
Business statements 515
Cairndhu Hospital, Property transfer 561-2w
Community charge, Northern Ireland 47w
Community charge, Students 307w
Compulsory purchase, Compensation 700-1w
Employment schemes, Northern Ireland 563w
Gibraltar, International Investments 1076
Harland & Wolff, Employment 700w
Hospitals, East Antrim 219w
International Investments, Criminal Investigation 699w
Nursing homes, Antrim 166w
Residential care, Antrim 166-7w
Residential care, Northern Ireland 166w
Rush Park flats, Building damage 561w
Teachers, Leave 565w

Beith, Mr A J
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 405-8
Questions
Kampuchea, Human rights 514w
Passports, Post Office 65w

Belfast
Employment schemes 239w
Unemployment 499

Belgium
Arrests 520-1w
British residents abroad 520-1w
Extradition 230w

Belize
Armed forces deployment 191w
Journalists 115w, 623w

Bellingham, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Oral question time point of order (24:03:88) 510
Questions
Defence procurement 106w
Employment schemes, Northern Ireland 504
Employment training, Training Commission 417w
Small businesses, Northern Ireland 218w
Student grants 471w

Bendall, Mr Vivian
Questions
Defence contracts 103w

Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Debates etc.
Local Authorities (General Powers) Bill, 1R (23:03:88) 361
Northern Ireland (Termination of Jurisdiction) Bill, 1R (28:03:88) 732
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 709-10

Bennett, Mr Andrew F
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 162
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 208-81 passim, (23:03:88) 381, (24:03:88) 535-6, 539-42, 550, 577, 579-81
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 761-2, 768

Bennett, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 106, 107
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 201
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 162
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 205, (23:03:88) 379, 434
Questions
Abortion, Foreign patients 451-2w
Army in Northern Ireland 1274-5
Breathalysers 262w
Business statements 516, 1283
Caravan sites, Tourist industry 428-9w
Direct labour departments, Hackney 721-2w
Dock workers, Redundancy 161-2w
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 354
Family doctors, Fees & charges 650-1w
Ford Motor Company 506
Government securities 123w
Green pound, National Farmers' Union 637w
Income support scheme, Social security reform 663w
Income tax, Tax burden 314-6w
Milk, Milk Marketing Board 206w
Nurses, Pay 150w
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation 142-3w
Speed limits, Road traffic control 130w
Standard of living 547-50w
Sunday trading, Scotland 231w
Tax burden 321-2w
Wales Tourist Board, Publicity 8-9
Welsh language 18
Welsh language, Secondary education 527w
Withybush Hospital 11

Benson Committee
see Legal Services Royal Commission

Benyon, Mr W
Questions
Open University, Upper waiting hall 395w

Benzodiazepines
Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction 659w
Drug abuse 247w
Drug hazards 659-60w
Prescriptions 330-2w, 660w

Berlin
Diplomatic service 173w

Bermingham, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1090
Rover Group (29:03:88) 894
Questions
Prisoners, Exercise 276-7w

Betting & gaming duties
Northern Ireland 315w

Bevan, Mr David Gilroy
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 897

Bidwell, Mr Sydney
Questions
Artillery, BAOR 111w
Railway industry, Public records 470w, 553-4w

Bield Housing Association
Finance 201w

Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 218w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 518w
Broadcasting, Terrorism 193-4
Commonwealth Secretariat 182w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Board of Trade 25w
Dog licences, Northern Ireland 167w
EC free food scheme 636w
Prison visits, IRA 225-6w
Tax allowances, Cohabitation 97w
Training, Northern Ireland 239w

Billingham
Dept of Trade & Industry 62w

Birmingham
Community health councils 35w
Entry clearances 494w
Exceptional needs payments 35w
Immigration officers 685w
Income support scheme 36w

Birmingham Prison
276-7w, 678-82w

Biwater
4-5w, 19-20w, 468w
Malaysia 601w

BL
see British Library
see Rover Group

Blair, Mr Tony
Questions
Corporation tax, Tax allowances 498w
EC internal trade, Publicity 119-20w
Tour operators, Fees & charges 357-8w, 482w
Unfair trading practices, Supermarkets 234w
Water charges, Publicity 302w
Water supply disconnections 302-3w

Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Questions
Council of Ministers 633w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1077

Blind
Pontypridd 7

Block grant
Local government expenditure 722w
Research 3-4w
Stockport 308-9w

Blood sports
Army 114w
Railway land 19w, 46w

Blunkett, Mr David
Questions
Northern General Hospital Sheffield, Hospital admissions 452w

BMA
see British Medical Association

BNFL
see British Nuclear Fuels

Board of Inland Revenue
see Inland Revenue

Board of Trade
Dept of Trade & Industry 25w

Boateng, Mr Paul
Questions
Magistrates, Ethnic minorities 371w
Prison population, Ethnic groups 384w
Prison population, Ethnic minorities 183-4w

Body armour
Offenders 118w

Body searches
Scotland 643w

Boeing
116w, 412w

Bomb disposal
Scorriton down 410w

Bone marrow disorders
Strontium 90 658w

Books
Export controls 495w, 574w
Religion 13-4
VAT 13-4

Bophuthatswana
Overseas aid 131-2w

Borders Regional Council
285w

BOTB
see British Overseas Trade Board

***Bottomley, Mr Peter**, Under-Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc.
Light aircraft, Air safety (31:03:88) 1289-93
Questions
A2, Cost benefit analysis 354w
A2, Road traffic 129-30w
A38, Road works 556w
A51, Speed limits 616w
Air safety, Departmental publications 614w
Air safety, Near misses 458w
Airports, Air traffic 355w
Airports, Fees & charges 619w
Airports, Passengers 353w
Breathalysers 262w
Bridges, Repairs & maintenance 615w
Cherished number plates, Indictable offences 129w
Chester bypass, Road construction 554w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Transport 268-70w
Consultants, Dept of Transport 554-6w
Cycling, Crash helmets 129w
Dartford tunnel, Transport of hazardous materials 46w
Disley bypass, Road construction 616w
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre, Civil service agencies 264-5w
Driving tests, Bristol 457-8w
Handicapped, Dept of Transport 45-6w
Hayes bypass, Road traffic 617-8w
Helicopters, France 263-4w
Inner city areas, Dept of Transport 616-7w
Kelsall bypass, Road safety 554w
Knaresborough bypass, Public inquiries 60w
Lorry drivers, Medical examinations 456w
M1, M5 60w
M5, Road works 60-1w
M25, Road construction 615w
M25, Road works 615w
M40, Road construction 557w
Manchester Airport, Air routes 131w
Ministerial duties, Dept of Transport 456w
Motor vehicle registration 42w
Motor vehicle registration, Indictable offences 130w
Motor vehicle safety, Retail trade 352w
Motor vehicles, Computer applications 352w
Motorcycles, Injuries 559w
Motorcycles, Protective clothing 459w
Motorcycles, Road accidents 621-2w
Private companies, Safety 554w
Road accidents 354w
Road accidents, A256 261-2w
Road accidents, Heart diseases 456w
Road accidents, Summertime 619w
Road construction, Administrative delays 617w

***Bottomley, Mr Peter**—continued*
Road construction, London Docklands 263w
Road construction, Public inquiries 263w
Road safety barriers, North West region 42w
Road signs, Tourism 620w
Road tax, Administrative costs 556w
Road tax, Tax yields 556w
Road traffic, M6 462w
Road traffic, Sizewell 459w
Road traffic, Stoke-on-Trent 267-8w
Road traffic, Urban areas 267-8w
Road Traffic Law Review Committee 61-2w, 557w
Road works, London Docklands 262-3w
Road works, Tourism 456w
Roads, Norfolk 61w
Safety belts, Ford Motor Company 42w
Speed limits, Road traffic control 130w
Stoke-on-Trent, Transport supplementary grants 266-7w
Traffic forecasting 617w
Transport, Safety 554w
Woolwich ferry, Industrial disputes 131w, 266w
Woolwich ferry, Road signs 355w

Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Questions
Enterprise allowance scheme 429w
Woodland grant scheme 644w
Young offenders 273-4w
Young offenders, EC countries 275w

Bowden, Mr Andrew
Questions
Age allowances, Pensioners 605-6w
Concessionary fares, Pensioners 43-5w
Earnings rules, Occupational pensions 152-3w
Home care services, Carers 153w
Housing benefits, Married women 243w
Incontinence 33w
Incontinence, Northern Ireland 48w
Incontinence, Scotland 15w
Incontinence, Wales 30w
Invalid care allowances 86w
Invalid care allowances, Carers 86w
Manpower Services Commission, Contracts 283w
Pensioners, Identity cards 153w
Severe weather payments, Earnings rules 153w
Tax allowances, House renovation grants 99w

Bowden, Mr Gerald
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 433
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 753-5
Questions
Council for National Academic Awards, Public appointments 176w
EC budget repayments, Own resources 399w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 723
Public libraries, Southwark 350w
Science & technology research, Research finance 471w

Bowis, Mr John
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 758-64
Questions
Arts, Advisory services 720
Arts, Inner city areas 350w
Conventional weapons 100w
Insurance, Harmonisation of legislation 233-4w
Unemployment 419w

Boyes, Mr Roland
Questions
British Coal Corporation Enterprise, Employment opportunities 293w
Cervical cancer, Screening 336w

***Boyes, Mr Roland**—continued*
Crime prevention, Inner city areas 9w
Crimes of violence 9w
Crown Suppliers, Privatisation 305w, 720w
EC free food scheme 636w
Employment opportunities, Handicapped 527-8w
Geriatric patients, Sunderland Health Authority 208w
Greenbelt, Town & country planning 190w
Litter, North East region 368w
Loan guarantee scheme, Inner city areas 165w
Medical research, Research finance 336-7w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Accident & emergency departments 550-1w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Administrative costs 453w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Finance 213-4w
Northern Regional Health Authority, NHS administration 39-41w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Performance indicators 659-60w
Nurses, Sunderland Health Authority 214w
Official hospitality, Local press 173w
Ophthalmic services, Hospital waiting lists 83w
Pay 673-4w
Photography, Schools 721-2
Police, Manpower 388-90w
Regional aid, Houghton 595-6w
Urban development corporations, Land values 55-6w
Water pollution, Houghton 303w
Water pollution, Nitrates 1w
Youth training scheme, Educational qualifications 421w

Boyson, Rt Hon Sir Rhodes
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 222-3, (23:03:88) 410-3, (24:03:88) 594, 595

BR
see British Rail

Brackhall Hospital
651w

Bradford
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 340w
Exceptional needs payments 552w
Free school meals 271w
Official engagements 173w
Tourist industry 282w

Bradford Health Authority
247-8w

Bradley, Mr Keith
Questions
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 109w

Bradwell power station
Magnox reactors 585w

Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 27

Brandon-Bravo, Mr Martin M
Questions
Air conditioning, Research 208-9w
City technology colleges 868
Coal mining, Productivity 291w
NATO, Warsaw Pact 518-9w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Management 724-5
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 424w

Brazier, Mr Julian
Debates etc.
Prime Minister, Northern Ireland (24:03:88) 530
Tree conservation (22:03:88) 332-4

***Brazier, Mr Julian**—continued*
Questions
Defence procurement 106w
Tourism, Rivers 873
USSR, Religious freedom 516w

Breast cancer
Screening 282w
Wales 282w

Breathalysers
262w

"Bribes, Brothels & Nuclear Waste"
20w

Bricks
Manpower 280w
Wales 280w

Bridges
Repairs & maintenance 615w

Bridging allowances
Youth training scheme 420w

Brighton Health Authority
Hospital waiting lists 454-8w

Bristol
Driving tests 457-8w

British Aerospace
Defence contracts 624w
Rover Group (29:03:88) 885-901, (31:03:88) 1301-7

British Broadcasting Corporation
see BBC

British Canoe Union
Sports Council 715-6w

British Coal
see British Coal Corporation

British Coal Corporation
95-7w, 293w
Nottinghamshire 20w
Official engagements 294w, 717-8
Redundancy pay 718
Trade unions 370w

British Coal Corporation Enterprise
Employment opportunities 293w

British Council
573w

British embassies
Laos 182w

British Leyland
see Rover Group

British Library
351w

British Medical Association
12

British Nuclear Fuels
68-9w

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd
see British Nuclear Fuels

British Overseas Trade Board
380-2w

British Rail
19w, 264w, 398-9w, 501-2w, 554w, 614-5w, 618w
Fraud 457w
Public service obligation grant 557w
Scotland (23:03:88) 339
Transport subsidies 557-8w

British Railways (London) Bill (HL) 1986/87
Debates etc.
Royal assent (24:03:88) 493

British Railways (No 2) Bill 1987/88

***British Railways (No 2) Bill 1987/88**—continued*
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned 2R read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

British Railways Order Confirmation Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep* (29:03:88) 867
3R* (30:03:88) 1065

British residents abroad
Belgium 520-1w
Panama 631-3w

British Steel Corporation
876-7
Privatisation 585w

British Theatre Association
Libraries 351w

British Waterways Board
Income 873
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 368-70w

British Wool Marketing Board
Official engagements 636-7w

Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 86-9
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1087

Broadcasting
Ownership 232w
Terrorism 193-4
Trade union membership 283-4w

Broadcasting controls
Sinn Fein 495w

Broadcasting external services
USSR 514w

Broadleaved woodlands
138-9w, 576w
Scotland 402w

Brompton Hospital
Listed buildings 722w

***Brooke, Rt Hon Peter**, Paymaster General*
Questions
Age allowances, Pensioners 605-6w
Budget, March 1988, Railway travel 501-2w
Business expansion scheme, Tax allowances 607-8w
Civil service dispersal 314w, 612-3w
Civil service dispersal, Manpower 18w
Consultants, HMSO 398w, 497-8w
Consultants, Inland Revenue 612w
Consultants, Pay 603w
Consultants, Privatisation 604-6w
Consultants, Treasury 398w
Departmental publications, Treasury 123w
EC budget repayments, Own resources 399w
EC Finance Council, Official engagements 607w
London allowance, Civil servants 610-2w
Pay settlements, Civil servants 607w
Tax allowances, Loans 604w
Tax reform, South East region 607w
Tax yields 602-3w
UK contributions to EC budget 603w

Broome, Robert
464w

Brown, CV
316w

Brown, Mr Gordon
Debates etc.
Acute beds, Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 178
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 49, 100-7

***Brown, Mr Gordon**—continued*
Questions
Central government borrowing, Interest charges 317-8w
Income tax, Tax burden 320w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 93-4w
Income tax, Tax yields 314w
Inheritance tax, Political parties 603-4w
Low incomes, Tax thresholds 320w
Public expenditure 318-20w
Public sector assets, Property transfer 319w
Public sector borrowing abroad 318w
Tax yields 320-1w
Tax yields, Banks 501w

Brown, Mr Michael
Questions
Amersham International, Government shareholding 371w
Skoal Bandits, Consumer protection 449w
Skoal Bandits, Health warnings 245w
Smoking, Health hazards 158-9w, 543w

Brown, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Frigates, Navy 104w
Harland & Wolff, Cost effectiveness 222w

Brown, Mr Ron
Questions
Bield Housing Association, Finance 201w
Nuclear submarines, Nuclear reactors 109w

Browne, Mr John
Questions
Education & industry 430w
Territorial Army, Armed forces strength 105w
Terrorism 195-6

Bruce, Mr Ian
Questions
Professional & Executive Recruitment, Privatisation 422w

Bruce, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 294-6
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 359
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Administrative delays 256w
Consultants, Privatisation 604-6w
Deaf, Teacher training 147w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 353-4
Handicapped workers, Aids for handicapped 256-8w
Handicapped workers, Deaf 258-9w
Helicopters, France 263-4w
Railway transport, Transport police 47w
Transport fuel consumption 42w

Brucellosis
563w

BSC
see British Steel Corporation

Buchan, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 857-8
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1105
[illegible]an areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 908
Questions
Artillery, BAOR 111w
Budget, March 1988, Railway travel 501-2w
Libraries, Arts finance 349-50w
Torry research station, Civil service manpower 634w

Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon Alick
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 289-91
Questions
Childbirth, Scotland 343-4
School discipline, Pupils 505w

Buck, Sir Antony
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 35-6
Questions
INF Treaty 104w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 184

Budgen, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 56
Questions
Iran-Iraq war 1067

Budget, March 1988
496-7w, 614w
Economic situation (21:03:88) 41-114
Pensioners 506-7
Railway travel 501-2w
Ways & means resolutions (21:03:88) 115-58

Builders' skips
561w

Building damage
Rush Park flats 561w

Building industry
EC integration 716-7w
Industrial health & safety 423w
Northern Ireland 169w

Building regulations
Northern Ireland 699-700w

Building repairs
Housing stock 121-2w

Building societies
Public companies 502w

Buildings
Energy conservation 509-10w
Log books 303w

Bureaucracy
House of Commons messenger service 726

Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority
Mental patients 651w

Burns, Brendan
Extradition 48-9w

Burns, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1092
Questions
Business statements 520
Crown Suppliers, Privatisation 238w
Defence contracts 187
Forestry Commission, Official engagements 634w
NHS, Laboratories 334w
Theatre, Business sponsorship incentive scheme 350w
Unemployed, Literacy 422w
Unemployment 869-70

Burt, Mr Alistair
Questions
Defence contracts 103w
Waite, Terry, Hostages 1276

Bus services
41-2w

Business
Public libraries 349w
Scotland 145w

Business expansion scheme
399-400w
Assured tenancies 607-8w
Tax allowances 607-8w

Business motions
(25:03:88) 693

Business premises
Outdoor advertising 479w

Business questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:03:88) 516, 519, 525, (31:03:88) 1278

Business sponsorship incentive scheme
347-8w
Theatre 350w

Business statements
511-29, 1277-86

***Butcher, Mr John**, Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry*
Debates etc.
Postal rates, Highlands of Scotland (23:03:88) 4889-92
Tin, Mining (29:03:88) 1059-64
Questions
Advertising Standards Authority, Exhibitions 383w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Trade & Industry 177-8w
Consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 381w, 593-5w
Consultants, Office of Fair Trading 382w, 481-2w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Board of Trade 25w
Departmental publications, Dept of Trade & Industry 22w
Design, Northern Ireland 22w
Electricity, Safety standards 374w
Fireworks, Injuries 482-4w
Government buildings, Dept of Trade & Industry 23-4w
Harmonisation of standards, EC action 592w
Luff, Peter, Conflict of interests 591w
Manufacturing industries, North West region 178w
Origin marking, Manufactured goods 23w
Pirate radio stations, Prosecutions 481w
Post Office, Social security payments 63w
Product safety, Consumer protection 62-3w
Telecommunications industry, West Germany 374-6w
Tour operators, Fees & charges 357-8w, 482w

Butler, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1098
Questions
Agricultural products, Agricultural marketing 1270
AIDS, Death 32-3w
CERN, UK contributions 127w
Community health councils, Expenditure 651-5w
Falkland Islands, Military exercises 110w
Family practitioner committees, Public appointments 453w
General Practice Finance Corporation, Public appointments 453w
M1, M5 60w
NHS, Cost effectiveness 154w
Official engagements 572-3w
Trinidad & Tobago, Official engagements 517w
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation, Factories 297-8w, 721w
Welsh language 28w
Welsh language, Welsh Grand Committee 17

Butler-Sloss Committee
see Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry

Butterfill, Mr John
Questions
Holiday accommodation 433w
Loans, Elderly 604w
Rates & rating 368w
Tax allowances, Loans 604w

Buxton Memorial
121w

Bye laws
Beaches 9-10w
RAF Greenham Common 101w

CAA
see Civil Aviation Authority

Cabinet Office
Consultants 373w, 468-70w

Caborn, Mr Richard
Questions
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w

Cabotage
(30:03:88) 1164-250
Shipping 559w

CAC
see Central Arbitration Committee

Cairndhu Hospital
Property transfer 561-2w

Calderstones Hospital
651w

Calling of Members
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 21, 36, 38-40, 41, (22:03:88) 301, (23:03:88) 351, 365, (28:03:88) 850, (29:03:88) 882

Camberley Camp
(30:03:88) 1083-98

Cameroon
Overseas aid 601w
Water supply 5w

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
111w
NATO 517w

Campbell, Mr Menzies
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1087
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 910
Questions
Armed forces catering services, Privatisation 411w
Arts, Ministers 725
Business statements 512-3
Diplock courts 48w
Middle East, Official engagements 511-2w
Pittenweem harbour 148w
Pittenweem harbour, Government grants 147-8w
Ports, Scotland 147w
Public libraries 349w
Raspberries, Scotland 148w
School population, Fife 73-6w

Campbell, Mr Ronnie
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 135w
Electricity supply industry, Radioactive waste disposal 68w
Employment training 415w
F111 aircraft 109w
Social security appeals, Disciplinary proceedings 444w
Social security appeals tribunals, Codes of practice 444w
Supplementary benefits, Departmental forms 150w
Supplementary benefits, Departmental leaflets 151w

Campbell-Savours, Mr D N
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 41, 56, 70, 71
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 38
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1092-3
Rover Group (29:03:88) 895, (30:03:88) 1108
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, Standing Order No 20 applications (30:03:88) 1099
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 36
Questions
Afcor Investments 1266
Business statements 524
Community Care Review 539w
Community Care Review, Health service staff 334w
Defence contracts, Marconi 187
Employment, West Cumbria 869
Energy supply, Iceland 140w
Falkland Islands, BBC external services 510w
Fire prevention, Kent 185-6w
Handicapped children, Kent 37-8w
Infant mortality, Kent 38w
Insider trading, Disclosure of information 356w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 622-3w
Security, Northern Ireland 221w

Canada
International Fund for Ireland 167w
Military exercises 9w

Canary Wharf
Employment opportunities 54-5w
Offices 55w

Canavan, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 844
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 943, 950-8, 995-1000, 1002-3, 1028
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1156-9
Questions
Community charge, Scotland 340-1
Fish farming 312w
Gibraltar, IRA 132w
Public opinion, Scotland 140w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Official engagements 78w
Unemployment 418w

Cancer
Children 552-3w
Electric cables 715-6
Screening 213w

Cancer hazards
Alcoholic drinks 330w

Cannon Consolidated
(29:03:88) 1056-64

Capital gains tax
Tax allowances 496w

Capital investment
Cash limits 192w
Coastal protection 1269
Educational finance 176w
Local authorities in Scotland 507w

Capital movements
Africa 124w

Capital rules
Housing benefits 323-4w

Caravan sites
Tourist industry 428-9w

Carcinogens
Housing insulation 366-7w

Cardiff Bay Barrage Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

Cardiff Prison
66w

Carers
Home care services 153w
Invalid care allowances 86w

Carlile, Mr Alex
Questions
Common sheep meat regime 635w
Craft industries, Wales 7
Health service staff, Wales 12
Power stations, Air pollution control 196

Carlisle, Mr John
Questions
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 637w
South Africa, Freedom of expression 513w
South Africa, Sporting tours 1078

Carrington, Mr Matthew
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Visual arts 444w
Enterprise in higher education 429-30w
Homelessness, Government grants to local authorities 191-2w
National Association of Local Government Officers, Sinn Fein 880-1

Cars
Lead free petrol 57-9w

Carstairs Hospital
Nurses 504w

Carttiss, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 375-7, 441
Questions
Social Security Advisory Committee, Publishing 661w

Cartwright, Mr John
Questions
Defence, France 114w
Inner London Education Authority, Educational psychology 271w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear weapons deployment 184
Rent increases, Sheltered housing 720w
Rolling stock, Network SouthEast 554w
Sheltered housing, Greenwich 658w
Woolwich ferry, Industrial disputes 266w
Woolwich ferry, Road signs 355w

Cash, Mr William
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 231-2

Cash limits
Capital investment 192w
Dept of the Environment 192w, 238w
Dept of Transport 266w
Local authorities in Scotland 507w
Northern Ireland Health & Social Services Boards 220w

Castle Court, Belfast
Property development 564-5w

Castledillon
Army in Northern Ireland 361-2w

Catering
Tourist industry 433w

Cavendish, Anthony
147w

CBI
see Confederation of British Industry

CCTA
see Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency

CEGB
see Central Electricity Generating Board

Cemeteries
Westminster City Council 713w

Central America
Democracy 630w
EC action 273w
EC external relations 515w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 591w
Overseas aid 484-5w
Peace negotiations 515w, 631w, 1067-8

Central Arbitration Committee
532w

Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency
Consultants 398w

Central Electricity Generating Board
20-2w, 289w, 296w, 585w, (24:03:88) 622-30, 716
Official engagements 714-5

Central government
Democracy (31:03:88) 1338-44

Central government borrowing
Interest charges 317-8w

Central Intelligence Agency
359-60w

Central London
Ministry of Defence 110w

Central London Rail Study
264w, 618-9w

Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority
Health service staff 39-40w

Cereals
Set-aside schemes 260-1w
Sites of special scientific interest 238w, 722w

CERN
UK contributions 127w

Cervical cancer
Computers in National Health Service 336w
Screening 213w, 336w

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
Austria, EC external relations 519w
Commonwealth Secretariat 182w
Council of Europe, Treaties 628-9w
Council of Ministers 633w
Cyprus, Official engagements 518w
Developing countries, Debts 132w, 628w
EC external relations, Foreign policy 515w
EC external trade, Food contamination 394-5w
EC Foreign Affairs Council, Human rights 133-4w
EC internal trade, Export promotion 1082
Ethiopia, Human rights 11w
Ethiopia, UN Commission on Human Rights 11w
European Court of First Instance 182-3w
European Court of Justice, Administration of justice 181-2w
European Court of Justice, Court jurisdiction 181-2w
France, Official engagements 513w
Gibraltar 1075-6
Gibraltar, International Investments 1076
Gibraltar, Official engagements 1075
Japan, EC external relations 512w
Mauritius, Official engagements 519w
Political parties, EC grants & loans 395w
Sharpeville six 133w, 1080-1

Chalker, Rt Hon Lynda—continued
Single European Act 518w
South Africa, Administration of justice 512w
South Africa, Angola 512w
South Africa, Diplomatic relations 513w
South Africa, EC external relations 512-3w
South Africa, EC external trade 629-30w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1081-2
South Africa, Freedom of expression 513w
South Africa, Official engagements 513w
Turkey, Political refugees 394w

Challenger tanks
Defence procurement 623w

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
12-3

Chancellor of the Exchequer
see Treasury

Channel tunnel
Industrial health & safety 430w
Waste disposal 61w

***Channon, Rt Hon Paul**, Secretary of State for Transport*
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1165-7, 1171-2, 1217-21
Questions
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 557w
British Rail, Transport subsidies 557-8w
Cabotage, Shipping 559w
Cash limits, Dept of Transport 266w
Coastguard 42-3w
EC Transport Council 459w
London airports, Air traffic control 557w
Motor vehicle registration, Cherished number plates 459w
Newark bypass, Road construction 460w
Railway network, Greater London 264w

Chapman, Mr Sydney
Questions
Civil service agencies 725-6
Closed shop, Mass media 536-7w
Defence land 111w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Disclosure of information 272-3w
Tree planting 1271

Charitable donations
663w, 1076-7

Charities
196, 677w
Convictions 678w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 341w
Medical research 396-7w
Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects 494w

Charity Commission
Law enforcement 677-8w

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
Upper waiting hall 179w

Cheese
Production 346
Scotland 346-7

Chemical & biological warfare
Defence research 99w

Chemical weapons
1071-2
Animal experiments 368w
Arms control negotiations 517-8w, 1070-1
Iran-Iraq war 1071-2
NATO 108w
USSR 113w

Chemicals
Water pollution 710w

Cherished number plates
Indictable offences 129w
Motor vehicle registration 459w

Chester bypass
Road construction 554w

Chester Health Authority
Finance 210w
Health service staff 210w
Hospital bed occupancy rates 211w
Hospital waiting lists 209-10w
Medical treatments 209w

Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry
Government grants to local authorities 248w

Child benefit
440w

Child care
Northern Ireland 169-72w

Child minding
Child workers 151w

Child workers
Child minding 151w
Minimum wage 12w
Pay 12w
Working hours 84-5w

Childbirth
Death 245w
Scotland 343-4

Children
Cancer 552-3w
Northern Ireland 169w

Children & Young Persons Act 1933
Questions
84-5w

Children in care
Homelessness 229-30w, 254w, 664-7w
Local authorities 36-7w
Scotland 254w
Wales 229-30w

Chile
Trade fairs 591w
Water supply 5w

China
Arts 573-4w
Export promotion 377-9w
Exports 377-8w
Foreign policy 514w
Foreign students 396w
Imports 377-8w
Ministers' visits abroad 372-3w
Official engagements 514w
Overseas students 396w
Publishing 381w
Tourists 438w
Trade fairs 380-2w
Twin towns 394w
UK companies abroad 379-80w

Chlamydia
Disease control 657w

Chlorofluorocarbons
EC countries 365-6w
ICI 713w
Pollution monitoring 366w
USA 365-6w

***Chope, Mr Christopher**, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment*
Questions
Barter trading, Local authorities 1w
Block grant, Stockport 308-9w
Cemeteries, Westminster City Council 713w
County hall 720-1w
Crown lands & estates, Richmond house 299-301w
Crown Suppliers, Privatisation 238w, 305w, 720w
Direct labour departments, Hackney 721-2w

Chope, Mr Christopher—continued
Economic regions 717w
Government buildings, Greater London 719-20w
Local authorities, Publicity 714w
Local government expenditure, Non-metropolitan counties 721w
Local government pensions, Administrative costs 367w
Local government services, Competition 719w
London Residuary Body, Local government buildings 2w
Monuments, Repairs & maintenance 121w
New towns development corporations, Local government revenue 711w
Non-domestic rates, Devon 58w
Property Services Agency, Competition 719w
Property Services Agency, Consultants 122w
Rates & rating, Appeals 478-9w
Rates & rating, Non-metropolitan counties 305-7w
Richmond house 237w
RNAD Coulport, Construction 54w, 368w
Road works, Local government expenditure 474-5w

Christianity
Religious education 13

Chubu Electric Company
68-9w

Church buildings
VAT 1273

Church Commissioners
Education 13

Churchill, Mr Winston
Questions
Airports, Fees & charges 619w
Dental charges 86w
EC external trade, Food contamination 394-5w
Food labelling, Hormone growth promoters 206-7w
Irradiated food, Food labelling 313w
Lead free petrol, Garages & petrol stations 304w
Shift work, Unemployment benefits 87-8w
Vietnamese refugees, Repatriation 631-2w
Vietnamese refugees, Resettlement 632w

CIA
see Central Intelligence Agency

CIMA
see Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

CISWO
see Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation

City of London (Spitalfields Market) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

City technology colleges
868

Civil Aviation Authority
467w

Civil defence
387w
Government grants 386-7w, 403w
Greater London 385-6w
London boroughs 384-5w
Scotland 403-4w

Civil Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) (Scotland) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 198, (30:03:88) 1250

Civil servants
Civil service agencies 725
Consultants 603w
London allowance 607w, 610-2w
Northern Ireland Dept of Agriculture 701w
Nottingham 725
Pay incentives 463w
Pay settlements 607w

Civil servants' box
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 201-2

Civil service
724
Consultants 724
Disclosure of information 723-4
Ethnic monitoring 322w
Management 313w, 725-6
Members 314w
Public expenditure 313-4w

Civil service agencies
313w, 725-6
Civil servants 725
Civil service unions 725
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre 264-5w

Civil service dispersal
314w, 612-3w
Dept of Education & Science 67-8w
Dept of Energy 135w
Dept of Health & Social Security 151-2w
Dept of the Environment 297w
Dept of Trade & Industry 177-8w
Dept of Transport 268-70w
Down 701w
Home Office 184w
Manpower 18w
Ministry of Agriculture 65w
Ministry of Defence 188-9

Civil service manpower
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 211w
Immigration officers 685w
Lunar house 686w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate 432w
Ministry of Defence 235-6w, 724
Passports 682-3w
Social Fund 212w
Social security abuse 215w
Social security appeals 215w
Torry research station 634w

Civil service recruitment
Examinations 724

Civil service retirement
Government contracts 726-8

Civil service unions
Civil service agencies 725

***Clark, Mr Alan**, Minister of State for Trade and Industry*
Questions
EC Internal Market Council 483w
EC internal trade, Conferences 383w
EC internal trade, Northern Ireland 233w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Central America 591w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Disclosure of information 25-6w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Nicaragua 591w
Export promotion, China 377-9w
Export promotion, Saudi Arabia 24-6w
Exports, China 377-8w
Fida 88, Government grants 591w
Furs, Exports 26w
GATT, Trade agreements 178-9w
Manufacturing industries, Exchange rates 586w
Publishing, China 381w
Trade fairs, China 380-2w
UK companies abroad, China 379-80w
UK companies abroad, Republic of Ireland 234w

***Clark, Mr Alan**—continued*
UK companies abroad, South Africa 481w

Clark, Dr David
Questions
Common sheep meat regime 1263-4
EC free food scheme 565w, 569-70w
Food contamination, Radioactivity 1262
Radioactivity, Pollution monitoring 568w
Set-aside schemes, Cereals 260-1w
Sheep, Cumbria 206w
Sheep, Exports 312-3w, 400-1w
Sheep, Radioactivity 228-30w, 238-9w, 252w, 641-2w
Sites of special scientific interest, Cereals 238w, 722w

Clark, Dr Michael
Questions
Armed forces recruitment, Armed forces strength 191
Green pound 1268-9
Litter, Government grants 59-60w
Nuclear power stations, Insurance 289w

***Clarke, Rt Hon Kenneth**, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*
Debates etc.
Rover Group, Ministerial statements (29:03:88) 885-901
Questions
Arms exports, Palestine Liberation Organisation 356w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Billingham 62w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Middlesbrough 62w
EC internal trade, Publicity 119-20w
Enterprise initiative, Newcastle upon Tyne 62w
Inner cities initiative, Publicity 591w
Inner city areas, Dept of Trade & Industry 586w
Inner city areas, Expenditure 590w
Inner city areas, Handicapped 382w
Inner city areas, Local authorities 586w
Inner city areas, Population 586-90w
Leicester, Official engagements 12-3
Magistrates, Oldham 382-3w
Postal services, Monopolies 592-3w
Rio Tinto Zinc, Cornwall 63w

Clarke, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Community care (31:03:88) 1308-11, 1314
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 943-4
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 913
Questions
Employment schemes, Monklands 77w

Clay, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1207-8
Questions
Empty housing, Council housing 189-90w
F111 aircraft 108-9w
Family credit, Sunderland 342w
Housing benefits, Sunderland 342w
IRA, Gibraltar 218w
Supplementary benefits, Sunderland 338w

Cleveland
Cruelty to children 651w

Cleveland County Council
248w

Clinical physicists
Pay settlements 446w

Closed shop
Mass media 536-7w

Clwyd
EC grants & loans 200w
Hospital waiting lists 7-8
Unemployment 15-6

Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 267, 268-72, 276, 281-2
Questions
Armed forces, Alcoholism 8w
Business statements 1281
Cameroon, Overseas aid 601w
Cameroon, Water supply 5w
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Coal mining, South Wales 718-9
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 415-6w
Export Credits Guarantee Department, Disclosure of information 25-6w
Kampuchea, Foreign policy 1070
Malaysia, Biwater 601w
Malaysia, Water supply 4-5w, 19-20w, 468w
Planning permission 718w
Sheep meat, Radioactivity 5, 29w
Tree planting, Scotland 402w

Clwyd County Council
15-6

CNAA
see Council For National Academic Awards

CND
see Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Coal
Exchange rates 717-8
Heating 713
Imports 294w
South Africa 294w
Sulphur 295w

Coal fired power stations
Kingsnorth 292w
Pollution control 289-90w
Scotland 716-7

Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation
370w

Coal mining
293w, 718
Dismissal 291-2w
Government assistance to nationalised industries 293w
Leicestershire 717-8
Productivity 291w, 1273
Property transfer 20w
Redundancy 712
Scotland 141w, 291w, 351-2
South Wales 718-9
Wales 2-3

Coastal protection
Capital investment 1269

Coastguard
42-3w
Equipment 355w

Coatbridge project
Employment opportunities 77w

Codes of practice
Criminal records 679w
Gas disconnections 289w
Ministry of Defence police 464w
Police firearms 681w
Select Committee evidence 523w
Social security appeals tribunals 444w
Solicitors 16w
Water meters 301-2w

COE
see Council of Europe

Cohabitation
Mortgage relief 91w
Social security benefits disqualification 31w
Tax allowances 97w

Cohen, Mr Harry
Questions
Air force, Cruise missile sites 114w
Air force bases, Treaties 180w
Artillery 354w

Cohen, Mr Harry—continued
Belgium, British residents abroad 520-1w
Community charge, Literacy 15w
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 14w
Community charges register, Scotland 641w
Computer privacy, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 521w
Criminal records, Data Protection Registrar 679w
Criminal records, Disclosure of information 679w
Defence equipment, Defence expenditure 464w
Early warning systems 136w
Emergency planning, Guided weapons 117w
Employment training, Sex discrimination 429w
Exercise Outback 88 358w
Exercise Outback 88, Navy 358-9w
Exercise Outback 88, Nuclear weapons 358w
Falkland Islands, Military exercises 110w
Guided weapons, USA 410w
Mediterranean Sea, Armed forces deployment 520w
Ministry of Defence police 364w
Ministry of Defence police, Greenham Common 411w
Nuclear weapons, Arms control negotiations 114w
Police records, Computer privacy 387w, 678-9w
Prisoners' transfers, Northern Ireland 119-20w
Prisoners' transfers, Republic of Ireland 491-2w
RAF Feltwell, Satellites 7w
RAF Feltwell, Space technology 364w
RAF Molesworth 7w
RAF Wethersfield, Stansted Airport 7w
South Africa house, Arrests 492w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 464w
Vanguard submarines, Navigational aids 136w
Warsaw Pact, Nuclear free zones 520w

Coinage
Design 123w

Coleman, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 566
Questions
Opera, Craig-y-nos castle 6
Unemployment, West Glamorgan 4
Welsh language 18

Colvin, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Electricity supply industry, Research (24:03:88) 622-5, 629
Questions
Arts finance, Cultural heritage 349w
Coal fired power stations, Kingsnorth 292w
Cycling, Crash helmets 129w
Electric cables, Cancer 715-6
Farm woodland scheme 637w
Gibraltar 1076
Local employer network scheme, Costs 430w
Mauritius, Official engagements 519w
NHS reciprocal arrangements, Medical treatment abroad 31-2w

Combined heat & power
292-3w, 714

Commencement orders
Financial Services Act 1986 179w

Commission for Racial Equality
528-9w

Commission of the European Communities
see European Commission

"Commissioner Annual Report, 1987"
373w

Committee for Monitoring Agreements on Tobacco Advertising
157-8w

Committee on Safety of Medicines
33-5w

Common agricultural policy
1264-5
Competition 1269
EC Agriculture Council 636w
EC budget 634-5w
National Farmers' Union 636w
Retail prices 640w

Common sheep meat regime
635w, 1262-4

Commonwealth Secretariat
182w

"Community Care"
333-4w, 571w, (31:03:88) 1308-15
Expenditure 332-3w
Northern Ireland 563w
Scotland 504w

Community Care Review
441w, 539w, 571w, (31:03:88) 1308-15
Departmental circulars 333-4w
Health service staff 334w
Social workers 334w

Community charge
2w, 190w, 478w, 713w, 879-80
Arts finance 161w
Eastbourne Borough Council 713-4w
Government grants to local authorities 307w
Interest charges 405w
Literacy 15w
Local authorities in Scotland 143w, 346
Local government services 143w, 714w
Married women 2w
Northern Ireland 47w, 222w
Nottingham 713w
Overseas students 190w
Prisoners on remand 405w
Religious orders 714w
Scotland 15w, 143w, 204w, 340-1, 345-9, 405w, (28:03:88) 833-58
Scottish councils 72-4w
Social security benefits 149-50w
Students 222w, 307w
Transport & General Workers' Union 348
Wales 281-2w, 392-4w

Community charge rebates
Scotland 405w

Community charges register
2w, (28:03:88) 833-58
Age 340
Disclosure of information 14w, 641w
Police 405w
Scotland 14w, 143w, 404-6w, 641w

Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(28:03:88) 833-58

Community development
Northern Ireland 223-4w

Community health councils
Administrative delays 35w
Birmingham 36w

Community health councils—continued
Expenditure 651-5w

Community nurses
Psychiatric nurses 443w

Community programme
Crime prevention 677w
Employment training 164w

Companies
Ministerial duties 572w
Northern Ireland 165w

Companies Act 1985
Questions
233w

Companies (Audit Committees) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (22:03:88) 199-200

Company accounts
Economic League 119w
Public companies 233w

Company investigations
Guinness 356w

Company registration
Scotland 119w
Yorkshire & Humberside 22-3w

Company reports
IHV Industrial Investments 64w
Industrial Heating & Ventilation 64w

Compensation
Armed forces casualties 411-2w
Compulsory purchase 700-1w
Industrial tribunals 674w
NHS 662w
Tree conservation (22:03:88) 332-8
Vaccine damaged children 244w

Competition
Common agricultural policy 1269
Computers in National Health Service 32w
Local government services 479-80w, 576-7w, 719w
Property Services Agency 719w

Complaints
Employment protection 532w
Nurses 657w

Complaints against police
Damages 684-5w
Metropolitan Police 685w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 221w

Comprehensive schools
Education & industry 29-30w

Comptroller & Auditor General
see National Audit Office

Comptroller & Auditor General for Northern Ireland
see Northern Ireland Audit Office

Compulsory purchase
Compensation 700-1w
Northern Ireland 700-1w

Computer applications
Motor vehicles 352w
Screening 213w

Computer industry
Skill shortages 397w

Computer privacy
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 521w
Police records 387w, 678-9w

Computers in Government departments
Contracts for services 605-7w

Computers in National Health Service
Accountability 32w
Cervical cancer 336w
Competition 32w

Computers in National Health Service—continued
Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham 32w
Scottish health boards 647w

Concessionary fares
Pensioners 43-5w

Conditions of employment
Fire services 229w

Confederation of British Industry
294w

Conferences
EC internal trade 383w
NHS 646w

Conflict of interests
Luff, Peter 591w

Congenital abnormalities
Advisory services 217w
Screening 217w

Conifers
Scotland 402w

Connah's Quay power station
3

Conseil Europeene de Recherche Nucleaire
see CERN

Conservative Party
Police 186w

Construction
Antrim Hospital 500-1
Emergency planning 386-7w
Power stations 716
RNAD Coulport 54w, 368w

Consultants
Attorney-General 371w
Cabinet Office 373w, 468-70w
Central Computer & Telecommunications Agency 398w
Civil servants 603w
Civil service 724
Customs & Excise 498w, 611-2w
Dept of Education & Science 396w, 470w
Dept of Employment 437w, 535w
Dept of Energy 371w, 509w
Dept of Health & Social Security 446w, 539-41w
Dept of the Environment 367w, 473-4w
Dept of Trade & Industry 381w, 593-5w
Dept of Transport 554-6w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 393w, 521-2w
HMSO 398w, 497-8w
Inland Revenue 498w, 612w
Land Registry Office 372w, 485w
Lord Chancellor 371-2w, 485w
Manpower Services Commission 437w, 533-6w
Metropolitan Police 387-8w, 493w
Ministry of Agriculture 400w, 565-6w
Ministry of Defence 411w, 464-7w
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 381-2w, 482w
Northern Ireland Office 705w, 707-10w
Office of Arts & Libraries 397-8w, 495w
Office of Fair Trading 382w, 481-2w
Pay 603w
Privatisation 604-6w
Property Services Agency 122w, 367w, 471-3w
Scottish Development Agency 648w
Scottish Office 404w, 648-9w
Treasury 398w
Welsh Office 391w, 579w

Consumer Credit Act 1974
Questions
234-5w

Consumer protection
Product safety 62-3w
Skoal Bandits 449w

Consumer Protection Act 1987
Questions
86w, 330w

Contracts
Manpower Services Commission 283w
Overseas aid 601w
Sizewell B 370-1w

Contracts for services
Computers in Government departments 605-7w
Private health services 142w
Regional health authorities 335w
Western Isles Health Board 146-7w

Contracts of employment
Hospital consultants (23:03:88) 362-3

Conventional weapons
100w
Military balance 112-3w
NATO 521w
USSR 101w

Convictions
Charities 678w
Dog fighting 494w
False imprisonment 117w
Homicide 80w

Conway, Mr Derek
Questions
Hospital patients, Scotland 508-9w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 495

Cook, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 404, 410, 417, 424
Questions
Central America, EC external relations 515w
Conventional weapons, Military balance 113w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w
Food contamination, Radioactivity 1260-1
Handicapped 440w
Pay settlements, Top Salaries Review Body 883-4

Cook, Mr Robin
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 466-72, 480, 481-2
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 1011-2
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 310, 328
Questions
Hospital admissions, NHS 541w
Hospital beds, Wales 581-2w
Hospital length of stay, Private patients 344-8w
Hospital waiting lists 538w
Housing benefits, Local authorities in England & Wales 324-30w
NHS finance, Trust funds 663w
Nurses, Carstairs Hospital 504w
Nurses, Northern Ireland 708w
Nurses, Scottish health boards 505-6w
Nurses, Wales 579-81w
Pay beds, Income 339-40w
Supplementary benefits, Average earnings 338w

Coombs, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 387-8, 402-5
Questions
China, Foreign policy 514w
Education & industry 430w
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 113-4w
Telecommunications industry, West Germany 374-6w
USSR, Political prisoners 273-4w

Coombs, Mr Simon
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 113w
Road Traffic Law Review Committee 61-2w

Cope, Mr John, Minister of State for Employment
Questions
Deaf, Training 672w
Employment 877
Employment, Rural areas 876
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 415-6w
Enterprise allowance scheme 12w, 193w, 429w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Employment opportunities 420w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Lewisham 282-3w
European Social Fund, Greater London 70w
Ford Motor Company, Trade unions 877-8
Inner city areas, Dept of Employment 673w
Loan guarantee scheme, Inner city areas 165w
Local enterprise agencies 431-2w
Manufacturing industries 878
Professional & Executive Recruitment, Privatisation 422w
Skillcentres 419-20w
Small businesses, Employment 432w
Small Firms Service 433w
"Tendering for Government Contracts" 433w
Trade unions 878
Unemployment 878
Unemployment, East Sussex 876
Unemployment, EC action 430w
Youth training scheme 69w, 421-2w
Youth training scheme, Bridging allowances 420w
Youth training scheme, Deaf 11w
Youth training scheme, Educational qualifications 421w
Youth training scheme, Job substitution rates 421w
Youth training scheme, Lewisham 284w
Youth training scheme, Occupations 531-2w
Youth training scheme, Part-time education 12w
Youth training scheme, Southwark 871
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 420-1w, 673w
Youth training scheme, Travelling expenses 420-1w
Youth training scheme, Unemployment 879
Youth unemployment, Further education 69-70w

Corbett, Mr Robin
Questions
Religious discrimination, Northern Ireland 223w
Tourism, Inland waterways 873

Corby
Government assistance to industry 879

Corbyn, Mr Jeremy
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 746, 758, 759, 763-4, 771, 775-6
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 325-6
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 637, 653-7, 668
Questions
Business statements 528, 1284
Chemical weapons, Iran-Iraq war 1071-2
Nuclear disarmament, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 102w

Cormack, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 393, 408, 420, 430, 435-6, 437-8, 451, 452
House of Commons Select Committees (22:03:88) 198
Questions
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 190
VAT, Church buildings 1273

Cornton Vale Prison
643w

Cornwall
Assisted areas 876
EC grants & loans (25.03.88) 650-3
Rio Tinto Zinc 63w
Tin 63w, (23:03:88) 357

Corporate plans
Museums & galleries 351w

Corporation tax
Tax allowances 498w

Cost benefit analysis
A2 354w

Cost effectiveness
Harland & Wolff 222w
NHS 154w

Cost per student
White Hart Training Centre 84w

Couchman, Mr James
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1097
Questions
Chemical weapons 1071
Defence contracts 103w
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre, Civil service agencies 264-5w
Iran-Iraq war 513-4w

Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction
Benzodiazepines 659w

Council For National Academic Awards
Public appointments 176w

Council house rents
Scotland 141w
Sheltered housing 658w
Wales 280w

Council house sales
Nottingham 719w
Sutton (28:03:88) 860-6

Council housing
Empty housing 189-90w
Local government finance 121-2w
Property transfer 298w
Wales 28w

Council housing finance
711w

Council of Europe
Treaties 628-9w

Council of Ministers
53w, 633w

Council tenants
House purchase 191-2w
Nottingham 298w

Councillors
Local authorities in Northern Ireland 311w
Northern Ireland 311w
Public transport 461-2w

Country Landowners' Association
Official engagements 634w

County hall
720-1w

Court jurisdiction
(30:03:88) 1164-250
European Court of Justice 181-2w

Courts
EC law 177w
European Court of Justice (25:03:88) 674-93

Cousins, Mr Jim
Questions
EC free food scheme 640w
Guided weapons 112w

Cox, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 804
Questions
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w

Craft industries
Wales 6-7

Craig-y-nos castle
Opera 6

Cran, Mr James
Debates etc.
East Yorkshire Health Authority (31:03:88) 1316-9
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 13w
Cancer, Children 552-3w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Education & Science 67-8w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Energy 135w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Health & Social Security 151-2w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of the Environment 297w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Trade & Industry 177-8w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Transport 268-70w
Civil service dispersal, Home Office 184w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Agriculture 65w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 235-6w
Derelict land, Humberside 56w
Energy Efficiency Office, Energy conservation 291w
Enterprise allowance scheme 12w
Overseas investment, Income 613w
Pigs, Animal husbandry 635w
Radiation hazards, Industrial health & safety 718-9w
Unemployment, Yorkshire & Humberside 417w

Crash helmets
Cycling 129w

CRE
see Commission for Racial Equality

Crewe Health Authority
Finance 210w
Health service staff 210w
Hospital bed occupancy rates 211w
Hospital waiting lists 209-10w
Manpower 37-8w
Medical treatments 209w

Crime
Northern Ireland 502-3

Crime prevention
Community programme 677w
Inner city areas 9w, 387w
Low flying 628w
Women 492-3w

Crime prevention panels
Scotland 144w

Crimes of violence
9w

Criminal investigation
Gibson, Lord Justice 439w
International Investments 699w

Criminal investigation—continued
MV Saga Moon 705w

Criminal proceedings
Time limits 492w

Criminal records
Codes of practice 679w
Computer privacy 678-9w
Data Protection Registrar 679w
Disclosure of information 678-9w

Criminal statistics
232w

Crofting
Scotland 1262-3

Cross border cooperation in Ireland
494-5
Northern Ireland 79w
Terrorism 439w

Crown lands & estates
Land values 299-301w
Richmond house 299-301w

Crown Prosecution Service
(31:03:88) 1324-30

Crown Suppliers
Privatisation 238w, 305w, 720w

Cruelty to children
Cleveland 651w
Inquiries 651w

Cruise missile sites
Air force 114w

Cruise missiles
108w, 190
Nuclear weapons deployment 189-90

Cryer, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Community charge, Orders & regulations (24:03:88) 530-1
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 731-2
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 848-9
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 165-7
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 802
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1052-3
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1239
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1093
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 635-8
Smith, Tim, Members' interests (29:03:88) 1108-9
Questions
Access to Parliament, House of Commons catering 296-7w
Bankruptcy 93w
Bradford, Official engagements 173w
Business statements 521, 1282-3
Consultants, Pay 603w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Bradford 340w
Dogs, Animal cruelty 10w
European fighter aircraft 192
Exceptional needs payments, Bradford 552w
Free school meals, Bradford 271w
Gibraltar 1075-6
House Magazine, Palace of Westminster 599-600w
House Magazine, Portcullis 600w
Housing standards 3w
Journalists, Belize 115w, 623w
Journalists, Ministry of Defence 115w
Local government pensions, Administrative costs 367w
Luff, Peter, Conflict of interests 591w
Medical research, Charities 396-7w

Cryer, Mr Bob—continued
Prisoners, Disclosure of information 66w
Security, Northern Ireland 221w
Set-aside schemes, Expenditure 638w

CSM
see Committee on Safety of Medicines

Cultural heritage
Arts finance 349w

Cumbria
Sheep 206w, 312-3w, 400-1w

Cummings, Mr John
Questions
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 108w
Arts finance, Greater London 227w
Electricity supply industry, Radioactive waste disposal 295w

Cunningham, Dr John
Questions
Block grant, Research 3-4w
Community charge 478w
Community charge, Government grants to local authorities 307w
Community charge, Local government services 714w
Community charge, Married women 2w
Community charge, Wales 392-4w
Death rate 543-4w
Local government expenditure 4w
Sports facilities, Local government services 476-7w

Currency movements
EC budget 572w

Curriculum
(21:03:88) 159-72, (22:03:88) 204-305, (23:03:88) 366-463, (24:03:88) 534-621, (28:03:88) 733-832
Scotland 141w

"Curriculum & Assessment in Scotland Consultation Paper"
141w

Currie, Mrs Edwina, Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security
Debates etc.
"Community Care" (31:03:88) 1311-5
East Yorkshire Health Authority (31:03:88) 1317, 1319-23
Questions
Air conditioning, Research 208-9w
Alcoholic drinks, Cancer hazards 330w
Alcoholic drinks, Visual arts 444w
Aspartame 243-4w
Benzodiazepines, Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction 659w
Cancer, Children 552-3w
Cancer, Screening 213w
Cervical cancer, Screening 213w, 336w
Child minding, Child workers 151w
Child workers, Working hours 84-5w
Children in care, Homelessness 664-7w
Chlamydia, Disease control 657w
Computers in National Health Service, Accountability 32w
Computers in National Health Service, Competition 32w
Computers in National Health Service, Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham 32w
Congenital abnormalities, Screening 217w
Crewe Health Authority, Finance 210w
Crewe Health Authority, Manpower 37-8w
Death rate 543-4w
Dental charges 86w
Dental health, Health education 449w
Dentistry, Hygiene 337w
Dept of Health & Social Security, Negligence 248w
District health authorities, Public appointments 341w
District health authorities, Surplus land 655w
Dystonia, Medical treatments 83w

Currie, Mrs Edwina—continued
Family doctors, Worthing Health Authority 214-5w
Food contamination, Imports 446w
Geriatric patients, Sunderland Health Authority 208w
Handicapped children, Kent 37-8w
Health service staff, Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority 39-40w
Health service staff, Pontefract Health Authority 38-9w
Hepatitis, Disease control 655-6w
Hospital admissions, NHS 541w
Hospital bed occupancy rates, Crewe Health Authority 211w
Hospital closures 338-9w, 538-9w
Hospital closures, West Midlands 246w
Hospital consultants, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 344w
Hospital length of stay 41w
Hospital length of stay, Private patients 344-8w
Human organs, Imports 208w
Incontinence 33w
Infant mortality 212-3w
Infant mortality, Kent 38w
Leeds Western Health Authority, Public appointments 451w
Manhattan 100, Informative labelling 246w
Maternal mortality, Anaesthetics 245w
Medical research, Research finance 336-7w
Medical treatments, Crewe Health Authority 209w
Mental health community care, Finance 657-8w
Mental health community care, Regional health authorities 333w
Mental hospitals, Hospital beds 442w, 444w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 333w
Mental hospitals, Property transfer 331-2w
Mental patients, Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority 651w
Mental patients, Schizophrenia 441-4w
Mentally handicapped, Mental health community care 549-50w
Mentally ill, Residential care 331w
Motorcycles, Injuries 667w
Motorcycles, Road accidents 553w
National Blood Transfusion Service 342w
NHS, Compensation 662w
NHS & private practice, Hospital patients 553w
NHS Management Board, Departmental circulars 445-6w
NHS reciprocal arrangements, Medical treatment abroad 31-2w
North Western Regional Health Authority, Hospital closures 334w
Northern General Hospital Sheffield, Hospital admissions 452w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Accident & emergency departments 550-1w
Northern Regional Health Authority, NHS administration 39-41w
Nursing homes, Expenditure 82w
Pay beds, Income 339-40w
Perinatal mortality, Airedale Health Authority 247-8w
Plastic surgery 154w
Regional health authorities, Political activities 335w
Riverside Health Authority, Hospital closures 334-5w
Schizophrenia, Homelessness 331w
Skoal Bandits 449w
Skoal Bandits, Consumer protection 449w
Skoal Bandits, Health warnings 245w
Smoking 246w
Smoking, Health hazards 158-9w, 543w
South Cumbria Health Authority, Finance 152w
South Cumbria Health Authority, Health service staff 209-10w

Currie, Mrs Edwina—continued
South East Thames Regional Health Authority, Accident & emergency departments 154-6w
Strontium 90, Bone marrow disorders 658w
Tobacco 86w
Tobacco, Labelling 154w
Tobacco, Science & technology research 153-4w
Tobacco advertising 157-8w
Transport, Injuries 460w
Whooping cough, Vaccination 244w
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, District health authorities 450w

Curry, Mr David
Questions
Common sheep meat regime 1263
Passports, Administrative delays 682-3w

Custodial treatment
Fine defaulters 229-30w
Rates & rating 276w
Thain, Ian Richard 136w
Young offenders 274w

Customs
Drugs 608w
Newry 92w
Railway travel 398-9w
Trains 398-9w

Customs & Excise
91-3w, 317w, 398-9w, 605-8w
Consultants 498w, 611-2w

Cycling
Crash helmets 129w

Cyprus
Official engagements 518w

DAFS
see Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland

Daily Mail & General Trust
Netherlands 97w

Dalyell, Mr Tam
Debates etc.
Business questions point of order (31:03:88) 1286
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 207, 226-7, 233, 258-9, (23:03:88) 368, 413-4, 417, 438, (24:03:88) 536, 578, 579, 611-2
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 799, 803
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 922, 923, 929, 932, 971-2, 992
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1125
Rover Group (29:03:88) 897, 898
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1107
Questions
Antarctic, Minerals 133w
Armed forces deployment, Belize 191w
Buildings, Log books 303w
Business statements 522-4
Civil service, Disclosure of information 723-4
Computer industry, Skill shortages 397w
Diplomatic service, Berlin 173w
Electricity supply industry, Emergency planning 719-20
Electronic surveillance, Northern Ireland 494
Examinations, Disclosure of information 19w
Gibraltar, IRA 183w
"Inside Intelligence", Legal costs 147w
Power station closures, Research finance 20w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Disclosure of information 702-3w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Police informers 702w
Salmon, Fishery protection 639w

Dalyell, Mr Tam—continued
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 510w
Tighe, Michael, Homicide 241w, 311-2w
Trident, Members' correspondence 409w

Damages
Complaints against police 684-5w

Darling, Mr Alistair
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 849-50
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 301-2
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 915
Questions
Business statements 526
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 290w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants, Fees & charges 16-7w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants, Health services 15-6w
Mines, Navy 106w
Private health services, Scotland 142w

Dartford tunnel
Transport of hazardous materials 46w

Data Protection Registrar
Criminal records 679w

Datamed
32w

Davies, Mr Quentin
Questions
Forestry grants, Northern Ireland 167-8w
Television, Terrorism 505

Davies, Mr Ron
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Farmers 568-9w
Agricultural land, Land values 51-2w
Agricultural land, Wales 51w
Agriculture, Income 51w
Employment, Mid Glamorgan 127-8w
Environmentally sensitive areas, Northern Ireland 221w
Forestry, Ministerial duties 278w
Forestry, Road works 285w
Forestry, Scotland 137w, 139w
Forestry grants 400w, 1269-70
Forestry grants, Scotland 75-7w
Forestry grants, Wales 52w
Foxes, Animal husbandry 639w
Guided weapons 112w
Mink, Animal husbandry 206w
Mink, Licensing 566w
Mink, Scotland 646w
Mink, Wales 200w, 583w
New Forest, Rents 880
Paper industry, Government assistance to industry 643w
Planning permission, Animal husbandry 190-1w
Rate rebates, Public buildings 237-8w
Transport, Safety 554w
Tree planting, Flow country 643w

Davis, Mr David
Questions
Defence procurement, Disclosure of information 468w

Davis, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 891-2
Questions
Community health councils, Birmingham 35w
Entry clearances 10-1w, 685w
Entry clearances, Birmingham 494w
Exceptional needs payments, Birmingham 35w
Immigration officers, Birmingham 685w
Income support scheme, Birmingham 36w

Davis, Mr Terry—continued
Passports, Administrative delays 681-2w

Day, Mr Stephen
Questions
Unemployment, North West region 419w

Deaf
Handicapped workers 258-9w
Teacher training 147w
Training 672w
Youth training scheme 11w

Death
AIDS 32-3w
Armed forces casualties 412w
Childbirth 245w
Dogs 10w
Drinking & driving 77-8w
Industrial accidents 435w
Industrial diseases 436w
Prosecutions (31:03:88) 1324-30
Terrorism 438-9w

Death rate
543-4w

Debts
Advisory services 234-5w
Developing countries 132w, 628w
Rates & rating 118w

Decca navigator system
619-20w

Defective housing
House renovation grants 309w

Defence
France 114w

Defence contracts
103w, 111-2w, 116w, 187-8
British Aerospace 624w
Fraud 188, 726-8
Lorries 106w
Marconi 187, 624w
North Sea 362w
North West region 189
Small businesses 109w, 181-2
Strategic defence initiative 464w

Defence equipment
Defence expenditure 464w
Export controls 278w
North Sea 624w
Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w

Defence expenditure
Defence equipment 464w
Taxation 98-100w

Defence land
111w

Defence procurement
106-7w, 468w
Challenger tanks 623w
Disclosure of information 468w
Frigates 104w
Tanks 623w
Type 23 frigates 104w

Defence research
107w
Chemical & biological warfare 99w

Degrees
International Management Centre from Buckingham 175w

Democracy
Central America 630w
Central government (31:03:88) 1338-44

Denmark
Energy conservation 509-10w

Dental charges
86w, 542w

Dental health
Health education 449w

Dental services
Tayside Health Board 288w

Dental students
174w

Dentistry
Hygiene 337w

Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland
Administrative costs 644w
Advisory services 644-5w
Offices 644-6w

Dept of Education & Science
Civil service dispersal 67-8w
Consultants 396w, 470w
Departmental publications 5-6w

Dept of Employment
120w
Consultants 437w, 535w
Inner city areas 673w
Publishing 671w
Regional development grants 874-5
Telephone systems 672w

Dept of Energy
583w
Civil service dispersal 135w
Consultants 371w, 509w
Departmental publications 68w
Inner city areas 583w

Dept of Health & Social Security
63w, 120-1w, 151w, 212w, 336-7w, 467w, 605-7w
Civil service dispersal 151-2w
Consultants 446w, 539-41w
Inner city areas 655-6w
Negligence 248w

Dept of Health & Social Security local offices
Bradford 340w
Charities 341w
Civil service manpower 211w
Research 217w
Tottenham 211w

Dept of the Environment
3-4w, 120-1w, 278w, 711-2w, 716-7w, 719w
Cash limits 192w, 238w
Civil service dispersal 297w
Consultants 367w, 473-4w
Inner city areas 715w
Market research 299w

Dept of Trade & Industry
62w, 591w
Billingham 62w
Board of Trade 25w
Civil service dispersal 177-8w
Consultants 381w, 593-5w
Departmental publications 22w
Government buildings 23-4w
Inner city areas 586w
Middlesbrough 62w

Dept of Transport
Cash limits 266w
Civil service dispersal 268-70w
Consultants 554-6w
Handicapped 45-6w
Inner city areas 616-7w
Ministerial duties 456w

Department of Transport (Fees) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(25:03:88) 696

Departmental circulars
Community Care Review 333-4w
NHS Management Board 445-6w

Departmental coordination
Health 120-1w
Housing standards 120-1w

Departmental correspondence
120w, 333-4w, 388w, 723-4

Departmental forms
Firearms certificates 689w
Restart programme 162-3w
Supplementary benefits 150w

Departmental leaflets
Handicapped workers 258-9w
Supplementary benefits 151w

Departmental publications
Air safety 614w
Dept of Education & Science 5-6w
Dept of Energy 68w
Dept of Trade & Industry 22w
Inner London Education Authority 235w
Ministry of Agriculture 160w
Ministry of Defence 7w
Northern Ireland Office 78w
Treasury 123w
Welsh Office 29w

Derbyshire
Employment training 874
"Training for Employment White Paper" 874

Derelict land
Humberside 56w

DES
see Dept of Education & Science

Design
Coinage 123w
Northern Ireland 22w

Developing countries
Debts 132w, 628w
Food contamination 394-5w

Devlin, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 839, 843
Questions
Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry, Government grants to local authorities 248w
China, Official engagements 514w
Cruelty to children, Cleveland 651w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Billingham 62w
Dept of Trade & Industry, Middlesbrough 62w
Enterprise initiative, Newcastle upon Tyne 62w
Government buildings, Dept of Trade & Industry 23-4w
Unemployment, Northern region 418w

Devolution
Anglo-Irish Agreement 222w
Northern Ireland 48w, 222w

Devon
Non-domestic rates 57-8w
Uniform business rate 57w

Devonport dockyard
Redundancy 412-3w

Devonport Management
412-3w

Dewar, Mr Donald
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 833-6, 837, 851-3
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1100, 1102
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 903-4, 905
Questions
Ford Motor Company 350-1

Dewar, Mr Donald—continued
Ford Motor Company, Dundee 287w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 353

DHSS
see Dept of Health & Social Security

Dickens, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 163, 166
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 361
Ford Motor Company, Dundee (25:03:88) 662-5
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1094
Questions
Aerosols, Palace of Westminster 20
Armed forces deployment, Northern Ireland 136w

Diego Garcia
Public petitions (30:03:88) 1251

Dinoseb
148w

Diplock courts
48w

Diplomatic relations
South Africa 513w
Speaker's rulings & statements (30:03:88) 1111-2

Diplomatic service
Berlin 173w

Direct labour departments
Hackney 721-2w

Disablement resettlement officers
Manpower 256w

Disablement schemes
Handicapped workers 162w, 431w

Disciplinary proceedings
Low flying 627-8w
Police Authority for Northern Ireland 222w
Social security appeals 444w

Disclosure of information
Anglo-Irish Agreement 218w
Civil service 723-4
Community charges register 14w, 641w
Criminal records 678-9w
Defence procurement 468w
Drug side effects 446-7w
Examinations 19w
Export Credits Guarantee Department 25-6w
Insider trading 356w
International Atomic Energy Agency 272-3w
Magistrates' courts 67w
NHS finance 10-1
Prisoners 66w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 702-3w

Disease control
1-2, 504w, 641-3w
AIDS 503-4w
Chlamydia 657w
Hepatitis 655-6w

Disley bypass
Road construction 616w

Dismissal
Coal mining 291-2w

Disposable income
Social security reform 335w

Disposable syringes
503-4w
Scotland 504w

District auditors
(23:03:88) 361

District development officers
Northern Ireland 223w

District health authorities
Health service staff 667-71w
NHS finance 15

District health authorities—continued
Public appointments 33w, 341w
Surplus land 655w
Wales 15
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority 450w

Dobson, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 201
Community charge, Orders & regulations (24:03:88) 531
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1052, 1053
NHS finance (25:03:88) 665-9
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 670
Questions
Business statements 511-2, 1277-8
Health service staff, Manpower 455w

Dock labour scheme
161-2w
East Anglia 674w
Goole 675-6w
Greater London 674-6w
Grimsby 675-6w
Immingham 675-6w
Kingston upon Hull 675-6w
Scotland 675-8w
Tyne & Wear 675-6w

Dock workers
Industrial tribunals 674-8w
Redundancy 161-2w

Docklands Forum
54-5w

Docklands Light Railway
Southwark 553w

DOE
see Dept of the Environment

Dog fighting
Advertising controls 494w
Convictions 494w
Import controls 494w
Prosecutions 485-6w
Punishment 493-4w

Dog licences
Northern Ireland 167w

Dogs
Animal cruelty 10w
Death 10w
Northern Ireland 48w

Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
Questions
48w

Doran, Mr Frank
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 297-8
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 970-1
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 915
Questions
Central America, EC external relations 515w
Community charge, Scottish councils 72-4w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 416w
Frigates, Navy 104w
Nurses' training, Scotland 140w

Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Turkey) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1111

Double Taxation Relief (Taxes on Income) (Venezuela) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1111

Douglas, Mr Dick
Debates etc.
Acute beds, Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 173-6, 177, 178
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 112

Douglas, Mr Dick—continued
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 730
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 840-1, 845, 846
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 972, 988-90
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1140, 1153-4, 1157
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1103
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 909
Questions
Business statements 517-8
Coal fired power stations, Scotland 716-7
Coal mining, Scotland 291w
Community charge, Scotland 348
Frigates, Defence procurement 104w
Navy, Warships 186
South of Scotland Electricity Board 145w

Douglas-Hamilton, Lord James, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 921-1036 passim
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1123-7, 1137-40, 1147-9, 1157, 1159-60
Questions
A96, Road works 144w
Acid rain, Scotland 508w
AIDS, Prisoners 641-3w
Air pollution control, Scotland 507-8w
Ancient monuments, Scotland 141w
Bield Housing Association, Finance 201w
Body searches, Scotland 643w
Civil defence, Government grants 403w
Civil defence, Scotland 403-4w
Community charge, Scotland 345-6
Conifers, Scotland 402w
Council house rents, Scotland 141w
Crime prevention panels, Scotland 144w
Drinking & driving, Death 77-8w
Edinburgh District Council 345
Ettrick & Lauderdale District Council, Housing finance 503w
European Year of the Environment, Scottish Office 406w
Firearms certificates, Dundee 203w
Forestry, Road works 285w
Forestry, Scotland 137w, 139w
Forestry grant scheme, Scotland 286w
Forestry grants, Scotland 75w, 77w
Government grants to voluntary organisations, Scotland 253-4w
Historic buildings, Scotland 202w
Homelessness, Mental hospitals 202w
Homelessness, Public expenditure 249-50w
Homelessness, Scotland 248-51w
Housing association grant, Scotland 253w
Housing standards, Dundee District Council 203-4w
"Inside Intelligence", Legal costs 147w
Local government, Scotland 346
Local government staff, Scotland 344-5
Police authorities, Scotland 646w
Prisoners, Scotland 647-8w
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 17w
Scottish Bus Group, Privatisation 142-3w
Scottish Lay Observer, Law Society of Scotland 16w
Scottish Solicitors' Discipline Tribunal, Legal malpractice 16w
Scottish Special Housing Association, Shetland 201w
Solicitors, Codes of practice 16w
Surveying, Pollution monitoring 286w
Surveying, Radioactivity 286-7w
Tree felling 201-2w
Tree felling, Licensing 202w
Tree planting 505-6w
Tree planting, Flow country 643w
Tree planting, Scotland 402w
Woodland grant scheme 644w

Dounreay
Radioactive wastes 21w

Dover, Mr Den
Questions
Acute beds, NHS finance 35w
Religious education 6w

Down
Civil service dispersal 701w

Drinking & driving
Death 77-8w
Scotland 77-8w

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre
130w
Civil service agencies 264-5w

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Directorate
see Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre

Driving tests
Bristol 457-8w

Drug abuse
AIDS 406-8w, 453-5w, 1273, (31:03:88) 1294-300
Benzodiazepines 247w
Prison medical services 683w
Prisoners 683w

Drug crimes
Forensic science 117w

Drug hazards
Benzodiazepines 659-60w

Drug side effects
Disclosure of information 446-7w

Drugs
Abortion 655w
Customs 608w
Raw materials 33-4w

DTI
see Dept of Trade & Industry

DTp
see Dept of Transport

Dual carriageways
129-30w, 354w

Duffy, Mr A E P
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 401-2
Questions
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear disarmament 182-3
Security, Northern Ireland 501-2
"Training for Employment White Paper, South Yorkshire 874
Unemployment, South Yorkshire 418w

Dumfries & Galloway Regional Council
Forestry 285w

Dundee
215w
Employment opportunities 355
Firearms certificates 203w
Ford Motor Company 287w, (25:03:88) 662-8
Free school meals 203w
Handicapped 216w
Health & Safety Executive 437w
Housing benefits 207-8w
Shotgun certificates 203w
Social security appeals 215w
Social security benefits disqualification 551-2w
Social security recipients 216w
Tourist industry 205w
Youth training scheme 205w, 255w

Dundee District Council
Housing standards 203-4w

Dunmore shooting centre
693w
Firearms certificates 688-9w

Dunmore shooting centre—continued
Gun sports 695-6w
Police 696-7w
Ryan, Michael 688w, 690w, 694-7w

Dunn, Mr Bob, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 234, 272, 279-81, (23:03:88) 432
Playgrounds, Injuries (30:03:88) 1255-8
Questions
Education welfare officers 126-7w
Educational finance, Headteachers 6w
Free school meals, Bradford 271w
Free school meals, Inner London Education Authority 127w
Inner London Education Authority 596w
Inner London Education Authority, Educational psychology 271w
School admission 6w
School meals 596-8w
School population, Suffolk County Council 396w

Dunnachie, Mr Jimmy
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1139, 1140
Questions
Armed forces pensions, Widows' benefits 111w
Fishing vessels, Fishing quotas 637w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Manpower 434w
Training, Travelling expenses 672-3w
Unemployment, Motherwell 15w

Duthie, Robin
142w

DVLC
see Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre

Dykes, Mr Hugh
Questions
Common agricultural policy, EC budget 634-5w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 290w
INF Treaty 104w
South Africa, Official engagements 513w

Dystonia
Medical treatments 83w

Dystonia Society
83w

Eadie, Mr Alexander
Debates etc.
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1106
Questions
British Coal Corporation, Trade unions 370w
Coal mining 293w
Economic situation, Scotland 349

EAEC
see EURATOM

Ear disorders
Hospital waiting lists 246w
Surgery 246-7w

Early warning systems
136w
Employment opportunities 362-3w, 412w
Military aircraft 363w
Offset arrangements 116w

Earned income
284w

Earnings rule
Occupational pensions 152-3w
Severe weather payments 153w

East Anglia
Dock labour scheme 674w
Skilled workers 422w

East Anglia—continued
Vacancies 431w

East Anglian Regional Health Authority
Midwives 159w
Tourists 34w

East Antrim
Hospitals 219w

East Germany
Exports 1072-3
Ministers' visits abroad 1072-3
Nuclear disarmament 1073

East London river crossing
Lorries 46w

East Midlands
Unemployment 419w

East Sussex
Unemployment 876

East West relations
510w

East Yorkshire Health Authority
(31:03:88) 1316-23

Eastbourne Borough Council
Community charge 713-4w

Eastern Health & Social Services Board
Members' correspondence 562w
NHS finance 499

Eastham, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 410
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1094
Questions
Air force, Military aircraft 100w
Nuclear accidents 370w

EC action
Central America 273w
Fish conservation 13-4w
Harmonisation of standards 592w
Investor protection 383w
Radioactive wastes 121w
Unemployment 430w

EC Agriculture Council
260w, 567-8w, 571w, 633w, 638-9w
Common agricultural policy 636w

EC budget
Common agricultural policy 634-5w
Currency movements 572w
UK contributions 603w

EC Budget Council
633w

EC budget repayments
Own resources 399w

EC Commission
see European Commission

EC Cons Doc 8202/87
124-6w

EC countries
Chlorofluorocarbons 365-6w
Economic situation 868-9
Unemployment 868-9
Young offenders 275w

EC Draft R/95/76
233w

EC Draft 8200/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8201/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8203/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8204/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8205/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8206/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8207/87
124-6w

EC Draft 8770/87
(25:03:88) 674-93

EC Economic & Finance Council
see EC Finance Council

EC energy policy
711

EC Environment Council
186-8w

EC external relations
Austria 519w
Central America 515w
Foreign policy 515w
Japan 512w
South Africa 512-3w

EC external trade
Food contamination 394-5w
South Africa 629-30w

EC Finance Council
633w
Official engagements 607w

EC Foreign Affairs Council
633w
Human rights 133-4w

EC free food scheme
565w, 569-70w, 636w, 640w

EC General Affairs Council
see EC Foreign Affairs Council

EC grants & loans
Clwyd 200w
Cornwall (25:03:88) 650-3
Gwynedd 128-30w
International Fund for Ireland 495
Political parties 395w
Wales 200w

EC integration
Building industry 716-7w
Scotland 70-1w

EC Internal Market Council
483w

EC internal trade
Conferences 383w
Export promotion 1082
Northern Ireland 233w
Publicity 119-20w
VAT 358w

EC law
European Court of Justice 177w
Water pollution 303w

EC nationals
64-5w

EC Research Council
633w

EC Transport Council
459w

ECGD
see Export Credits Guarantee Department

ECOFIN
see EC Finance Council

Economic League
Company accounts 119w
Police 275w

Economic models
Income tax 398w

Economic regions
717w

Economic sanctions
South Africa 1076-8, 1081-2

Economic situation
868-9
Budget, March 1988 (21:03:88) 41-114
EC countries 868-9
Scotland 349

Eddisbury
Unemployment 193w

Edinburgh District Council
345

Education
Church Commissioners 13

Education & industry
430w, 867-8
Comprehensive schools 29-30w
Wales 29-30w

Education (No 2) Act 1986
Questions
174-5w

Education Reform Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 202-3, (23:03:88) 364-5
Money res (21:03:88) 159-72
Rep (22:03:88) 204-305, (23:03:88) 366-463, (24:03:88) 534-621
Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 733-832
Questions
6w, 13

Education welfare officers
84-5w, 126-7w

Educational exchanges
USSR 132w

Educational finance
Capital investment 176w
Headteachers 6w
Tayside Regional Council 202-3w

Educational maintenance allowance
Wales 575w

Educational policy
School administration 235w

Educational psychology
Inner London Education Authority 271w

Educational qualifications
Youth training scheme 421w

Educational standards
Public petitions (23:03:88) 484

Efficiency scrutinies
313w, 468w, 725-6

EFTA
see European Free Trade Association

Eggar, Mr Tim, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs
Debates etc.
Exercise Fire Focus (31:03:88) 1333, 1334-7

Eggar, Mr Tim—continued
Questions
Afghanistan, Ministers' visits abroad 511w
Afghanistan, USSR 511w
Antarctic, Minerals 133w
Belgium, British residents abroad 520-1w
Bophuthatswana, Overseas aid 131-2w
Cameroon, Water supply 5w
Central America, Democracy 630w
Central America, EC action 273w
Central America, EC external relations 515w
Central America, Peace negotiations 631w, 1067-8
China, Foreign policy 514w
China, Official engagements 514w
China, Twin towns 394w
Computer privacy, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 521w
Consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 393w, 521-2w
Entry clearances, Administrative delays 132w
Falkland Islands, BBC external services 510w
Falkland Islands, Official engagements 518w
Falkland Islands, Operation Fire Focus 517w
Fiji, Official visits 393w
Guatemala, Foreign policy 522w
Hong Kong, Refugees 274w
Inner city areas, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 629w
Japan, Foreign policy 519w
Kampuchea 1070
Kampuchea, Foreign policy 1070
Kampuchea, Human rights 514w
Laos, British embassies 182w
Malaysia, Water supply 4-5w
Nepal, Political prisoners 273w
Nicaragua 1068
Nicaragua, Peace negotiations 518w
Overseas trade, Bananas 629w
Panama 53w
Panama, British residents abroad 631-3w
South Africa, Sporting tours 630w
South East Asia, Ministers' visits abroad 519w
Trinidad & Tobago, Official engagements 517w
UN Convention on Torture 134w
USA, Foreign policy 517w
Vietnamese refugees, Repatriation 631-2w
Vietnamese refugees, Resettlement 632w

Eggs
Government assistance 635w

Elderly
Health insurance 571w
Heating allowances 83w
House renovation grants 30w, 99w
Loans 604w
Mortgages 604w
Nottingham (25:03:88) 697-708
Sheltered housing (25:03:88) 657-60

Election expenses
Addresses to the Crown (23:03:88) 339

Electric cables
Cancer 715-6
Scotland 354

Electricity
Iceland 286w, 295-6w
Safety standards 374w
Scotland 286w

Electricity area boards
Interest charges 710
Official engagements 292w

Electricity Consumers' Council
Official engagements 709

Electricity Council
Official engagements 291w

Electricity distribution
715

"Electricity Generating Stations & Overhead Lines (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 1987"
21-2w

Electricity generation
296w
Nuclear power stations 21-2w, 294w

Electricity supply industry
Emergency planning 719-20
Nuclear accidents 135w
Privatisation 20w, 68w, 135w, 137w, 281w, 289-90w, 353-4, 509w, 572w, (24:03:88) 622-30, 709-10, 712-6, 719
Radioactive waste disposal 68w, 295w
Research (24:03:88) 622-30
Scotland 137w, 351-2, 354, 572w
Wales 281w

Electricity tariffs
710-2
Price increases 290w
Scotland 353-4
Social security benefits reductions 212w

Electronic Data Systems
Government data network 443w

Electronic surveillance
Northern Ireland 241w, 311-2w, 494

Electronics industry
Wales 2-3

Emergency planning
Construction 386-7w
Electricity supply industry 719-20
Guided weapons 117w
Local authorities 385-7w
Metropolitan districts 384-5w
Scotland 403-4w

Emery, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 40
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 730-1
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 162-3
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 632-5, 640, 670
Questions
Prime Minister, Treasury 880

Emigration
USSR 516-7w

Employers' statutory sick pay scheme
Unemployment benefits 452w

Employment
877
Harland & Wolff 700w
Mid Glamorgan 127-8w
Northern Ireland 700w
Rhymney Valley 127-8w
Rural areas 876
Small businesses 432w
Suffolk 413w
West Cumbria 869

Employment discrimination
Ethnic minorities 870
Local Government Act 1988 477-8w
Northern Ireland 504, 698w
Redundancy 162w

Employment level
418w
Wales 27-8w

Employment opportunities
British Coal Corporation Enterprise 293w
Canary Wharf 54-5w

Employment opportunities—continued
Coatbridge project 77w
Dundee 355
Early warning systems 362-3w, 412w
Enterprise allowance scheme 420w
Handicapped 527-8w
Inverclyde initiative 75w, 287-8w
Paper industry 643w
Tourist industry 27w, 424w, 529-30w
Trade unions 877
Urban development grants 55-6w

Employment protection
Complaints 532w
Insolvency 875-6

Employment schemes
Belfast 239w
Greenock 75w
Monklands 77w
Northern Ireland 504, 563w
Scotland 355
Social security benefits disqualification 415-6w
Wales 280w

Employment training
255w, 414-5w, 532-3w
Community programme 164w
Derbyshire 874
Handicapped workers 416w
Housing benefits 243w
Sex discrimination 429w
Social security benefits disqualification 415w
Trades Union Congress 432-3w
Training allowances 417w, 432-3w
Training Commission 417w
Travelling expenses 416w

Empty housing
(30:03:88) 1112-4
Council housing 189-90w
Property transfer 189-90w

Empty property
Ministry of Defence 236w

Empty Property & Community Aid Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (30:03:88) 1112-4

Endrigkeit, Christina
173w, 510w

Energy conservation
Buildings 509-10w
Denmark 509-10w
Energy Efficiency Office 291w

Energy Efficiency Office
Energy conservation 291w

Energy prices
83w

Energy research
Laboratories 20w
Severn barrage 261w

Energy supply
Iceland 140w

Engineering Council
395w

Engineering education
Higher education 395w

English Channel
Waste disposal 4w, 14w

English Heritage
see Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

English Tourist Board
North West region 255w

Enterprise allowance scheme
12w, 193w, 429w
Arts 348w, 720

Enterprise allowance scheme—continued
Employment opportunities 420w
Lewisham 282-3w

Enterprise in higher education
429-30w

Enterprise initiative
62w
Newcastle upon Tyne 62w

Entry clearances
10-1w, 685w
Administrative delays 132w
Birmingham 494w

Environment protection
Land drainage 13w

Environmental health
Northern Ireland 699-700w

Environmentally sensitive areas
Northern Ireland 221w

EOC
see Equal Opportunities Commission

EPIC
see European Proliferation Information Centre

Equal opportunities
Industry 528-9w

Equal Opportunities Commission
528-9w

Equipment
Coastguard 355w

Estate management
719w

Ethiopia
Human rights 11w
Overseas aid 601-2w
UN Commission on Human Rights 11w

Ethnic groups
Prison population 384w
Unemployment 69w
Young offenders 273-4w

Ethnic minorities
Employment discrimination 870
Examinations 395w
Judges 19w
Magistrates 19w, 371w
Prison population 183-4w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 221w

Ethnic monitoring
Civil service 322w
Northern Ireland Office 224w
Scottish Office 146w
Welsh Office 197w

Ettrick & Lauderdale District Council
Housing finance 503w

EURATOM
68-9w, 296w

Europe
Nuclear weapons deployment 114w

European Assembly
see European Parliament

European Atomic Energy Community
see EURATOM

European Commission
64w, 181w

European Council
572w

European Court of First Instance
182-3w, (25:03:88) 674-93

European Court of Justice
182-3w
Administration of justice 181-2w

European Court of Justice—continued
Court jurisdiction 181-2w
Courts (25:03:88) 674-93
EC law 177w

European fighter aircraft
105w, 192
Costs 104w
Production 192

European Free Trade Association
868-9

European Organisation for Nuclear Research
see CERN

European Parliament
395w

European Proliferation Information Centre
Arms control negotiations 242w

European Regional Development Fund
Textile industry 365w

European Social Fund
Greater London 70w

European Space Agency
356-7w

European Year of the Environment
Scottish Office 406w

Evans, Mr David
Questions
Defence contracts, Small businesses 181
Property Services Agency, Consultants 122w

Evans, Mr John
Questions
Tree planting 639w

Evening courses
Prison education services 678w

Evennett, Mr David
Questions
Defence contracts 111-2w
Property development, Howbury Park 190w
Woolwich ferry, Industrial disputes 131w

Everyman Theatre, Liverpool
720-1

Ewing, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 108, 158
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 858
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 358-9, 360
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 987
Oral question time intervention (23:03:88) 351
Oral question time point of order (23:03:88) 356
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1104
Questions
Companies, Ministerial duties 572w
Michael Forsyth Limited, Scottish Office 646-7w
NHS, Tenders 646w

Ewing, Mrs Margaret
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 297, (24:03:88) 603-5, 613-4
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 360
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1038, 1039, 1047-50, 1051, 1052
Questions
A96, Road works 144w
Agricultural research, Scotland 1267-8
Community charge, Scotland 143w

Ewing, Mrs Margaret—continued
Dental students 174w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 342-3
North Sea oil, Offshore suppliers 711
RAF Lossiemouth 116w
Teachers, Scotland 148w

Examinations
Civil service recruitment 724
Costs 596w
Disclosure of information 19w
Ethnic minorities 395w

Exceptional needs payments
Birmingham 35w
Bradford 552w
Northern Ireland 703-4w
Social security recipients 151w
Strabane 703w

Exchange rates
Coal 717-8
Interest rates 613w
Manufacturing industries 586w
Mark 317w
Retail price index 613w
Sterling 195

Excise duties
Liquefied petroleum gas 317w
Tax harmonisation 124-6w

Exercise
Prisoners 276-7w

Exercise Arrowhead Express
Armed forces deployment 623-4w

Exercise Fire Focus
110w, 115w, (31:03:88) 1331-7

Exercise Outback 88
358w
Navy 358-9w
Nuclear weapons 358w

Exhibitions
Advertising Standards Authority 383w
Visual arts 444w

Explosives Inspectorate
164-5w

Export controls
Books 495w, 574w
Defence equipment 278w

Export Credits Guarantee Department
Central America 591w
Disclosure of information 25-6w
Nicaragua 591w
South America 591w

Export Credits Guarantee Dept
see Export Credits Guarantee Department

Export promotion
China 377-9w
EC internal trade 1082
Saudi Arabia 24-6w
Wales 282w, 576w

Exports
China 377-8w
East Germany 1072-3
Furs 26w
Plutonium 296w
Sheep 312-3w, 400-1w

Extradition
Belgium 230w
Burns, Brendan 48-9w
Republic of Ireland 486w, 495w, 705-6w

Eye disorders
Hospital consultants 246w
Hospital waiting lists 246-7w

Eye tests
Tayside Health Board 288w

F111 aircraft

F111 aircraft—continued
108-9w, 135-6w

Factories
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation 297-8w, 721w

Factory closures
Wales 392w

Factory Inspectorate
164-5w, 423w
Manpower 423w
Scotland 423w

Fairbairn, Mr Nicholas
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 110
Ford Motor Company, Standing Order No 20 applications (23:03:88) 358-61
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 907
Questions
Business statements 521
Community charge, Scotland 345-6

Falkland Islands
Armed forces deployment 180w
BBC external services 510w
Military aircraft 115w
Military exercises 110w, (31:03:88) 1331-7
Official engagements 518w
Operation Fire Focus 517w

Fallon, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1106
Questions
BAOR, National Audit Office 110w
Ford Motor Company 349
Jobclubs, Northern region 431w
Shareholders, Scotland 122-3w
South East Asia, Ministers' visits abroad 519w
Turkey, Official engagements 54w
Voluntary restraint agreements 480-1w

Falmouth Container Terminal Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

False imprisonment
Convictions 117w

Family credit
Free school meals 342w, 542w
Lewisham 157w
Scotland 447-8w
Social security benefits rules (22:03:88) 306-31
Sunderland 342w

Family Credit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 306-31

Family doctors
Fees & charges 650-1w
Greater London 245w
Hygiene 337w
Worthing Health Authority 214-5w

Family income
Low incomes 449-50w

Family income supplements
Sunderland 338w

Family practitioner committees
Public appointments 453w

Farm woodland scheme
137-9w, 637w
Agricultural land 1267
Forestry grants 1266-7

Farmers
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279w, 568-9w

Farmers' Union of Wales
637w

Farr, Sir John
Questions
Business statements 514-5
Dept of Employment, Regional development grants 874-5
European fighter aircraft, Production 192
International Management Centre from Buckingham, Degrees 175w
Security, Northern Ireland 221w

Farrell, Mairead
Student grants 564w

Fast reactors
712

Fatchett, Mr Derek
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 159-62, 167
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 212, 213, 244-8, 263, 279, (23:03:88) 366-453 passim, (24:03:88) 597
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 786-8, 792-3, 824-6
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1095
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 225w
Challenger tanks, Defence procurement 623w
Conventional weapons, Military balance 112-3w
Educational finance, Headteachers 6w
Leeds Western Health Authority, Public appointments 451w
School admission 6w
Tanks, Defence procurement 623w
Yorkshire Regional Health Authority, District health authorities 450w

Faulds, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 361
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1039-40, 1043-6, 1050
Questions
Brompton Hospital, Listed buildings 722w
Business statements 516-7

Favell, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 360
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 324-5
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 911
Questions
Afghanistan, USSR 511w
Business, Scotland 145w
Cash limits, Dept of Transport 266w
District health authorities, Health service staff 667-71w
Employment training, Training allowances 432-3w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 102w
Trade unions 878

FCO
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Fearn, Mr Ronnie
Debates etc.
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 321-2
Questions
Dental charges 542w
District health authorities, Public appointments 341w
English Tourist Board, North West region 255w
Family credit, Free school meals 542w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service dispersal 188-9
NHS & private practice, Hospital patients 553w
Prescription charges 542-3w

Fearn, Mr Ronnie—continued
Social Security Act 1986, Social security finance 542w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1076-7

Fees & charges
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 13w
Airports 619w
Family doctors 650-1w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants 16-7w
Inland waterways 873-4
Public libraries 574-5w, 722-3
Tour operators 357-8w, 482w

Fenner, Dame Peggy
Questions
British Rail, Public service obligation grant 557w

Ferries
Safety standards 47w
Shipbuilding 47w
Shipping safety 46-7w

Fertilisers
Nitrates 1264

Fida 88
Government grants 591w

Field, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 319-20
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1214-5, 1222, 1225
Questions
Age allowances, Pensioners 611w
Animal feed, Food contamination 312w
Bass, Fish conservation 14w
Bass, Fishery protection 638w
Bass, Fishing gear 638w
Bass, Fishing quotas 13-4w
Bass, Fishing vessels 638w
British Waterways Board, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 368-70w
Conventional weapons, USSR 101w
Country Landowners' Association, Official engagements 634w
Food contamination, Imports 446w
Glanville fritillary 720w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS & private practice 538w
Local authorities, Publicity 714w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 334w
Non-domestic rates, Scotland 503w
Parliamentary press gallery 296w
Pilotage, Radio engineering 619-20w
Ships, Radios 620w
Tree conservation, Preservation orders 297w
Tree felling 201-2w
Tree felling, Licensing 202w
Water distribution 710w
Water meters, Codes of practice 301-2w
Water meters, Water supply 301w
Whooping cough, Vaccination 244w

Field, Mr Frank
Questions
AIDS 159w
AIDS, Advisory services 37w
Human organs, Imports 208w
NHS finance 88w
Social security benefits reductions, Electricity tariffs 212w

Fields, Mr Terry
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1209-12, 1219, 1220, 1233-8
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Fire prevention 112w

Fife
School population 73-6w
Teachers 73-6w

Fife Health Board
Acute beds (21:03:88) 173-80

Fiji
Official visits 393w
Overseas aid 483w
Overseas Development Administration 483w

Film industry
22w

Finance (No 2) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Ways & means res (21:03:88) 113-57
Money res* (22:03:88) 158
1R (22:03:88) 158
Questions
Publishing 194w

Financial Services Act 1986
Questions
Commencement orders 179w

Financial Services Act 1986 (Delegation) (No 2) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

Financial Services Act 1986 (Extension of Scope of Act & Meaning of Collective Investment Scheme) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

Financial Services Act 1986 (Investment Advertisements) (Exemptions) (No 2) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

Financial Services Act 1986 (Stabilisation) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

"Financing Africa's Recovery"
124w

"Financing Public Library Service Consultation Paper"
348w

Fine defaulters
Custodial treatment 229-30w

Fines
Industrial health & safety 428w

Finks, Arnold
Abortion 245w

Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 819-20

Fire prevention
Armed forces deployment 112w
Kent 185-6w
Residential care 185w

Fire Service Inspectorate
383w

Fire services
Conditions of employment 229w

Firearms
Ryan, Michael 688w, 694-6w

Firearms certificates
10w
Departmental forms 689w
Dundee 203w
Dunmore shooting centre 688-9w
Gwent 388w
Ryan, Michael 687-94w, 696w
Security 691-2w

Fires
Housing occupancy 486-91w

Fireworks
Injuries 482-4w

Fish conservation
Bass 14w
EC action 13-4w

Fish farming
312w, 1259-60
Water pollution 1259

Fisher, Mr Mark
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 388-90, 391
Questions
Arts, China 573-4w
Books, Export controls 495w
British Theatre Association, Libraries 351w
China, Ministers' visits abroad 372-3w
China, Twin towns 394w
Debts, Rates & rating 118w
Export promotion, China 377-9w
Exports, China 377-8w
Foreign students, China 396w
Overseas students, China 396w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 574-5w, 723
Publishing, China 381w
Radio, Gaming 118w
Radio, Licensing 118w
Tourists, China 438w
Trade fairs, China 380-2w
UK companies abroad, China 379-80w
"Urban Renaissance, Expenditure 351w

Fishery protection
Bass 638w
France 638w
Salmon 639w

Fishing
Northern Ireland 219w
Prosecutions 64-5w
Tourism 219w

Fishing gear
Bass 638w

Fishing quotas
Bass 13-4w
Fishing vessels 637w
Lowestoft 313w

Fishing vessels
Bass 638w
Fishing quotas 637w
France 638w

Flannery, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 162
Education Reform Bill, Allocation of time motion (23:03:88) 365
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 205, 212, 217, 230-1, 243-4, 259-60, 273, 277, (23:03:88) 368, 375, 382, 393, 413, 446-7, (24:03:88) 546, 581
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 747, 788-9, 805
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1091
Questions
Artillery, BAOR 111w
Employment training, Travelling expenses 416w
Republic of Ireland, Official engagements 495-6
St Thomas' Hospital, Hospital closures 192-3

Flow country
Tree planting 643w

Fluoride tablets
449w

Flynn, Mr Paul
Questions
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 185
Business statements 527
Civil service dispersal 314w
Coal fired power stations, Pollution control 289-90w
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 27w

Flynn, Mr Paul—continued
Training, Travelling expenses 672-3w
Transport, Injuries 460w

Food contamination
Animal feed 312w
Developing countries 394-5w
EC external trade 394-5w
Imports 446w
Radioactivity 1260-2

Food exports
Retail prices 640w

Food from Britain
1264-5

Food labelling
Hormone growth promoters 206-7w
Irradiated food 313w
Nutrition & health 633w

Fookes, Miss Janet
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1089
Questions
Navy, Armed forces training 363-4w

Football
Hooliganism 1271

Ford Motor Company
193, 349-51, 355, 506-7
Dundee 287w, (25:03:88) 662-5
Safety belts 42w
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:03:88) 358-61
Trade unions 193, 877-8

Foreign & Commonwealth Office
518w
Computer privacy 521w
Consultants 393w, 521-2w
Inner city areas 629w

Foreign investment in UK
MacBride principles 224w
Scotland 140w
Wales 26w, 577-8w

Foreign patients
Abortion 451-2w

Foreign policy
Austria 1068-9
China 514w
EC external relations 515w
Guatemala 522w
Japan 519w
Kampuchea 1070
Libyan Arab Republic 510w
Middle East 511w
Palestine Liberation Organisation 522w
Syrian Arab Republic 510w
USA 517w
USSR 510w

Foreign students
China 396w

Foreign tourists
529w
Indian subcontinent 119-20w
USA 434w

Forensic science
Drug crimes 117w
Metropolitan Police 117w

Forestry
1269-71
Dumfries & Galloway Regional Council 285w
Government grants 639w, 644w
Ministerial duties 278w
Road works 285w
Scotland 137-9w

Forestry Commission
52w, 76-7w, 137w
Official engagements 634w

Forestry grant scheme
Scotland 286w

Forestry grants
400w, 1269-71
Farm woodland scheme 1266-7
Northern Ireland 167-8w
Scotland 75-7w
Wales 52w, 576w

Forgery
Army in Northern Ireland 359-60w

Forman, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Council house sales, Sutton (28:03:88) 862-3
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1095
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 35

***Forsyth, Mr Michael**, Under-Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
Acute beds, Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 176-80
AIDS, Scotland (31:03:88) 1298-300
Questions
AIDS, Drug abuse 406-8w
AIDS, Scotland 503-4w
Cheese, Production 346
Cheese, Scotland 346-7
Childbirth, Scotland 343-4
Children in care, Homelessness 254w
Community care, Scotland 504w
"Curriculum & Assessment in Scotland Consultation Paper" 141w
Deaf, Teacher training 147w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland, Advisory services 644-5w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland, Offices 644-6w
Disposable syringes, Scotland 504w
EC integration, Scotland 70-1w
Eye tests, Tayside Health Board 288w
Forestry grants, Scotland 76-7w
Free school meals, Dundee 203w
Free school meals, Strathclyde 406w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants, Fees & charges 16-7w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants, Health services 15-6w
Health, Scotland 355
Heart diseases, Scotland 204w
Homelessness, Schizophrenia 251w
Hospital beds, Scotland 144w
Hospital discharges, Schizophrenia 251-2w
Hospital patients, Scotland 140-1w, 508-9w
Hospitals, Hamilton 356
Incontinence, Scotland 15w
Local government social services, Scotland 507w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 402-3w
Mental hospitals, Property transfer 251w
Mental hospitals, Scotland 401-2w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 402w
Mental patients, Scotland 503w
Merksworth School Paisley, Official engagements 255w
Merksworth School Paisley, School closures 142w
Mink, Scotland 646w
NHS, Tenders 646w
NHS finance, Scotland 143-4w
Nursery schools, Scotland 355-6
Nurses, Carstairs Hospital 504w
Nurses, Scottish health boards 71-2w, 505-6w
Nurses' training, Scotland 71w, 140w
Petroleum production, North Sea oil 644w
Pittenweem harbour 148w
Pittenweem harbour, Government grants 147-8w
Ports, Scotland 147w
Private health services, Scotland 142w
Psychiatric nurses, Scotland 402w
Raspberries, Scotland 148w
St Bede's School Balornock, Handicapped pupils 142w

***Forsyth, Mr Michael**—continued*
Schizophrenia, Hospital discharges 284-5w
School discipline, Pupils 505w
School population, Fife 73-6w
Scottish health boards, Computers in National Health Service 647w
Scottish Health Education Group 354
Sheep, Radioactivity 252w
Student grants, Scotland 506-7w
Surgery, Scotland 139-40w
Tayside Health Board, Expenditure 203w
Tayside Health Board, Finance 203w
Tayside Health Board, Pay beds 204-5w
Teachers, Scotland 148w
Western Isles Health Board, Contracts for services 146-7w

Forsythe, Mr Clifford
Questions
Antrim Hospital, Construction 500-1
Castle Court Belfast, Property development 564-5w
District development officers, Northern Ireland 223w

Forth, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 840, 842-3
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1103-4
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 909
Questions
Alcoholic drinks, Cancer hazards 330w
Arts finance 722
Business statements 1280
Council house rents, Scotland 141w
Drug abuse, AIDS 453-5w
Electricity area boards, Official engagements 292w
Japan, Foreign policy 519w
Sharpeville six 1081
Tobacco, Labelling 154w
Unemployment 869
Unemployment, EC action 430w
Welsh language 18

Foulkes, Mr George
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 107
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 730
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 839
Fiji, Ministerial statements (30:03:88) 1110
Health & Safety at Work (Tobacco Smoking) Bill, 1R (24:03:88) 533
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1118, 1120
Questions
Arms trade, Air freight transport 91-2w
Business statements 516
Cheese, Scotland 346-7
Employment training, Training allowances 417w
Hercules aircraft, Uruguay 115w
Nicaragua 1068
Scottish Lay Observer, Law Society of Scotland 16w
Scottish Solicitors' Discipline Tribunal, Legal malpractice 16w
Solicitors, Codes of practice 16w
Surveying, Pollution monitoring 286w
Surveying, Radioactivity 286-7w

***Fowler, Rt Hon Norman**, Secretary of State for Employment*
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 41-6
Questions
City technology colleges 868
Education & industry 430w, 867-8
Employment, West Cumbria 869
Employment discrimination, Ethnic minorities 870

***Fowler, Rt Hon Norman**—continued*
Employment training 414-5w, 532-3w
Equal opportunities, Industry 528-9w
Gangmasters, Inquiries 533w
Industrial accidents 872-3
Industrial relations law 872
Inner city school compacts 867
Lost working days, Strikes 871-2
Restrictive labour practices, Television 283-4w
Strikes 872
Unemployment 869-70
Unemployment, EC countries 868-9

Foxes
Animal husbandry 639w

France
Bass 14w
Defence 114w
Fishery protection 638w
Fishing vessels 638w
Helicopters 263-4w
Official engagements 513w
Telecommunications industry 374-6w
Waste disposal 4w, 14w

Franks, Mr Cecil
Questions
Trident 99w

Fraser, Mr John
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 772, 813-5
European Court of First Instance (25:03:88) 686-90
Questions
Daily Mail & General Trust, Netherlands 97w
Telephone systems, Dept of Employment 672w

Fraud
British Rail 457w
Defence contracts 188, 726-8

Free school meals
596-8w
Bradford 271w
Dundee 203w
Family credit 342w, 542w
Inner London Education Authority 127w
Strathclyde 406w
Tayside Regional Council 203w

Freedom of expression
South Africa 513w

***Freeman, Mr Roger**, Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces*
Questions
Aircrew, USA 135-6w
Armed forces, Alcoholism 8w
Armed forces casualties 412w
Armed forces casualties, Compensation 411-2w
Armed forces casualties, Death 412w
Armed forces deployment, Fire prevention 112w
Armed forces medical services, Hospital patients 467w
Armed forces pensions, Widows' benefits 111w
Armed forces recruitment 131
Armed forces recruitment, Armed forces strength 191
Armed forces training, Psychology 359w
Army, Blood sports 114w
Army, Medical examinations 360-2w
Army, Psychiatry 360-1w
Army in Northern Ireland, Armed forces training 362w
Army in Northern Ireland, Castledillon 361-2w
Army in Northern Ireland, Forgery 359-60w
BAOR, National Audit Office 110w
Defence land 111w

Freeman, Mr Roger—continued
Empty property, Ministry of Defence 236w
Holroyd, Fred 360w
Holroyd, Fred, Medical examinations 360w
Intelligence services, Northern Ireland 360w
Low flying, Crime prevention 628w
Low flying, Disciplinary proceedings 627-8w
Low flying, Military aircraft 6-7w, 625-7w
Maple Flag exercises, Air force 9w
Military aircraft, Air accidents 622-3w
Ministry of Defence, Central London 110w
Navy, Armed forces training 363-4w
Prisoners of war, Japan 6w
RAF Feltwell, Satellites 7w
RAF Feltwell, Space technology 364w
RAF Greenham Common, Bye laws 101w
RAF Wethersfield, Stansted Airport 7w
Rescue services, Helicopters 467w
Scorriton down 410w
Scorriton down, Bomb disposal 410w
Territorial Army, Armed forces strength 105w
Thain, Ian Richard, Custodial treatment 136w
Thain, Ian Richard, Solicitors 137w

Freight transport
Ports 92-3w

French, Mr Douglas
Questions
Defence contracts 111-2w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 509w
National Bus Company, Privatisation 558w

Friedrich's ataxia disease
396-7w

Frigates
Defence procurement 104w
Navy 104w

Froggatt Committee
see Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking & Health

Funerals
Northern Ireland 194, 497-9, 502-3
Terrorism (21:03:88) 21-36

Furs
Exports 26w

Further education
Polytechnics 5w
Youth unemployment 69-70w

FUW
see Farmers' Union of Wales

Fyfe, Mrs Maria
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 846
Questions
Army, Blood sports 114w
Body searches, Scotland 643w
Business statements 525-6
Community charges register, Age 340
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Research 217w

G-Mex exhibition centre
Government grants 2-3w

Galbraith, Mr Sam
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 984-5
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1123, 1124-5
Questions
Business statements 513
Clinical physicists, Pay settlements 446w
EC integration, Scotland 70-1w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 413w

Galbraith, Mr Sam—continued
Hospital closures 538-9w
Ministry of Defence, Pay incentives 463w
Pay settlements, Civil servants 607w
Surgery, Scotland 341-2
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 104w

Gale, Mr Roger
Questions
Beaches, Bye laws 9-10w
Community charge 2w
Dartford tunnel, Transport of hazardous materials 46w
Dogs, Death 10w
Dogs, Northern Ireland 48w
Drugs, Raw materials 33-4w
Firearms certificates 10w
Motor vehicle registration 42w
Stray dogs 10w

Galloway, Mr George
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 298, 300
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 946-9, 998
Questions
Frigates, Navy 104w

Gaming
Radio 118w

Gangmasters
Inquiries 533w

Garages & petrol stations
Lead free petrol 304-6w

Gardiner, Mr George
Questions
Conventional weapons 100w
M25, Road construction 615w

Garnishee proceedings
93w

Garrett, Mr John
Questions
Energy conservation, Buildings 509-10w
Fiji, Overseas aid 483w
Fiji, Overseas Development Administration 483w
Public libraries, Norfolk County Council 348w

Gas Consumers' Council
Gas disconnections 289w

Gas disconnections
179w
Codes of practice 289w
Gas Consumers' Council 289w

Gas tariffs
Social security benefits reductions 212w

GATT
Trade agreements 178-9w

Gatwick Airport
389-91w, 619w

GCE
Languages education 272w

General Agreement on Tariffs & Trade
see GATT

General Certificate of Secondary Education
Wales 9-10

General Commissioners of Income Tax
Northern Ireland 498-9w

General Practice Finance Corporation
Public appointments 453w

Geriatric patients
Northern Regional Health Authority 208w
Sunderland Health Authority 208w

Geriatrics
Nurses 455-6w

Gibraltar
1075-6
International Investments 1076
IRA 132w, 183w, 218w, 495-6
Official engagements 1075
Spain 1075

Gibson, Lord Justice
Criminal investigation 439w

Gill, Mr Christopher
Questions
Employment level 418w

Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 445-6, (24:03:88) 605-6

Glanville fritillary
720w

GLC
see Greater London Council

GLECC
see Greater London Coordination Centre

Gleneagles Agreement
714-5w

Glyn, Dr Alan
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 418

Godman, Dr Norman A
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 987-8, 990
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 308, 309, 320-1
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1182, 1186, 1192-3, 1215-6
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1106
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 911
Questions
Cheese, Scotland 347
Employment schemes, Greenock 75w
Family credit, Scotland 447-8w
Fish farming 1260
Free school meals, Strathclyde 406w
Housing benefits, Scotland 448w
Income support scheme, Scotland 447w
Inverclyde initiative, Employment opportunities 287-8w
Inverclyde initiative, Scottish Development Agency 15-6w, 142w
Official engagements 54w
RNAD Coulport, Construction 54w, 368w
Terrorism, Armed forces deployment 571w
Unemployment, Greenock 75-6w
Youth training scheme 421w

Goodlad, Mr Alastair
Questions
A51, Speed limits 616w
Chester bypass, Road construction 554w
Community care, Expenditure 332-3w
Community care, Northern Ireland 563w
Community care, Scotland 504w
Community nurses, Psychiatric nurses 443w
Crewe Health Authority, Finance 210w
EC Agriculture Council, Common agricultural policy 636w
Health service staff, Crewe Health Authority 210w
Homelessness, Mental hospitals 202w
Homelessness, Mentally ill 188w
Homelessness, Schizophrenia 251w
Hospital bed occupancy rates, Crewe Health Authority 211w
Hospital discharges, Schizophrenia 251-2w, 697w
Hospital waiting lists, Crewe Health Authority 209-10w

Goodlad, Mr Alastair—continued
Kelsall bypass, Road safety 554w
Medical treatments, Crewe Health Authority 209w
Mental health, Medical research 271-2w
Mental health community care, NHS finance 560w
Mental health community care, Regional health authorities 333w
Mental hospitals, Hospital beds 442w, 444w, 698w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 333w, 402-3w, 560w
Mental hospitals, Northern Ireland 310w, 560-1w
Mental hospitals, Property transfer 251w, 331-2w
Mental hospitals, Scotland 401-2w
Mental patients, Hospital discharges 402w
Mental patients, NHS finance 538w
Mental patients, Northern Ireland 560w, 697-8w
Mental patients, Schizophrenia 441-4w
Mental patients, Scotland 503w
Mentally ill, Residential care 331w, 697w
Psychiatric nurses, Northern Ireland 698-9w
Psychiatric nurses, Scotland 402w
Schizophrenia, Homelessness 331w
Schizophrenia, Hospital discharges 284-5w
Unemployment, Eddisbury 193w

Goodson-Wickes, Dr Charles
Questions
Charities 196

Goole
Dock labour scheme 675-6w

Gordon, Ms Mildred
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 778
Questions
Asbestos, Housing estates 121w
Canary Wharf, Employment opportunities 54-5w
Canary Wharf, Offices 55w
Computers in Government departments, Contracts for services 605-7w
Electronic Data Systems, Government data network 443w
Port of London, Ports 409-10w
Port of London, USA 409w
Road construction, London Docklands 263w
Road construction, Public inquiries 263w
Road works, London Docklands 262-3w
Social security benefits disqualification, Cohabitation 31w

Gorman, Mrs Teresa
Questions
Crime prevention, Women 492-3w
Examinations, Costs 596w

Gould, Mr Bryan
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 44-5, 46-53
Rover Group (29:03:88) 887, 901
Questions
Film industry 22w
Inner city areas, Dept of Employment 673w
Inner city areas, Dept of Energy 583w
Inner city areas, Dept of Health & Social Security 655-6w
Inner city areas, Dept of the Environment 715w
Inner city areas, Dept of Trade & Industry 586w
Inner city areas, Dept of Transport 616-7w
Inner city areas, Expenditure 575-6w, 590w
Inner city areas, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 629w
Inner city areas, Home Office 681w
Inner city areas, Local authorities 586w

Gould, Mr Bryan—continued
Inner city areas, Ministry of Agriculture 639w
Inner city areas, Ministry of Defence 623w
Inner city areas, Northern Ireland Office 702w
Inner city areas, Population 586-90w
Inner city areas, Scottish Office 644w
Tax yields 602-3w

Government assistance
Eggs 635w
Pigs 640w
Poultry 635w
Shipping accidents 123w
Small businesses 218w

Government assistance to industry
Corby 879
Paper industry 643w

Government assistance to nationalised industries
Coal mining 293w

Government buildings
236w, 319w, 719w
Dept of Trade & Industry 23-4w
Greater London 719-20w

Government contracts
Civil service retirement 726-8

Government data network
Electronic Data Systems 443w

Government departments
Access to buildings 45-6w
Land acquisition 319w

Government grants
Civil defence 386-7w, 403w
Fida 88 591w
Forestry 639w, 644w
G-Mex exhibition centre 2-3w
Historic buildings 202w
Litter 59-60w
London Regional Transport 266w
Pittenweem harbour 147-8w
Ports 147w
Quangos 711-2w
Railway electrification 614-5w
Tourism 424w
Training 413w

Government grants to local authorities
Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry 248w
Community charge 307w
Homelessness 191-2w

Government grants to voluntary organisations
Homelessness 237w, 239-40w
Scotland 253-4w
Single homeless 253-4w

Government securities
123w

Government shareholding
Amersham International 371w

Gow, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 58
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 168
Questions
Amnesty International 1274
Community charge, Eastbourne Borough Council 713-4w
Devolution, Northern Ireland 222w
Funerals, Northern Ireland 498-9
Independent Commission for Police Complaints for N Ireland, Public appointments 80w
Religion, Books 14

Gower, Sir Raymond
Questions
AIDS, Wales 1-2, 29w
Arson, Wales 5-6
Breast cancer, Screening 282w

Gower, Sir Raymond—continued
Education & industry, Comprehensive schools 29-30w
House renovation grants, Elderly 30w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Wales 30w
National Museum of Wales, Finance 196-7w
Wales Tourist Board 9

Graham, Mr Thomas
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 838, 851
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 483
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 985-6, 995
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 916
Questions
Employment training, Training allowances 417w
Navy, Mines 186
Torry research station, Official engagements 634w

Grampian Health Board
343-4

Grant, Sir Anthony
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1093-4
Questions
Business statements 513
Dept of Health & Social Security, Negligence 248w
Housing insulation, Carcinogens 366-7w
Pigs, Animal husbandry 640w
Skilled workers, East Anglia 422w

Grant, Mr Bernie
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Tottenham 211w
Social security claims, Tottenham 211-2w
Vacancies Tottenham 194w

Grant maintained schools
(23:03:88) 566-463

Grant Thornton Management Consultants
Fees & charges 16-7w
Health services 15-7w
Scotland 15-6w

Great Southern Airways
91-2w

Great Yarmouth & Waveney Health Authority
159w

Greater London
Arts finance 227w
Civil defence 385-6w
Dock labour scheme 674-6w
European Social Fund 70w
Family doctors 245w
Government buildings 719-20w
Mobility of disabled 131w
Railway network 264w
Railway transport 618-9w
Remand in custody 66w
Vacancies 417w

Greater London Coordination Centre
London Fire & Civil Defence Authority 684w

Greater London Council
720-1w

Green pound
260w, 637w, 1265-6, 1268-9
National Farmers' Union 637w

Greenbelt
Town & country planning 190w

Greenham Common
Ministry of Defence police 411w

Greenock
Employment schemes 75w
Unemployment 75-6w

Greenway, Mr Harry
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 371, 372, 414-6, 425
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 739-40, 745-8, 751
Education Report Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 204, 211, 213, 228-9, 289
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1097
Questions
Advertising Standards Authority, Exhibitions 383w
Arts, Marketing 349w
Business statements 1282
Conifers, Scotland 402w
Conventional weapons, USSR 101w
Employment training 532-3w
Hayes bypass, Road traffic 617-8w
Heating, Coal 713
House of Commons catering, Mineral waters 17
Local education authorities, Per capita costs 596w
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w, 374w, 572-3w
Polytechnics, Further education 5w
Prison education services, Evening courses 678w
Schools broadcasting, Sex education 174-5w
Summertime 685-6w
Tourism, Inland waterways 873
Weapons, Military balance 463w
Youth training scheme, Occupations 531-2w

Greenway, Mr John
Questions
Dock labour scheme, Kingston upon Hull 675-6w
Employment schemes, Scotland 355
Opera 349w

Greenwich
Rent increases 720w
Sheltered housing 658w

Gregory, Mr Conal
Questions
Coal mining, Government assistance to nationalised industries 293w
Hotels 70w, 260w
Hotels, Scotland 76w
Hotels, Wales 52w
Hotels, Wales Tourist Board 200w

Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Questions
Aircrew, USA 135-6w
Gibraltar 1076
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 503

Griffiths, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 42, 43, 55, 81
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 836-7, 844, 845
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 941, 969-70
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1101-2
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 913
Questions
Accidents, Agriculture 434w
Community charge, Scotland 143w
Edinburgh District Council 345
Higher civil servants, Scottish Office 287w

Griffiths, Mr Win
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 231, 275, (23:03:88) 388, 444-5, (24:03:88) 549, 558-61, 570-1
Questions
Agriculture, Pollution control 637-8w
British Coal Corporation, Official engagements 717-8

Griffiths, Mr Win—continued
District health authorities, NHS finance 15
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 10
Pensioners, Budget, March 1988 506-7

Griffiths Committee
see Community Care Review

Grimsby
Dock labour scheme 675-6w

***Grist, Mr Ian**, Under-Secretary of State for Wales*
Questions
AIDS, Wales 1-2, 29w
Breast cancer, Screening 282w
Children in care, Homelessness 229-30w
Community charge, Wales 281-2w, 392-4w
Council house rents, Wales 280w
Council housing, Wales 28w
District health authorities, NHS finance 15
Health, Wales 26w
Home care services, Wales 281w
Hospital beds, Wales 581-2w
Hospital waiting lists, Clwyd 7-8
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 8
House condition survey, Wales 576w
House renovation grants, Elderly 30w
Housing insulation, Insulation grants 31w
Incontinence, Wales 30w
Kidney patients, Wales 29w
Local government staff, Manpower 281w
Maternity services, Wales 26w
Mink, Wales 200w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis, Wales 30w
NHS finance, Disclosure of information 10-1
NHS finance, Wales 8, 15
Nurses, Wales 579-81w
Optical charges, Wales 11
Private health services, Manpower 280w
St Tydfils Hospital 11
Surgery, Heart diseases 278-9w
Withybush Hospital 11

Grocott, Mr Bruce
Debates etc.
Diplomatic relations (30:03:88) 1110-1, 1112
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1092
Questions
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 495-7
Civil service agencies, Civil servants 725
Employment training, Travelling expenses 416w
NATO 106w

Ground, Mr Patrick
Questions
Restrictive labour practices, Television 283-4w

Grylls, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 891
Questions
Business expansion scheme 399-400w

Guatemala
Foreign policy 522w

Guided weapons
112w, 191
Emergency planning 117w
USA 410w

Guillotine
Public Bills 598-600w
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 204-5, 244, 289-90, 301, 305, (28:03:88) 776

Guinness
Company investigations 356w

Guinness Trust
Upper waiting hall 471w

***Gummer, Rt Hon John Selwyn**, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*
Questions
Agricultural products, Agricultural marketing 1270
Agriculture, Pollution control 637-8w
Bass, Fish conservation 14w
Bass, Fishery protection 638w
Bass, Fishing gear 638w
Bass, Fishing quotas 13-4w
Bass, Fishing vessels 638w
Coastal protection, Capital investment 1269
Country Landowners' Association, Official engagements 634w
EC free food scheme 565w, 569-70w, 636w, 640w
Farm woodland scheme 637w
Farm woodland scheme, Agricultural land 1267
Fish farming 312w, 1259-60
Fish farming, Water pollution 1259
Fishing, Prosecutions 64-5w
Fishing quotas, Lowestoft 313w
Fishing vessels, Fishing quotas 637w
Forestry grants 400w
Hill livestock allowances 636w
Land drainage, Environment protection 13w
Marginal land, Land tribunals 634w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 14w
River pollution, Agricultural products 635w
Salmon, Fishery protection 639w
Tenant Farmers' Association, Official engagements 636w
Torry research station, Agricultural research 634w
Torry research station, Civil service manpower 634w
Torry research station, Official engagements 634w
Tree planting 639w, 1266-7
Waste disposal, English Channel 14w
White fish, North Sea 313w
Woodland grant scheme 640-1w

Gun sports
Dunmore shooting centre 695-6w
Wiltshire shooting centre 694w

Gwent
Firearms certificates 388w

Gwynedd
EC grants & loans 128-30w

Gypsies
Planning permission 1-2w

Habitual offenders
Young offenders 231w, 273-4w

Hackney
Direct labour departments 721-2w

Halton Health Authority
209-10w

Hamilton
Hospitals 356

Hamilton, Mr Neil
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 52, 55, 84, 105, 106
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 361
Questions
Companies, Northern Ireland 165w
Local government staff, Scotland 344-5
National Nuclear Corporation, Upper waiting hall 296w

Hamilton, Mr Neil—continued
Product safety, Consumer protection 62-3w

Hampson, Dr Keith
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 434, 438, 442, (24:03:88) 536-41, 551, 593, 602-3, 608-11
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 803, 808

Handicap benefits
Social security recipients 537-8w

Handicapped
440w
Access to buildings 447w
Dept of Transport 45-6w
Dundee 216w
Employment opportunities 527-8w
Income support scheme 216w
Inner city areas 382w
United Nations 447w

Handicapped children
Kent 37-8w

Handicapped pupils
St Bede's School Balornock 142w

Handicapped workers
Aids for handicapped 256-8w
Deaf 258-9w
Departmental leaflets 258-9w
Disablement schemes 162w, 431w
Employment training 416w

Hanley, Mr Jeremy
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 719
Select Committee evidence, Codes of practice 523w
Vacancies, Greater London 417w

Hannam, Mr John
Questions
Handicapped, Dept of Transport 45-6w
Mobility of disabled, Greater London 131w
Non-domestic rates, Devon 57-8w
Power stations, Construction 716
Vacancies, South West region 433w

Hardy, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 817-9
Questions
Central Electricity Generating Board 289w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 712-3
Iran-Iraq war 1067
Milk, Production quotas 635w
School leaving, Take-up of employment 429w

Hargreaves, Mr Andrew
Questions
Abortion, Drugs 655w

Hargreaves, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Empty Property & Community Aid Bill, 1R (30:03:88) 1112-4
Questions
Abortion 89-92w
Income support scheme, Social security reform 662-3w
Tourist industry, Lancashire 423-4w

Harland & Wolff
Cost effectiveness 222w
Employment 700w

Harman, Ms Harriet
Questions
EC free food scheme 636w
London Residuary Body, Local government buildings 2w

Harmonisation of legislation
Insurance 233-4w

Harmonisation of standards
EC action 592w

Harris, Mr David
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland (25:03:88) 650-3
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 644, 667, 669
Tin, Mining (29:03:88) 1056, 1060
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 137w
Rio Tinto Zinc, Cornwall 63w

Harrogate bypass
Public inquiries 60w

Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1085-6, 1098

Haughey, Charles
48w, 495-6

Hawkins, Mr Christopher
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 159
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 210, 213, 227, 236, (24:03:88) 580-2, 594-5, 597-9, 602
Questions
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 102w

Hayes, Mr Jerry
Questions
Barter trading, Local authorities 1w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 504
False imprisonment, Convictions 117w
Funerals, Northern Ireland 497
Solicitors, Legal aid 176-7w

Hayes bypass
Road traffic 617-8w

Haymarket Theatre, Leicester
Arts finance 722

Haynes, Mr Frank
Questions
Artillery 112w
Beekeeping, Official engagements 260w
Child benefit 440w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w
House of Commons catering, Mineral waters 17
Nicaragua, Peace negotiations 518w
Public libraries, Old people's homes 347w

Hayward, Mr Robert
Questions
Electricity Consumers' Council, Official engagements 709
Jobclubs 431w

Headteachers
Educational finance 6w

Health
Departmental coordination 120-1w
Scotland 355
Wales 26w

Health & Safety at Work (Tobacco Smoking) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (24:03:88) 533

Health & Safety Commission
see Health & Safety Executive

Health & Safety Executive
370w, 424w, 430w, 434w
Dundee 437w

Health & Safety Executive—continued
Industrial health & safety 413w
Manpower 164-5w, 413w, 426-8w
Privatisation 673w
Public petitions (29:03:88) 1055
Research finance 530w
Wolfson College 425-6w

Health education
Dental health 449w

Health hazards
Smoking 158-9w, 543w

Health insurance
Elderly 571w

Health service ancillary staff
440w

Health service staff
Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority 39-40w
Chester Health Authority 210w
Community Care Review 334w
Crewe Health Authority 210w
District health authorities 667-71w
Manpower 323-4w, 455w
Pontefract Health Authority 38-9w
South Cumbria Health Authority 209-10w
Training 84w
Trent Regional Health Authority 82-3w
Wales 12

Health services
Grant Thornton Management Consultants 15-7w
Northern Ireland 220-1w, 564w
Public petitions (28:03:88) 859

Health services finance
Inner London boroughs (25:03:88) 646-50
Northern Ireland 220w, 223w

Health warnings
Skoal Bandits 245w
Tobacco 246w

Heart diseases
Hospital waiting lists 204w
Road accidents 456w
Scotland 204w
Surgery 278-9w

Heath, Rt Hon Edward
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 54-8

Heathcoat-Amory, Mr David
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 192w
Forestry, Scotland 137w
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 294w
Hinkley Point C, Somerset County Council 717
Local Government Act 1988, Employment discrimination 477-8w
Nuclear power stations, Electricity generation 21-2w
USSR, Broadcasting external services 514w
Vacancies 414w

Heathrow Airport
389-91w, 619w

Heating
Coal 713
Smoke control areas 713

Heating allowances
Elderly 83w

Heddle, Mr John
Questions
District health authorities, Surplus land 655w
Electricity area boards, Interest charges 710
Local government expenditure, Block grant 722w

Heddle, Mr John—continued
Local government property, Local government audit 719w
Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects, Charities 494w
Property Services Agency, Competition 719w
Urban development grants, Housing construction 55-6w

Heffer, Mr Eric S
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 109
Questions
Availability for work, Unemployment benefits 424w
Extradition, Belgium 230w
Nuclear disarmament, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 103w

Helicopters
France 263-4w
Rescue services 354w, 467w

Henderson, Mr Doug
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 46
Questions
Employment protection, Complaints 532w
Handicap benefits, Social security recipients 537-8w
Health & Safety Executive 424w
Railway travel 457w

Hepatitis
Disease control 655-6w

Herald of Free Enterprise
46-7w, 123w, 353w
Marine surveys 353-4w

Hercules aircraft
Uruguay 115w

Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 736, 741
Rover Group (29:03:88) 891

Heysel Stadium
230w

Hicks, Mrs Maureen
Questions
Football, Hooliganism 1271
Inner city school compacts 867

Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 61-4
Questions
Family doctors, Worthing Health Authority 214-5w

High Peak Borough Council
616w

Higher civil servants
Pay incentives 463w
Scottish Office 287w

Higher education
Engineering education 395w

Highland Regional Council
285w

Highlands of Scotland
Postal rates 139w, (23:03:88) 485-92
Postal services 145w

Hill livestock allowances
636w

Hinchliffe, Mr David
Questions
Children in care, Local authorities 36-7w
Dog fighting, Advertising controls 494w
Dog fighting, Convictions 494w

Hinchliffe, Mr David—continued
Dog fighting, Import controls 494w
Dog fighting, Prosecutions 485-6w
Dog fighting, Punishment 493-4w
Furs, Exports 26w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 649-50w
Pensioners, Social security reform 212w
Railway land, Blood sports 19w, 46w
Social Fund, Civil service manpower 212w
Social Fund, Training 212w
Tax evasion, Animal experiments 497w
Water authorities, Mailing lists 310w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 421w

Hind, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 837-8, 841, 843, 845
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 375
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 361
Rover Group (29:03:88) 896
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 912
Questions
Business statements 524
Community charge, Scotland 348-9
Defence contracts, Fraud 188
Motor vehicle registration, Cherished number plates 459w
Public footpaths, Maps 475-6w
USA, Foreign policy 517w

Hinkley Point C
Public inquiries 294w
Somerset County Council 717

Hip replacements
544-6w

Historic buildings
Government grants 202w
Scotland 202w

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England
722w

HM Factory Inspectorate
see Factory Inspectorate

HM Land Registry
see Land Registry Office

HM Systems
32w

HMSO
Consultants 398w, 497-8w

***Hogg, Mr Douglas**, Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office*
Questions
Animal experiments, Laboratories 184-5w
Beaches, Bye laws 9-10w
Body armour, Offenders 118w
Complaints against police, Damages 684-5w
Complaints against police, Metropolitan Police 685w
Conservative Party, Police 186w
Consultants, Metropolitan Police 387-8w, 493w
Criminal records, Disclosure of information 679w
Dog fighting, Advertising controls 494w
Dog fighting, Convictions 494w
Dog fighting, Import controls 494w
Dog fighting, Punishment 493-4w
Dogs, Animal cruelty 10w
Dogs, Death 10w
Drug crimes, Forensic science 117w
Dunmore shooting centre, Firearms certificates 688-9w
Dunmore shooting centre, Gun sports 695-6w
Economic League, Police 275w
Firearms certificates 10w

Hogg, Mr Douglas—continued
Firearms certificates, Departmental forms 689w
Firearms certificates, Gwent 388w
Leicester Prison, Prison overcrowding 491w
Metropolitan Police, Forensic science 117w
News International, Public order policing 184w
Police, Manpower 388-90w
Police custody 183w
Police firearms, Wild animals 681w
Police records, Computer privacy 387w, 678-9w
Prison education services, Evening courses 678w
Prison employment, Prisons 680-2w
Prison employment, Working hours 679-80w
Prison escapes, Ashwell Prison 232w
Prison medical services, Drug abuse 683w
Prison population, Ethnic groups 384w
Prison population, Ethnic minorities 183-4w
Prisoners, Disclosure of information 66w
Prisoners, Exercise 276-7w
Prisoners' transfers, Republic of Ireland 491-2w
Prisons, Land acquisition 66w
Remand in custody, Greater London 66w
Ryan, Michael, Dunmore shooting centre 690w, 694-7w
Ryan, Michael, Firearms 688w, 694-6w
Ryan, Michael, Firearms certificates 687-94w, 696w
Ryan, Michael, Wiltshire shooting centre 692-3w
South Africa house, Arrests 492w
Stray dogs 10w
Thain, Ian Richard, Parole 185w
Traffic wardens, London boroughs 684w
Wiltshire shooting centre, Gun sports 694w
Young offenders 274w
Young offenders, Custodial treatment 274w

Hogg, Mr Norman
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 286-9, 300-1
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 920, 921
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1118
Questions
Business statements 1279
NHS, Scotland 343
Official engagements, Scotland 372w

Holiday accommodation
433w

Holloway Prison
276-7w

Holroyd, Fred
360w
Medical examinations 360w

Holt, Mr Richard
Questions
Civil service recruitment, Examinations 724
Defence procurement 106w
Heating allowances, Elderly 83w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Official engagements 291w
Theatres, National anthems 161w
Unemployment, Langbaurgh 532w
Vacancies, Ministry of Defence 875

Home care services
Carers 153w
Wales 281w

Home Office
605-7w
Civil service dispersal 184w
Inner city areas 681w

Home Robertson, Mr John
Debates etc.
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 731
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 923-1036 passim
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1115-8, 1126, 1127-8, 1132-4, 1140-1, 1149-52, 1157, 1158
Questions
Electricity distribution 715
Falkland Islands, Operation Fire Focus 517w
Local government, Scotland 346

Homelessness
Children in care 229-30w, 254w, 664-7w
Government grants to local authorities 191-2w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 237w, 239-40w
Hospital admissions 202w
Housing 298-300w
Mental hospitals 202w
Mentally ill 188w
Northern Ireland 239w, 312w, 706-7w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 312w
Public expenditure 249-50w
Schizophrenia 251w, 331w
Scotland 248-51w

Homicide
Army in Northern Ireland 438w, 707w
Convictions 80w
Northern Ireland 80w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 703w
Tighe, Michael 241w, 311-2w

Homosexuality
Northern Ireland 310w
Residential care of children 310w

Hong Kong
Refugees 274w

Hood, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Artillery 112w
Coal, South Africa 294w
Industrial health & safety 425w
Panama 53w
South Africa, EC external relations 512-3w
Uranium, Namibia 411w

Hooliganism
Football 1271

Hordern, Sir Peter
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 93-6
Questions
Northern Ireland Audit Office, Pay 14
Public Accounts Committee, Public Accounts Commission 14

Horizon 2000
Space technology 357w

Hormone growth promoters
Food labelling 206-7w

Horniman Museum
720

Horses
Animal welfare (29:03:88) 918-9

Horses Ponies & Donkeys Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (29:03:88) 918-9

Hospital admissions
Homelessness 202w
NHS 541w
Northern General Hospital Sheffield 452w

Hospital bed occupancy rates
Chester Health Authority 211w
Crewe Health Authority 211w

Hospital beds
Mental hospitals 442w, 444w, 698w
Northern Regional Health Authority 39-41w

Hospital beds—continued
Scotland 144w
Wales 581-2w

Hospital closures
338-9w, 538-9w
North Western Regional Health Authority 334w
Riverside Health Authority 334-5w
St Thomas' Hospital 192-3
West Midlands 246w

Hospital consultants
Contracts of employment (23:03:88) 362-3
Eye disorders 246w
South East Thames Regional Health Authority 344w
South Glamorgan Health Authority 279w

Hospital Consultants (Transfer & Revision of Contracts) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (23:03:88) 362-3

Hospital discharges
331w, 441-4w, 538w, 697w
Mental patients 402w
Schizophrenia 251-2w, 284-5w, 697w

Hospital length of stay
41w
Private patients 344-8w

Hospital patients
Armed forces medical services 467w
NHS & private practice 553w
Per capita costs 508-9w
Scotland 140-1w, 508-9w

Hospital staff
Mental hospitals 439-40w

Hospital waiting lists
538w
Brighton Health Authority 454-8w
Chester Health Authority 209-10w
Clwyd 7-8
Crewe Health Authority 209-10w
Ear disorders 246w
Eye disorders 246-7w
Heart diseases 204w
NHS & private practice 538w
NHS finance 323w
Northern Ireland 310-1w
Ophthalmic services 83w
Regional health authorities 544-6w
Scotland 342-3
Wales 7-8

Hospitals
East Antrim 219w
Hamilton 356
Norwich 308w
Oldham Health Authority 452w
Planning inquiries 307-8w

Hostages
Lebanon 1276
Waite, Terry 1276

Hostels
Mental hospitals 333w, 402-3w, 560w

Hotels
70w, 260w
Juries 277w
Scotland 76w
Wales 52w
Wales Tourist Board 200w

Houghton
Regional aid 595-6w
Water pollution 303w

House condition survey
Wales 576w

House Magazine
Palace of Westminster 599-600w
Portcullis 600w

House of Commons announciator system
16-7
House of Commons statements 16

House of Commons broadcasting
House of Commons division of time (25:03:88) 694-6
House of Commons Select Committees (29:03:88) 1037-55

House of Commons catering
Access to Parliament 296-7w
Mineral waters 17

House of Commons chamber
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 331

House of Commons debates
National Audit Office 14
Procedure Select Committee 524-8w
Speaker's rulings & statements (29:03:88) 1040

House of Commons division of time
House of Commons broadcasting (25:03:88) 694-6

House of Commons messenger service
Bureaucracy 726

House of Commons questions
583w

House of Commons Select Committees
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1037-55
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 198

House of Commons (Services) Select Committee
600w

House of Commons Standing Committees
Members 122w
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:03:88) 532

House of Commons statements
House of Commons annunciator system 16

House of Commons times of sittings
(25:03:88) 660-2, 693

House of Commons Works of Art Advisory Committee
192-3w

House prices
717-8w

House purchase
Council tenants 191-2w
Local government services 188w

House renovation grants
Defective housing 309w
Elderly 30w, 99w
Tax allowances 99w
Wales 4, 30w

Housing
Homelessness 298-300w
Scotland (29:03:88) 920-1036, (30:03:88) 1115-63
South Wales 4-5

Housing & handicapped
Mental patients 657-8w

Housing association grant
Scotland 253w

Housing associations
Northern Ireland 701-2w

Housing Benefit (General) Amendment Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(23:03:88) 464-83

Housing Benefit (Supply of Information) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(23:03:88) 464-83

Housing benefits
Administrative delays 207w
Capital rules 323-4w
Dundee 207-8w
Employment training 243w
Lewisham 157w
Local authorities in England & Wales 324-30w
Married women 243w
Multiple occupation 701w
Northern Ireland 701w
Pensioners 649-50w, 1273-4
Personal savings 207w
Scotland 448w
Social security benefits rules (23:03:88) 464-83
Social security recipients 242w, 649-50w
Social security reform 216-7w, 1271-3
Sunderland 342w

Housing Bill 1987/88
Questions
Northern Ireland 223w

Housing completions
Northern Ireland Housing Executive 699w

Housing construction
Urban development grants 55-6w

Housing estates
Asbestos 121w
Rushmoor 57w
Tower Hamlets 121w

Housing finance
711w
Ettrick & Lauderdale District Council 503w

Housing improvement
Stockbridge Village Trust 479w

Housing insulation
Carcinogens 366-7w
Insulation grants 31w
Low incomes 1w
Superglass Insulation 308w
Wales 31w

Housing investment programmes
712w

Housing occupancy
Fires 486-91w

Housing (Scotland) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep (29:03:88) 920-1036
Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1115-63

Housing standards
3w
Departmental coordination 120-1w
Dundee District Council 203-4w

Housing starts
2w

Housing stock
Building repairs 121-2w

***Howard, Mr Michael**, Minister of State for Local Government*
Questions
Community charge 2w, 190w, 713w
Community charge, Eastbourne Borough Council 713-4w
Community charge, Nottingham 713w
Community charge, Overseas students 190w
Community charge, Students 307w
Local Government Act 1988, Employment discrimination 477-8w
Local government services, Competition 479-80w
Non-domestic rates, Devon 57w
Rate limitation, Basildon District Council 718w
Rate rebates, Public buildings 237-8w

***Howard, Mr Michael**—continued*
Rates & rating 368w

Howarth, Mr George
Questions
Community charge 879-80
Employment training 415w
Health services, Northern Ireland 220w
Stockbridge Village Trust, Housing improvement 479w
Youth training scheme, Part-time education 12w

Howarth, Mr Gerald
Questions
Defence contracts 111-2w
Foreign investment in UK, Scotland 140w
Rates & rating, Appeals 478-9w

Howbury Park
Property development 190w

***Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey**, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affair*
Questions
Afghanistan, USSR 511w
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 518w
Austria 1069
Austria, Foreign policy 1068-9
East west relations 510w
Iran-Iraq war 1066-7
Iran-Iraq war, Peace negotiations 514w
Iran-Iraq war, United Nations 1066
Palestine, Israel 1074-5
Palestine, Peace negotiations 1073-4
South Africa, African National Congress 1077
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1076-8
South Africa, Sporting tours 1078-9
Waldheim, Kurt, Nazi war crimes 1069

Howell, Rt Hon Denis
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 77-80

Howell, Mr Ralph
Questions
Green pound 1265-6
Health service staff, Manpower 323-4w

Howells, Mr Geraint
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Farmers 279w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Income 279w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Manpower 279-80w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Wales 280w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Welsh language 279w
European fighter aircraft, Costs 104w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 9-10
Pigmeat 1265
Pigs, Animal husbandry 635w

Hoyle, Mr Doug
Questions
Crown lands & estates, Richmond house 299-301w
Defence contracts, Marconi 624w
Health services, Northern Ireland 564w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern Ireland 310-1w
Nurses' training, Northern Ireland 311w
Private health services, Northern Ireland 311w
Rescue services, Helicopters 467w
Richmond house 237w
Riverside Health Authority, Hospital closures 334-5w

HSE
see Health & Safety Executive

Hughes, Mr John
Questions
Nuclear disarmament, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 102w

Hughes, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1178-84, 1186, 1201-4, 1248-9
Questions
Portsmouth City Transport, Privatisation 460-1w, 559w
Public transport, Privatisation 461-2w

Hughes, Mr Robert G
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1049-50
Questions
Civil service, Management 313w
Youth unemployment 418w

Hughes, Mr Roy
Debates etc.
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 202
Questions
House condition survey, Wales 576w
Housing, South Wales 4-5
Iron & steel industry, Manpower 876-7
Nissan, Trade unions 357w
Optical charges, Wales 11
Unemployment, Newport 28w

Hughes, Mr Sean
Questions
Armed forces recruitment 191
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 499

Hughes, Mr Simon
Debates etc.
Crown Prosecution Service (31:03:88) 1324-7
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 737, 755-8, 759, 762, 768, 777
Health services finance, Inner London boroughs (25:03:88) 646-50
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 465, 473-5, 480, 482
Points of order, Ministers (30:03:88) 1109
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 644
Questions
Chemical & biological warfare, Defence research 99w
Chlorofluorocarbons, EC countries 365-6w
Docklands Light Railway, Southwark 553w
Gas disconnections, Gas Consumers' Council 289w
Ozone layer, Air pollution 366w
Police Authority for Northern Ireland, Disciplinary proceedings 222w
South Africa, Administration of justice 512w
Youth training scheme, Southwark 871

Hulton Picture Library
685w

Human organs
Imports 208w
Transplant surgery 208w

Human rights
Armenia 516w
Azerbaijan 516w
EC Foreign Affairs Council 133-4w
Ethiopia 11w
Kampuchea 514w
Refugees 519-20w
USSR 510w, 515-7w, 1079

Humberside
Derelict land 56w

Hume, Mr John
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 27-8
Questions

Hume, Mr John—continued
Exceptional needs payments, Northern Ireland 703-4w
Exceptional needs payments, Strabane 703w
Government grants to voluntary organisations, Scotland 253-4w
Homelessness, Government grants to voluntary organisations 237w, 239-40w
Homelessness, Northern Ireland 706-7w
Homelessness, Public expenditure 249-50w
Homelessness, Scotland 251w
Insulation grants, Northern Ireland 563w, 704w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Homelessness 312w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 508-10
Single homeless, Temporary accommodation 239w
Social security reform, Disposable income 335w
Thain, Ian Richard, Custodial treatment 136w
Thain, Ian Richard, Parole 185w
Thain, Ian Richard, Solicitors 137w

Hunt, Mr David, Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (25:03:88) 694-5

Hunter, Mr Andrew
Questions
Agricultural research, Research finance 1267
Anglo-Irish Agreement 218w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USSR 101-2w
Unemployment, Basingstoke 417w

Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas, Secretary of State for the Home Department
Debates etc.
Election expenses, Addresses to the Crown (23:03:88) 339
Prison overcrowding, Ministerial statements (30:03:88) 1083-98
Questions
Broadcasting, Ownership 232w
Charities 677w
Charities, Convictions 678w
Charity Commission, Law enforcement 677-8w
Civil service dispersal, Home Office 184w
Crime prevention, Community programme 677w
Criminal records, Data Protection Registrar 679w
Criminal statistics 232w
Inner city areas, Home Office 681w
Magistrates' courts, Disclosure of information 67w
Metropolitan Police, Manpower 67w
Police firearms 186w
Summertime 685-6w

Hygiene
Dentistry 337w
Family doctors 337w

IAEA
see International Atomic Energy Agency

Iceland
Electricity 286w, 295-6w
Energy supply 140w

ICI
Chlorofluorocarbons 713w

Identity cards
Pensioners 153w

IHV Industrial Investments
Company reports 64w

ILEA
see Inner London Education Authority

Illsley, Mr Eric
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1050
Questions
International Fund for Ireland 224w

ILO
see International Labour Organisation

Immigration & Nationality Division
686-7w

Immigration controls
Visas 389-91w

Immigration officers
641w
Birmingham 685w
Civil service manpower 685w

Immingham
Dock labour scheme 675-6w

Import controls
Dog fighting 494w

Imports
China 377-8w
Coal 294w
Food contamination 446w
Human organs 208w

"Improving Management in Government"
313-4w

Inbucon
196-7w

Income
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279w
Agriculture 51w
British Waterways Board 873
Overseas investment 613w
Pay beds 339-40w

Income Support (General) Amendment Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 306-31

Income support scheme
Average earnings 663w
Birmingham 36w
Handicapped 216w
Lewisham 157w
Pregnant women 36w
Scotland 447w
Social security benefits rules (22:03:88) 306-31
Social security reform 662-3w
Sunderland 342w
Training 528w

Income tax
(22:03:88) 158
Economic models 398w
Married people 17-20w
Tax burden 314-6w, 320w
Tax rates & bands 93-6w, 496w, 608-9w
Tax yields 228w, 314w

Incontinence
33w
Northern Ireland 48w
Scotland 15w
Wales 30w

Independent Commission for Police Complaints for N Ireland
Public appointments 80w

Independent Living Fund
440w, 661-2w

Independent Scientific Committee on Smoking & Health
158-9w, 246w

Indian subcontinent
Foreign tourists 119-20w

Indictable offences
Cherished number plates 129w
Motor vehicle registration 130w

Industrial accidents
872-3
Death 435w
Lost working days 436-7w
Scotland 435w

Industrial Air Pollution Inspectorate
164-5w

Industrial development
Lewisham 585w

Industrial diseases
Death 436w
Scotland 436w

Industrial disputes
Surgery 139-40w
Woolwich ferry 131w, 266w

Industrial energy prices
294w

Industrial health & safety
425w
Building industry 423w
Channel tunnel 430w
Fines 428w
Health & Safety Executive 413w
Prosecutions 427-8w
Radiation hazards 718-9w
Scotland 427-8w
Small businesses 437w
Smoking (24:03:88) 533

Industrial Heating & Ventilation
Company reports 64w

Industrial injury benefit
Administrative delays 160w

Industrial policy
144w

Industrial production
Scotland 145-6w

Industrial relations
Transport & General Workers' Union 871-2

Industrial relations law
872

Industrial tribunals
Compensation 674w
Dock workers 674-8w

Industries
Tourist industry 434-5w

Industry
Equal opportunities 528-9w

INF Treaty
103-4w

Infant mortality
212-3w
Kent 38w
Refugees 520w

Information
Northern Ireland Office 494

Informative labelling
Manhattan 100 246w

Ingram, Mr Adam
Debates etc.

Ingram, Mr Adam—continued
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 1007-11, 1016
Questions
Defence contracts 116w
Hospitals, Hamilton 356
Skoal Bandits 449w
Youth unemployment, Further education 69-70w

Inheritance tax
Political parties 603-4w
Tax rates & bands 496w

Injuries
Fireworks 482-4w
Motorcycles 559w, 621-2w, 667w
Playgrounds (30:03:88) 1252-8
Transport 460w

Inland Revenue
93w, 498-9w, 605-7w
Consultants 498w, 612w
Tax reform 228w
Tax repayment 499-500w

Inland waterways
Fees & charges 873-4
Tourism 873

Inner cities initiative
586w, 590w
Publicity 591w

Inner city areas
Arts 350w
Crime prevention 9w, 387w
Dept of Employment 673w
Dept of Energy 583w
Dept of Health & Social Security 655-6w
Dept of the Environment 715w
Dept of Trade & Industry 586w
Dept of Transport 616-7w
Expenditure 575-6w, 590w, 623w, 629w, 639w, 644w, 655-6w, 681w
Foreign & Commonwealth Office 629w
Handicapped 382w
Home Office 681w
Loan guarantee scheme 165w
Local authorities 586w
Manpower Services Commission 673w
Ministry of Agriculture 639w
Ministry of Defence 623w
Northern Ireland Office 702w
Population 586-90w
Scottish Office 644w
Tourism 255-6w
Wales 575-6w

Inner city school compacts
430w, 867-8

Inner London boroughs
Health services finance (25:03:88) 646-50

Inner London Education Authority
596w, (28:03:88) 733-832
Departmental publications 235w
Educational psychology 271w
Free school meals 127w

Inquiries
Cruelty to children 651w
Gangmasters 533w
School discipline 176w

"Inside Intelligence"
Legal costs 147w

Insider trading
Disclosure of information 356w

Insolvency
Employment protection 875-6
Midland Professional Cleaning Services 12-3w, 875-6

Insulation grants
Housing insulation 31w
Northern Ireland 563w, 704w
Stoke-on-Trent 1w

Insurance
Harmonisation of legislation 233-4w
Nuclear power stations 289w

Intelligence services
Northern Ireland 49-50w, 360w, 494

"Interception of Communications"
373w

Inter-city rail transport
557-8w, 615w

Interest charges
Central government borrowing 317-8w
Community charge 405w
Electricity area boards 710

Interest rates
316w, 398w
Exchange rates 613w

International Atomic Energy Agency
68-9w
Disclosure of information 272-3w

International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea
711-2w

International conferences
North Sea 711-2w
Radioactive waste disposal 717w

International Fund for Ireland
224w
Canada 167w
EC grants & loans 495
USA 167w

International Investments
Criminal investigation 699w
Gibraltar 1076

International Labour Office
see International Labour Organisation

International Labour Organisation
193w

International Management Centre from Buckingham
Degrees 175w

Inter-union disputes
Motor industry (23:03:88) 358-61

Invalid care allowances
86w
Carers 86w

Inverclyde initiative
Employment opportunities 75w, 287-8w
Scottish Development Agency 15-6w, 142w

Investment
Northern Ireland 699w

Investor protection
EC action 383w

IRA
Gibraltar 132w, 183w, 218w, 495-6
Prison visits 225-6w
Republic of Ireland 497

Iran
Political refugees 388w, 394w

Iran-Iraq war
513-4w, 1066-7
Chemical weapons 1071-2
Peace negotiations 514w
United Nations 1066

Iron & steel industry
877
Manpower 876-7
Privatisation 876-7

Irradiated food
207w, 639-40w
Food labelling 313w

Irvine, Mr Michael
Questions
Petroleum production licences, Offshore drilling 292w
Surgery, Scotland 139-40w

Irving, Mr Charles
Questions
House of Commons catering, Mineral waters 17
Police custody 183w

Israel
1080
Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 241-2w, 630w
Nuclear weapons 242w
Palestine 1074-5, 1080
Vanunu, Mordechai 242w, 630w

Jack, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 647
Sheltered housing, Elderly (25:03:88) 657-60
Questions
Defence contracts, North West region 189
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 1264-5
Road works, Local government expenditure 474-5w
Road works, Tourism 456w
Tax repayment, Inland Revenue 499-500w
UK companies abroad, Republic of Ireland 234w
UN Convention on Torture 134w
USSR, Human rights 515-6w

Jackson, Mr Robert, Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 298-300, (24:03:88) 543, 550-3, 558, 579
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 736
Questions
Arthritis, Medical research 175w
CERN, UK contributions 127w
Computer industry, Skill shortages 397w
Dental students 174w
Engineering education, Higher education 395w
Foreign students, China 396w
International Management Centre from Buckingham, Degrees 175w
Medical research, Charities 396-7w
Mental health, Medical research 271-2w
Open University, Upper waiting hall 395w
Overseas students, China 396w
Polytechnics, Further education 5w
Railway industry, Public records 470w
Science & technology research, Research finance 471w
Student grants 471w

Janman, Mr Tim
Questions
Small firms service 433w

Janner, Mr Greville
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 900
Questions
Austria, Foreign policy 1068-9
British Coal Corporation, Official engagements 717-8
Business statements 520, 1285
Equal opportunities, Industry 528-9w
Ethnic monitoring, Civil service 322w
Leicester, Official engagements 12-3
Theatre, Leicester 722
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 673w
Youth unemployment 531-2w

Japan
EC external relations 512w
Foreign policy 519w

***Japan**—continued*
Prisoners of war 6w

Job release scheme
Training allowances 537w

Job security
(24:03:88) 534-621

Job substitution rates
Youth training scheme 421w

Job training scheme
239w

Jobclubs
164w, 431w
Northern region 431w

John, Mr Brynmor
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 561-2, 568
Questions
Building societies, Public companies 502w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 448w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Manpower 448-9w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Pay settlements 448-9w

John Rylands Library
574w

Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Questions
Submarines, USSR 105w

Joint Matriculation Board
272w

Jones, Mr Barry
Questions
Bricks, Manpower 280w
Community charge, Wales 281-2w
Connah's Quay power station 3
Council house rents, Wales 280w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 281w
Employment schemes, Wales 280w
Home care services, Wales 281w
Local government staff, Manpower 281w
Postal services, Wales 280w
Power stations 710
Private health services, Manpower 280w
Social security reform, Voluntary organisations 341w
Unemployment, Clwyd 15-6

Jones, Mr Gwilym
Questions
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 11w
Hospital waiting lists, Wales 8
Kidney patients, Wales 29w
Local government services, Competition 576-7w
Trident 99w

Jones, Mr Ieuan Wyn
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1049
Questions
Business statements 519
EC Agriculture Council 260w
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 26w
Housing benefits, Pensioners 1273-4
London allowance, Civil servants 610-2w
London Regional Transport, Government grants 266w
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w, 374w
Railway electrification, Government grants 614-5w
Unemployment, Rural areas 259w
Wales Tourist Board, Publicity 9
Welsh language 17-8

Jones, Mr Robert B
Questions
British Rail, Transport subsidies 557-8w

***Jones, Mr Robert B**—continued*
Local government expenditure, Non-metropolitan counties 721w
North West Hertfordshire Health Authority 882
Youth training scheme 421-2w

Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Questions
Horniman Museum 720
Inland Revenue, Tax reform 228w
South Cumbria Health Authority, Finance 152w
South Cumbria Health Authority, Health service staff 209-10w

Journalists
Belize 115w, 623w
Ministry of Defence 115w
Official hospitality 623w

Jubilee gardens
South Bank Board 161w

Judges
Ethnic minorities 19w
Women 19w

Juries
Hotels 277w

Kampuchea
1070
Foreign policy 1070
Human rights 514w
Overseas aid 602w

Kansai Electric Company
68-9w

Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Questions
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 120w
Palestine, Israel 1074-5
Sharpeville six 133w
South Africa, Sporting tours 1078-9

Keep Britain Tidy
see Tidy Britain Group

Kellett-Bowman, Dame Elaine
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 369, 376, (24:03:88) 576
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 742
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 998
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1090-1

Kelsall bypass
Road safety 554w

Kennedy, Mr Charles
Questions
Dentistry, Hygiene 337w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland, Advisory services 644-5w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland, Offices 644-6w
Electricity, Iceland 286w, 295-6w
Electricity generation 296w
Family doctors, Hygiene 337w
Forestry grant scheme, Scotland 286w
Lead free petrol, Garages & petrol stations 304-6w
Unleaded Petrol Group, Public appointments 306w

Kent
Fire prevention 185-6w
Handicapped children 37-8w
Infant mortality 38w

Key, Mr Robert
Questions
School discipline, Inquiries 176w

Khmer Rouge
602w, 1070

Kidney patients
Wales 29w

Kilfedder, Mr James
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 32
Questions
NHS finance, North Down 500

King, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 893, (31:03:88) 1303-4
Questions
District health authorities, Public appointments 33w
Dock labour scheme, Tyne & Wear 675-6w
East Germany, Ministers' visits abroad 1072-3
Lost working days, Strikes 420w
Passenger transport executives, Local government finance 559w

***King, Rt Hon Tom**, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Ministerial statements (21:03:88) 21-36
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 218w, 497-8
Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference 225w, 495-7
Arms trade, Libyan Arab Republic 78w
Councillors, Local authorities in Northern Ireland 311w
Crime, Northern Ireland 502-3
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Northern Ireland 79w
Departmental publications, Northern Ireland Office 78w
Devolution, Northern Ireland 222w
Funerals, Northern Ireland 497-9, 502-3
Homicide, Convictions 80w
Independent Commission for Police Complaints for N Ireland, Public appointments 80w
IRA, Gibraltar 218w
Northern Ireland, Devolution 48w
Police Authority for Northern Ireland, Disciplinary proceedings 222w
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 81w
Prisoners' release, Northern Ireland 79-81w
Public appointments, Northern Ireland 81w
Religious discrimination, Northern Ireland 223w
Republic of Ireland, IRA 497
Republic of Ireland, Official engagements 222w, 495-6
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Disclosure of information 702-3w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Police informers 702w
Security, Northern Ireland 221w, 501-2
Sinn Fein, Proscribed organisations 706w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 78-9w, 218w, 503
Tighe, Michael, Homicide 241w, 311-2w
Unemployment, Belfast 499
Wallace, Colin 49-50w

Kingsnorth
Coal fired power stations 292w

Kingston upon Hull
Dock labour scheme 675-6w

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 110
Questions
Housing benefits, Social security reform 1271-3

Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil—continued
Social security reform 507-8, 881-2
Sterling, Exchange rates 195

Kirkcaldy
(21:03:88) 173-80

Kirkhope, Mr Timothy
Questions
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 53w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 521w

Kirkwood, Mr Archy
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 929-31, 933, 936, 941-2, 1017-9
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1135-6, 1138, 1139, 1153, 1154-6
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1102
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 907
Questions
Acid rain, Scotland 508w
AIDS, Prisoners 641-3w
AIDS, Scotland 503-4w
Air pollution control, Scotland 507-8w
Common sheep meat regime 1263
Dept of Employment, Publishing 671w
Departmental publications, Dept of Education & Science 5-6w
Departmental publications, Dept of Energy 68w
Departmental publications, Dept of Trade & Industry 22w
Departmental publications, Ministry of Agriculture 160w
Departmental publications, Ministry of Defence 7w
Departmental publications, Northern Ireland Office 78w
Departmental publications, Treasury 123w
Departmental publications, Welsh Office 29w
Disposable syringes, Scotland 504w
European Year of the Environment, Scottish Office 406w
Homelessness, Scotland 248-50w
Housing association grant, Scotland 253w
Nurses, Manpower 149w
Ozone layer 722w

Knapman, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Electricity supply industry, Research (24:03:88) 625-6
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 666
Questions
Arts, Enterprise allowance scheme 720
British Wool Marketing Board, Official engagements 636-7w
Civil service, Members 314w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 20w
Falkland Islands, Official engagements 518w
Potatoes, Agricultural subsidies 568w
Unemployment, West Midlands 419w

Knaresborough bypass
Public inquiries 60w

Knight, Mr Greg
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1095
Questions
Animal experiments, Netherlands 368w
Criminal statistics 232w
Enterprise allowance scheme 193w
House of Commons Standing Committees, Members 122w
Income tax, Married people 17-20w
Pirate radio stations, Prosecutions 481w
Police firearms 186w
Police firearms, Wild animals 681w

Knox, Mr David
Questions
A55, Road works 27w
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Upper waiting hall 179w
EC energy policy 711
EC external relations, Foreign policy 515w
Fires, Housing occupancy 486-91w
Unemployment, Staffordshire 870-1

Kosharovsky, Inna
516w

Kosharovsky, Yuly
516w

Kremen, Michael
517w

Labelling
Tobacco 154w

Laboratories
Animal experiments 184-5w
Energy research 20w
NHS 334w

Labour mobility
Northern Ireland 226w

Lamond, Mr James
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 896
Questions
Cyprus, Official engagements 518w
East Germany, Nuclear disarmament 1073
Ford Motor Company, Trade unions 877-8
House of Commons messenger service, Bureaucracy 726

***Lamont, Rt Hon Norman**, Financial Secretary to the Treasury*
Debates etc.
Finance (No 2) Bill, 1R (21:03:88) 158
Questions
Bankruptcy 93w
Business expansion scheme 399-400w
Capital gains tax, Tax allowances 496w
Computers in Government departments, Contracts for services 605-7w
Consultants, Inland Revenue 498w
Corporation tax, Tax allowances 498w
Daily Mail & General Trust, Netherlands 97w
General Commissioners of Income Tax, Northern Ireland 498-9w
Income tax, Married people 17-20w
Income tax, Tax burden 314-6w, 320w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 93-6w, 496w
Income tax, Tax yields 314w
Inheritance tax, Tax rates & bands 496w
Low incomes, Tax thresholds 320w
Mortgage relief, Cohabitation 91w
Nationalised industries, Expenditure 95-7w
Shareholders, Scotland 122-3w
Take-home pay 317w
Tax allowances, Cohabitation 97w
Tax allowances, House renovation grants 99w
Tax allowances, Ministers 496w
Tax burden 321-2w
Tax burden, Single people 496-7w, 614w
Tax evasion, Animal experiments 497w
Tax rates & bands, Pay incentives 316w
Tax repayment, Inland Revenue 499-500w
Tax yields 97-8w, 320-1w
Tax yields, Banks 501w
Tax yields, Income tax 228w
Taxation, Defence expenditure 98-100w
Taxation, Personal income 500-2w

Lanarkshire Health Board
356

Lancashire
Tourist industry 423-4w

Lance missiles
Modernisation 102w

Land acquisition
Government departments 319w
Prisons 66w

Land drainage
Environment protection 13w

Land Registry
see Land Registry Office

Land Registry Office
Consultants 372w, 485w

Land tribunals
Marginal land 634w

Land values
Agricultural land 51-2w
Crown lands & estates 299-301w
Urban development corporations 55-6w

***Lang, Mr Ian**, Minister of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 851-3, 858
Questions
Business, Scotland 145w
Coal mining, Scotland 141w
Community charge, Interest charges 405w
Community charge, Literacy 15w
Community charge, Local authorities in Scotland 143w
Community charge, Prisoners on remand 405w
Community charge, Scotland 143w, 204w, 340-1, 347-9
Community charge, Scottish councils 72-4w
Community charges register, Age 340
Community charges register, Disclosure of information 14w
Community charges register, Police 405w
Community charges register, Scotland 404-6w, 641w
Consultants, Scottish Development Agency 648w
Consultants, Scottish Office 648w
Educational finance, Tayside Regional Council 202-3w
Electric cables, Scotland 354
Electricity, Iceland 286w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 353-4
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 137w, 354
Employment schemes, Greenock 75w
Employment schemes, Monklands 77w
Employment schemes, Scotland 355
Energy supply, Ireland 140w
Foreign investment in UK, Scotland 140w
Hotels, Scotland 76w
Industrial production, Scotland 145-6w
Inner city areas, Scottish Office 644w
Inverclyde initiative, Employment opportunities 287-8w
Inverclyde initiative, Scottish Development Agency 15-6w, 142w
Location of industry, Scotland 408-9w
National Garden Festival 1988, Expenditure 145w
Non-domestic rates, Scotland 503w
Paper industry, Government assistance to industry 643w
Postal rates, Highlands of Scotland 139w
Postal services, Highlands of Scotland 145w
Rate increases, Scotland 141-2w
Rate rebates, Shetland Islands Council 148-9w
Scotland 341

Lang, Mr Ian—continued
Scottish Council (Development & Industry) 144w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 145w, 354
Superglass Insulation, Scottish Development Agency 408w
Tourist industry, Dundee 205w
Transport & General Workers' Union, Community charge 348
Unemployment, Greenock 75-6w
Unemployment, Motherwell 15w
Unemployment, Scotland 254w
Youth training scheme, Dundee 205w, 255w

Langbaurgh
Unemployment 532w

Languages education
GCE 272w

Laos
British embassies 182w

Larne Borough Council
561-2w

Latham, Mr Michael
Questions
Arms exports, Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w, 317w, 356w
Building industry, EC integration 716-7w
Defence contracts. Small businesses 182
Defence equipment, Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w
Defence procurement 107w
Israel 1080
Middle East, Peace negotiations 512w
Northern Ireland Audit Office, Pay 14
Palestine Liberation Organisation, Foreign policy 522w
Prison escapes, Ashwell Prison 232w
Unemployment 419w

Law enforcement
Charity Commission 677-8w

Law Society of Scotland
Scottish Lay Observer 16w

Lawrence, Mr Ivan
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1088
Questions
Charities 677w
Charities, Convictions 678w
Charity Commission, Law enforcement 677-8w
Crime prevention, Community programme 677w
Crime prevention, Inner city areas 387w
Criminal proceedings, Time limits 492w
Excise duties, Liquefied petroleum gas 317w
Juries, Hotels 277w
Kampuchea 1070
Video recordings, Prosecutions 277w

Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 56, 103, 107-13
Questions
Coinage, Design 123w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 608-9w
Inland Revenue, Tax reform 228w
Shipping accidents, Government assistance 123w
Tax yields, VAT 228w

LDDC
see London Docklands Development Corporation

Lead free petrol
Cars 57-9w
Garages & petrol stations 304-6w

Leave
Teachers 565w

Lebanon
Hostages 1276

Lee, Mr John, Under-Secretary of State for Employment
Questions
Aids for handicapped, Administrative delays 256w
Availability for work 259w, 424w
Availability for work, Unemployment benefits 424w
Caravan sites, Tourist industry 428-9w
Catering, Tourist industry 433w
Consultants, Dept of Employment 437w, 535w
Consultants, Manpower Services Commission 437w, 533-6w
Dept of Employment, Publishing 671w
Dept of Employment, Regional development grants 874-5
Disablement resettlement officers, Manpower 256w
Earned income 284w
Employment, Suffolk 413w
Employment level 418w
Employment opportunities, Handicapped 527-8w
English Tourist Board, North West region 255w
Foreign tourists 529w
Foreign tourists, USA 434w
Handicapped workers, Aids for handicapped 256-8w
Handicapped workers, Deaf 258-9w
Handicapped workers, Disablement schemes 162w, 431w
Health & Safety Executive, Dundee 437w
Holiday accommodation 433w
Hotels 70w, 260w
Inland waterways, Fees & charges 873-4
Job release scheme, Training allowances 537w
Jobclubs 164w, 431w
Jobclubs, Northern region 431w
London Docklands, Vacancies 162w
Lost working days, Strikes 420w
Pay 673-4w
Regional aid 875
Restart programme 434w
Restart programme, Availability for work 163w
Restart programme, Departmental forms 162-3w
Telephone systems, Dept of Employment 672w
Tourism, Government grants 424w
Tourism, Inland waterways 873
Tourism, Inner city areas 255-6w
Tourism, Rivers 873
Tourist industry, Bradford 282w
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 424w
Tourist industry, Industries 434-5w
Tourist industry, Lancashire 423-4w
Tourist industry, North West region 529-30w
Tourists, China 438w
Unemployment 418-9w
Unemployment, Basingstoke 417w
Unemployment, East Midlands 419w
Unemployment, Eddisbury 193w
Unemployment, Ethnic groups 69w
Unemployment, Langbaurgh 532w
Unemployment, North West region 418-9w
Unemployment, Northern region 418w
Unemployment, Rural areas 259w
Unemployment, South Yorkshire 418w
Unemployment, Staffordshire 870-1
Unemployment, West Midlands 419w
Unemployment, Yorkshire & Humberside 417w
Vacancies 414w
Vacancies, East Anglia 431w
Vacancies, Greater London 417w

Lee, Mr John—continued
Vacancies, Ministry of Defence 875
Vacancies, South West region 433w
Vacancies, Tottenham 194w
Youth unemployment 418w, 531-2w

Leeds Prison
276-7w, 678-82w

Leeds Western Health Authority
Public appointments 451w

Legal Advice & Assistance (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 198, (30:03:88) 1250

Legal aid
Solicitors 176-7w

Legal Aid (Financial Conditions) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(22:03:88) 198, (30:03:88) 1250

Legal costs
"Inside Intelligence" 147w

Legal malpractice
Scottish Solicitors' Discipline Tribunal 16w

Legal Services Royal Commission
16w

Leicester
Official engagements 12-3
Theatre 722

Leicester Prison
Prison overcrowding 491w

Leicestershire
Coal mining 717-8

Leigh, Mr Edward
Questions
Business statements 521
Conventional weapons 100w
East West relations 510w
Employment 877
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 1264-5

Leighton, Mr Ron
Questions
Disablement resettlement officers, Manpower 256w
Handicapped workers, Aids for handicapped 256w
Handicapped workers, Disablement schemes 162w
Housing starts 2w
London Docklands, Vacancies 162w
News International, Public order policing 184w

Lenihan, Brian
495-6

Lestor, Miss Joan
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 277-9
Questions
Capital movements, Africa 124w
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Youth training scheme, Travelling expenses 420-1w

Leukaemia
Scotland 341-2

Lewis, Mr Terry
Questions
Air force, Military aircraft 100w
Employment training, Community programme 164w
Industrial health & safety, Channel tunnel 430w

Lewisham
Enterprise allowance scheme 282-3w
Family credit 157w

Lewisham—continued
Housing benefits 157w
Income support scheme 157w
Industrial development 585w
Social security recipients 155-7w
Social security reform 157w
Supplementary benefits 155w, 157w
Youth training scheme 284w

Libraries
Arts finance 349-50w
British Theatre Association 351w

Libyan Arab Republic
Arms trade 78w
Foreign policy 510w

Licensing
Mink 200w, 206w, 566w
Radio 118w
Tree felling 202w

Life imprisonment
Young offenders 219w

Light aircraft
Air safety (31:03:88) 1287-93

***Lightbown, Mr David**, a Lord Commissioner*
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 474

***Lilley, Mr Peter**, Economic Secretary to the Treasury*
Questions
Arms exports, Palestine Liberation Organisation 317w
Arms trade, Air freight transport 91-2w
Betting & gaming duties, Northern Ireland 315w
Building societies, Public companies 502w
Capital movements, Africa 124w
Consultants, Customs & Excise 498w, 611-2w
Customs, Newry 92w
Drugs, Customs 608w
EC internal trade, VAT 358w
Exchange rates, Interest rates 613w
Exchange rates, Mark 317w
Exchange rates, Retail price index 613w
Excise duties, Liquefied petroleum gas 317w
Excise duties, Tax harmonisation 124-6w
Freight transport, Ports 92-3w
Government securities 123w
Interest rates 316w, 398w
Loans, Elderly 604w
Petrol, Tax harmonisation 91w
Petrol, Tax yields 498w
Railway travel, Customs 398-9w
VAT, Passenger ships 125-6w
VAT, Veterinary services 227w
VAT zero rated goods 93w, 195-6w

Line of route
296-7w

Liquefied petroleum gas
Excise duties 317w

Listed buildings
Brompton Hospital 722w

Literacy
Community charge 15w
Unemployed 422w

Litherland, Mr Robert
Questions
Employment training, Travelling expenses 416w
G-Mex exhibition centre, Government grants 2-3w

Litter
Government grants 59-60w
North East region 368w
Publicity 278w, 373w

Liverpool
Arts Council grants 720-1
Theatres 720-1

Livingstone, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Northern Ireland, Oral questions (24:03:88) 531-2
Questions
Armed forces training, Psychology 359w
Army, Medical examinations 360-2w
Army, Psychiatry 360-1w
Army in Northern Ireland, Armed forces training 362w
Army in Northern Ireland, Castledillon 361-2w
Army in Northern Ireland, Forgery 359-60w
Holroyd, Fred 360w
Holroyd, Fred, Medical examinations 360w
Homosexuality, Residential care of children 310w
Intelligence services, Northern Ireland 360w
Northern Ireland Office, Information 494
Regional health authorities, Political activities 335w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Secret societies 703w
Wallace, Colin 49-50w

Livsey, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 565-6
Questions
Hill livestock allowances 636w
House renovation grants, Wales 4
Opera, Wales 6

Lloyd, Sir Ian
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 68-72
Questions
Armed forces deployment, Persian Gulf 186

Lloyd, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 423
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1168-70, 1171, 1196, 1221-4, 1228, 1238-9
Questions
Congenital abnormalities, Screening 217w
Ferries, Safety standards 47w
Ferries, Shipbuilding 47w
Ferries, Shipping safety 46-7w
G-Mex exhibition centre, Government grants 2-3w
Guatemala, Foreign policy 522w
Herald of Free Enterprise, Marine surveys 353-4w
Marine surveys, Shipping safety 353w
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 504-5
Road accidents 354w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Shipping safety 353w
Salford Health Authority, Finance 339-40w
Small businesses, Employment 432w
South Manchester Health Authority, Finance 339-40w
South Manchester Health Authority, Official engagements 658w
Tax reform, South East region 607w
Tree planting 505-6w

Loan guarantee scheme
Inner city areas 165w

Loans
Advisory services 234-5w
Elderly 604w
Tax allowances 604w

Local authorities
Barter trading 1w
Children in care 36-7w
Emergency planning 385-7w
Inner city areas 586w
Property development 1w
Publicity 714w

Local Authorities (General Powers) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (23:03:88) 361

Local authorities in England & Wales
Housing benefits 324-30w

Local authorities in Northern Ireland
Councillors 311w

Local authorities in Scotland
Capital investment 507w
Cash limits 507w
Community charge 143w

Local authority powers
(23:03:88) 361

Local education authorities
Per capita costs 596w

Local employer network scheme
Costs 430w

Local enterprise agencies
431-2w

Local government
Scotland 346

Local Government Act 1972
Questions
717w

Local Government Act 1988
Questions
719w
Employment discrimination 477-8w

Local government audit
Local government property 719w

Local Government Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Royal assent (24:03:88) 493

Local government buildings
London Residuary Body 2w

Local Government (Direct Labour Organisations) (Competition) (Amendment) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1111

Local government expenditure
4w
Block grant 722w
Non-metropolitan counties 721w
Road works 474-5w

Local government finance
Council housing 121-2w
Passenger transport executives 559w

Local Government Finance Bill 1987/88
Questions
237-8w, 713w

Local government pensions
Administrative costs 367w

Local Government (Prescribed Expenditure) (Amendment) Regulations 1988
Questions
711w

Local government property
Local government audit 719w

Local government revenue
New towns development corporations 711w

Local government services
Community charge 143w, 714w
Competition 479-80w, 576-7w, 719w
House purchase 188w
Privatisation 479-80w
Sports facilities 309-10w, 476-7w
Wales 576-7w

Local government social services
Personal records 507w
Scotland 507w

Local government staff
Manpower 281w
Scotland 344-5
Wales 281w

Local Loans (Increase of Limit) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(25:03:88) 696

Local press
Official hospitality 173w

Locate in Scotland
408-9w
Scotland 409w

Location of industry
Scotland 408-9w
UK companies abroad 234w

Loft insulation
366-7w

Lofthouse, Mr Geoffrey
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 898
Questions
Health service staff, Pontefract Health Authority 38-9w
Nuclear power stations 370w

Log books
Buildings 303w

London airports
Air traffic control 557w

London allowance
Civil servants 607w, 610-2w

London boroughs
Civil defence 384-5w
Traffic wardens 684w

London Buses
618-9w

London Docklands
Road construction 263w
Road works 262-3w
Vacancies 162w

London Docklands Development Corporation
54-5w, 262-3w
Rented housing 236w

London Fire & Civil Defence Authority
Greater London Coordination Centre 684w

London Regional Transport
264w, 618w
Government grants 266w

London Regional Transport Bill 1986/87
Debates etc.
Order for resuming adjourned debate on consideration read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

London Residuary Body
Local government buildings 2w

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
Medical research 552-3w

London Transport
266w

London Underground
266w, 618w

Loran navigator system
619-20w

Lord Chancellor
371w
Consultants 371-2w, 485w

Lord Chancellor's Office
see Lord Chancellor

Lorries
Defence contracts 106w
East London river crossing 46w

Lorry drivers
Medical examinations 456w

Lost working days
Industrial accidents 436-7w
Strikes 420w, 871-2

Low flying
Crime prevention 628w
Disciplinary proceedings 627-8w
Military aircraft 6-7w, 625-7w
Military Police 628w
Wales 6-7w

Low incomes
Family income 449-50w
Housing insulation 1w
Marginal tax rates 450w
Tax thresholds 320w

Lowestoft
Fishing quotas 313w

Loyden, Mr Eddie
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1187-9, 1212-4, 1221
Rover Group (29:03:88) 899
Questions
Lance missiles, Modernisation 102w

LRT
see London Regional Transport

Luce, Rt Hon Richard, Minister of State Privy Council Office (Minister for the Arts)
Debates etc.
Central government (31:03:88) 1342-4
Questions
Arts, Advisory services 720
Arts, China 573-4w
Arts, Enterprise allowance scheme 348w, 720
Arts, Inner city areas 350w
Arts, Marketing 349w
Arts, Ministers 725
Arts finance 722
Arts finance, Community charge 161w
Arts finance, Cultural heritage 349w
Arts finance, Greater London 227w
Arts sponsorship 347-8w, 350w
Books, Export controls 495w, 574w
British Theatre Association, Libraries 351w
Civil service 724
Civil service, Consultants 724
Civil service, Disclosure of information 723-4
Civil service, Management 313w
Civil service, Members 314w
Civil service, Public expenditure 313-4w
Civil service agencies 725-6
Civil service agencies, Civil servants 725
Civil service agencies, Civil service unions 725
Civil service recruitment, Examinations 724
Civil service retirement, Government contracts 726-8
Consultants, Office of Arts & Libraries 397-8w, 495w
Ethnic monitoring, Civil service 322w
House of Commons messenger service, Bureaucracy 726
Horniman Museum 720
Libraries, Arts finance 349-50w
Museums & galleries, Corporate plans 351w
Museums & galleries, Management 351-2w
National Theatre 349w
Office of Arts & Libraries, Management 724-5
Opera 349w
Photography, Schools 721-2
Public libraries 348-9w
Public libraries, Business 349w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 574-5w, 722-3
Public libraries, Norfolk County Council 348w

Luce, Rt Hon Richard—continued
Public libraries, Old people's homes 347w
Public libraries, Southwark 350w
South Bank Board, Jubilee gardens 161w
South Bank Centre 575w
Theatre, Business sponsorship incentive scheme 350w
Theatre, Leicester 722
Theatre Royal Stratford 721
Theatres, Liverpool 720-1
Theatres, National anthems 161w
"Urban Renaissance", Expenditure 351w

Luff, Peter
Conflict of interests 591w

Lunar house
Civil service manpower 686w
Telephone systems 686-7w

Lyell, Sir Nicholas, Solicitor-General
Debates etc.
European Court of First Instance (25:03:88) 674-9, 689, 690-3

M1
M5 60w

M5
M1 60w
Road works 60-1w

M6
Road traffic 267w, 462w

M25
Road construction 615w
Road works 615w

M40
Road construction 557w

McAllion, Mr John
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 300-1
Health & Safety Executive, Public petitions (29:03:88) 1055
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 922, 927-8, 933, 940, 984, 990-2, 1003
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1120-4, 1136-7
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 907
Questions
Arthritis, Medical research 175w
Business statements 525
Central America, EC action 273w
Community charge, Scotland 143w, 204w
Educational finance, Tayside Regional Council 202-3w
Eye tests, Tayside Health Board 288w
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 423w
Firearms certificates, Dundee 203w
Ford Motor Company 193, 349-50
Free school meals, Dundee 203w
Gas disconnections 179w
Health & Safety Executive, Dundee 437w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 426-8w
Health & Safety Executive, Research finance 530w
Heart diseases, Scotland 204w
Housing benefits, Dundee 207-8w
Housing standards, Dundee District Council 203-4w
Income support scheme, Handicapped 216w
Industrial accidents, Death 435w
Industrial diseases, Death 436w
Industrial health & safety, Fines 428w
Industrial health & safety, Prosecutions 427-8w
Industrial health & safety, Small businesses 437w
Lost working days, Industrial accidents 436-7w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Europe 114w
Social security abuse, Civil service manpower 215w

McAllion, Mr John—continued
Social security abuse, Costs 215w
Social security appeals, Civil service manpower 215w
Social security benefits disqualification, Dundee 551-2w
Social security recipients, Dundee 216w
Tayside Health Board, Expenditure 203w
Tayside Health Board, Finance 203w
Tayside Health Board, Pay beds 204-5w
Tourist industry, Dundee 205w
Unemployment, Scotland 254w
Youth training scheme, Dundee 205w, 255w

McAvoy, Mr Thomas
Debates etc.
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 910
Questions
Coal mining, Scotland 141w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w

MacBride principles
Foreign investment in UK 224w

McCarthy, John
1276

McCartney, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1193-4
Questions
Chlorofluorocarbons, ICI 713w
RAF Greenham Common, Bye laws 101w

McCormick, Anna
32-3w

McCrea, Rev William
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 33-4
Questions
Business statements 515-6
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 501

McCusker, Mr Harold
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 218w
Customs, Newry 92w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 504
Northern Ireland, Devolution 48w

Macdonald, Mr Calum
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1177, 1216-7
Postal rates, Highlands of Scotland (23:03:88) 488-9, 490
Questions
Central America, Overseas aid 484-5w
Common sheep meat regime 1262-3
Defence contracts, North Sea 363w
Defence equipment, North sea 624w
Lance missiles, Modernisation 102w
Postal services, Highlands of Scotland 145w
Western Isles Health Board, Contracts for services 146-7w

McDonald's Hamburgers
Planning permission 712w

McFall, Mr John
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 949, 992-4
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1125
Questions
NHS finance, Scotland 144w
Nuclear submarines, Nuclear reactors 100w
Training, Government grants 413w

Macfarlane, Sir Neil
Debates etc.
Council house sales, Sutton (28:03:88) 860-2, 866

Macfarlane Trust
(22:03:88) 306-31, (23:03:88) 464-83

McGrady, Mr Eddie
Questions
Betting & gaming duties, Northern Ireland 315w
Civil service dispersal, Down 701w
Community charge, Northern Ireland 222w
Housing associations, Northern Ireland 701-2w
Housing benefits, Multiple occupation 701w
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 500
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 562w, 699w

MacGregor, Rt Hon John, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Questions
Afcor Investments 1266
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Fees & charges 13w
Agriculture, Official engagements 639w
Common agricultural policy, Competition 1269
Common agricultural policy, EC budget 634-5w
Common sheep meat regime 1262-4
Departmental publications, Ministry of Agriculture 160w
EC Agriculture Council 260w, 567-8w, 638-9w
EC Agriculture Council, Common agricultural policy 636w
Forestry, Government grants 639w
Forestry Commission, Official engagements 634w
Forestry grants 1269-70
Green pound 260w, 637w, 1265-6, 1268-9
Green pound, National Farmers' Union 637w
Milk, Production quotas 566-7w
National Farmers' Union, Common agricultural policy 636w
National Farmers' Union, Official engagements 1264-5
Nitrates, Fertilisers 1264
Pigmeat 1265
Set-aside schemes, Cereals 260-1w
Set-aside schemes, Expenditure 638w
Small Farmers' Association, Official engagements 400w
Tree planting 1271

McKay, Mr Allen
Debates etc.
Diego Garcia, Public petitions (30:03:88) 1251
Questions
Artillery 112w
USSR, Emigration 517w

MacKay, Mr Andrew
Questions
Middle East, Ministers' visits abroad 511w
Transport & General Workers' Union 507

McKelvey, Mr William
Questions
Business statements 522
Social security benefits, Community charge 149-50w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 354

Maclean, Mr David, an Assistant Whip
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1153

McLeish, Mr Henry
Debates etc.
Acute beds, Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 179, 180
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 1012-4, 1015

McLeish, Mr Henry—continued
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 914
Questions
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 423w
Location of industry, Scotland 408-9w
Petroleum production, North Sea oil 644w
Superglass Insulation, Housing insulation 308w
Superglass Insulation, Scottish Development Agency 408w

Maclennan, Mr Robert
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Scotland 137w
Fast reactors 712
Training, Tax allowances 259-60w

McLoughlin, Mr Patrick
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1096
Questions
Chemical weapons, USSR 113w
Coal mining, Productivity 291w
National Garden Festival 1988, Expenditure 145w
Rates & rating, Non-metropolitan counties 305-7w

McNair-Wilson, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 420
Light aircraft, Air safety (31:03:88) 1287-9, 1290
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland 112w
Community development, Northern Ireland 223-4w

McNamara, Mr Kevin
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 24-5
Questions
Homicide, Convictions 80w
International Fund for Ireland, EC grants & loans 495
Prison sentences, Northern Ireland 81w
Prisoners' release, Northern Ireland 79-81w
Unemployment, Belfast 499

McTaggart, Mr Bob
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1138
Questions
Community charge, Scotland 347-8
Lance missiles, Modernisation 102w
Lorry drivers, Medical examinations 456w
Nurses, Pay systems 85w
Nurses, Scottish health boards 71-2w
Nurses' training, Scotland 71w
Road accidents, Heart diseases 456w

McWilliam, Mr John
Questions
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 499

Madden, Mr Max
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 43-4
Questions
Business statements 520, 1284
Community charge, Overseas students 190w
Complaints against police, Royal Ulster Constabulary 221w
Mental health community care, Regional health authorities 333w
Retirement pensions, Social security benefits uprating 452w
Strikes 872

Madel, Mr David
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 246, 249
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 745, 812-3

MAFF
see Ministry of Agriculture

Maghaberry Prison
Operating costs 438w

Maginnis, Mr Ken
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 21, 30-1
Questions
Crime, Northern Ireland 502-3

Magistrates
Ethnic minorities 19w, 371w
Oldham 382-3w
Women 19w

Magistrates' courts
Disclosure of information 67w

Magnox reactors
Bradwell power station 585w
Radioactive wastes 584w
Uranium 583-4w

Mahon, Mrs Alice
Debates etc.
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 324
Questions
Armed forces training, Bangladesh 180-1w
Infant mortality 212-3w
Nuclear submarines, Nuclear reactors 109w

Mailing lists
Water authorities 310w

***Major, Rt Hon John**, Chief Secretary to the Treasury*
Questions
Age allowances, Pensioners 611w
Central government borrowing, Interest charges 317-8w
Finance (No 2) Bill 1987/88, Publishing 194w
Income tax, Economic models 398w
Inheritance tax, Political parties 603-4w
National income 497w
National income, Per capita costs 18w
Overseas investment, Income 613w
Public expenditure 318-20w
Public sector assets, Property transfer 319w
Public sector borrowing abroad 318w
Taxation 227-8w

Malaysia
Biwater 601w
Water supply 4-5w, 19-20w, 468w

Mallon, Mr Seamus
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 34

Management Advisory Services
334w

Manchester Airport
Air routes 131w
USA 131w

Manchester City Council
Social Fund 656w

Manchester University
574w

Manhattan 100
Informative labelling 246w

Manpower Services Commission
256-7w
Consultants 437w, 533-6w
Contracts 283w
Inner city areas 673w

Mans, Mr Keith
Questions
Afghanistan, USSR 511w
Arts, Enterprise allowance scheme 348w
Conventional weapons 100w
Restart programme 434w

Mans, Mr Keith—continued
Small Farmers' Association, Official engagements 400w

Manufactured goods
Market share 355w
Origin marking 23w
West Germany 586w

Manufacturing industries
878
Exchange rates 586w
North West region 178w
Redundancy 878-9
Wales 578w

Maple Flag exercises
Air force 9w

Maples, Mr John
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 380-4
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 755, 767-9

Maps
Public footpaths 475-6w

Marconi
Defence contracts 187, 624w
Scientists 624w

Marek, Dr John
Questions
A320 airbus 25w
Airbuses 25w
Civil service dispersal, Manpower 18w
Early warning systems, Offset arrangements 116w
EC grants & loans, Gwynedd 128-30w
EC grants & loans, Wales 200w
Hong Kong, Refugees 274w
Hospital waiting lists, Clwyd 7-8
Mines, Navy 106w
National Blood Transfusion Service 342w
Public libraries, Old people's homes 347w

Marginal land
Land tribunals 634w

Marginal tax rates
Low incomes 450w
Social security benefits 244-6w

Marine surveys
Herald of Free Enterprise 353-4w
Shipping safety 353w

Mark
Exchange rates 317w

Market research
Dept of the Environment 299w

Market share
559w
Manufactured goods 355w

Marketing
Arts 349w

Marland, Mr Paul
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 993
Questions
Irradiated food 207w
Tree planting 1266-7

Marlow, Mr Tony
Questions
Business statements 524
EC energy policy 711
Foreign tourists, Indian subcontinent 119-20w
Funerals, Northern Ireland 502
Middle East, Foreign policy 511w

Marmosets
368w

Married people
Income tax 17-20w

Married women
Community charge 2w
Housing benefits 243w

Married women—continued
Retirement pensions 441-2w

Marshall, Mr David
Debates etc.
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 912
Questions
British Rail, Fraud 457w
Community charge, Scotland 347

Marshall, Mr Jim
Questions
Cemeteries, Westminster City Council 713w
Health services, Northern Ireland 220w
National Farmers' Union, Common agricultural policy 636w
New towns development corporations, Local government revenue 711w
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 501

Marshall, Mr John
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 844-7
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 738, 743, 751
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1101
Questions
Arms trade, Libyan Arab Republic 78w
British Steel Corporation, Privatisation 585w
Church Commissioners, Education 13
Computers in National Health Service, Accountability 32w
Computers in National Health Service, Competition 32w
Computers in National Health Service, Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham 32w
EC internal trade, Export promotion 1082
Ethiopia, Overseas aid 601-2w
Housing benefits, Personal savings 207w
M25, Road works 615w
Museums & galleries, Corporate plans 351w
Palestine, Refugees 519-20w
Passports, Administrative delays 231w
Take-home pay 317w
Tourism, Inner city areas 255-6w
Waldheim, Kurt, Nazi war crimes 1069

Marshall, Mr Michael
Questions
Defence contracts 187-8

Martin, Mr David
Debates etc.
European Court of First Instance (25:03:88) 679
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 633
Questions
Defence procurement 106w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 94-6w
Lost working days, Strikes 871-2
Petrol, Tax yields 498w
Road tax, Administrative costs 556w
Road tax, Tax yields 556w

Martin, Mr Michael J
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1184-5
Questions
Business statements 514
St Bede's School Balornock, Handicapped pupils 142w

Martlew, Mr Eric
Questions
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 420w

Maskey, Sita Ram
Nepal 273w

Mass media
Closed shop 536-7w

Maternal mortality
Anaesthetics 245w

Maternity leave
432w

Maternity services
Wales 26w

Mates, Mr Michael
Questions
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 183-4

Matrimonial Proceedings (Transfers) Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
(29:03:88) 917

Maude, Mr Francis, Under-Secretary of State for Corporate and Consumer Affairs
Questions
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Upper waiting hall 179w
Company registration, Scotland 119w
Company registration, Yorkshire & Humberside 22-3w
Consultants, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 381-2w, 482w
Economic League, Company accounts 119w
Film industry 22w
Financial Services Act 1986, Commencement orders 179w
Guinness, Company investigations 356w
IHV Industrial Investments, Company reports 64w
Insider trading, Disclosure of information 356w
Insurance, Harmonisation of legislation 233-4w
Investor protection, EC action 383w
Loans, Advisory services 234-5w
Manufactured goods, Market share 355w
Public companies, Company accounts 233w
Textile industry, European Regional Development Fund 365w
Unfair trading practices, Supermarkets 234w
Voluntary restraint agreements 480-1w

Mauritius
Official engagements 519w

Mawhinney, Dr Brian, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Action for Community Employment, Northern Ireland 700w
Brucellosis 563w
Cairndhu Hospital, Property transfer 561-2w
Castle Court, Belfast, Property development 564-5w
Community care, Northern Ireland 563w
Community charge, Northern Ireland 47w, 222w
Community development, Northern Ireland 223-4w
Compulsory purchase, Compensation 700-1w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, Members' correspondence 562w
Electronic surveillance, Northern Ireland 494
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 698w

Mawhinney, Dr Brian—continued
Employment schemes, Northern Ireland 563w
Environmental health, Northern Ireland 699-700w
Exceptional needs payments, Northern Ireland 703-4w
Exceptional needs payments, Strabane 703w
Farrell, Mairead, Student grants 564w
Fishing, Northern Ireland 219w
Harland & Wolff, Employment 700w
Health services, Northern Ireland 564w
Homelessness, Northern Ireland 706-7w
Hospital discharges, Schizophrenia 697w
Hospital waiting lists, Northern Ireland 310-1w
Housing associations, Northern Ireland 701-2w
Housing benefits, Multiple occupation 701w
Insulation grants, Northern Ireland 563w, 704w
Labour mobility, Northern Ireland 226w
Mental health community care, NHS finance 560w
Mental hospitals, Hospital beds 698w
Mental hospitals, Hostels 560w
Mental hospitals, Northern Ireland 310w, 560-1w
Mental patients, Northern Ireland 560w, 697-8w
Mentally ill, Residential care 697w
Northern Ireland Dept of Agriculture, Civil servants 701w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Homelessness 312w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing completions 699w
Northern Ireland Office, Information 494
Nuclear accidents, Sellafield 562w, 699w
Nurses, Northern Ireland 708w
Orthopaedics, Northern Ireland 565w
Pay, Northern Ireland 219w
Pre-school education, Northern Ireland 226w
Private health services, Northern Ireland 311w
Psychiatric nurses, Northern Ireland 698-9w
Radioactivity, Northern Ireland 704-5w
Refuse disposal, Northern Ireland 562-3w
Rush Park flats, Building damage 561w
Sheep, Radioactivity 238-9w
Small businesses, Northern Ireland 218w
Student grants, Terrorism 565w
Teachers, Leave 565w

Maxton, Mr John
Debates etc.
Community charge, Orders & regulations (24:03:88) 530
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 729
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 845
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 916-7
Questions
Business statements 525
Ministry of Defence, Central London 110w
Scotland 341
Woodland grant scheme 640-1w

Maxwell-Hyslop, Mr Robin
Questions
Green pound 1266
House renovation grants, Defective housing 309w

Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick, Attorney-General
Debates etc.
Crown Prosecution Service (31:03:88) 1327-30
Questions
Consultants, Attorney-General 371w
Consultants, Land Registry Office 372w, 485w

Mayhew, Rt Hon Sir Patrick—continued
Consultants, Lord Chancellor 371-2w, 485w
Dog fighting, Prosecutions 485-6w
EC law, European Court of Justice 177w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 486w
Judges, Ethnic minorities 19w
Juries, Hotels 277w
Magistrates, Ethnic minorities 19w, 371w
Pink, Angela, Prosecutions 485w
Railway land, Blood sports 19w
Solicitors, Legal aid 176-7w

Meacher, Mr Michael
Questions
Availability for work 424w
Industrial accidents 872-3
Magistrates, Oldham 382-3w
Nursing homes, Expenditure 82w
Oldham Health Authority, Hospitals 452w
Unemployment 870

Meale, Mr Alan
Questions
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Health service staff, Central Nottinghamshire Health Authority 39-40w
Industrial injury benefit, Administrative delays 160w

Medical examinations
Army 360-2w
Holroyd, Fred 360w
Lorry drivers 456w

Medical laboratory scientific officers
334w, 448w
Manpower 448-9w
Pay settlements 448-9w

Medical research
Arthritis 175w
Charities 396-7w
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine 552-3w
Mental health 271-2w
Research finance 336-7w

Medical Research Council
175w
Expenditure 271-2w

Medical treatment abroad
NHS reciprocal arrangements 31-2w

Medical treatments
Chester Health Authority 209w
Crewe Health Authority 209w
Dystonia 83w
Mental patients 651w
NHS 194

Medicines Commission
Appeals 34-5w

Mediterranean Sea
Armed forces deployment 520w

Mellor, Mr David, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Questions
Armenia, Human rights 516w
Armilla patrol, Persian Gulf 515w
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 11w
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, NATO 517w
Chemical weapons 1071-2
Chemical weapons, Arms control negotiations 517-8w, 1070-1
Chemical weapons, Iran-Iraq war 1071-2
East Germany, Ministers' visits abroad 1072-3
East Germany, Nuclear disarmament 1073
Emigration, USSR 516w
Gibraltar, IRA 132w, 183w
International Atomic Energy Agency, Disclosure of information 272-3w
Iran-Iraq war 513-4w
Israel 1080

Mellor, Mr David—continued
Israel, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, 241-2w, 630w
Israel, Nuclear weapons 242w
Israel, Vanunu, Mordechai 242w, 630w
Mediterranean Sea, Armed forces deployment 520w
Middle East, Foreign policy 511w
Middle East, Ministers' visits abroad 511w
Middle East, Nuclear free zones 241w
Middle East, Official engagements 511-2w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 511-2w, 1080
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 53w
NATO, Arms control negotiations 132w
NATO, Nuclear weapons 521w
NATO, Warsaw Pact 518-9w
Palestine, Refugees 519-20w
Palestine Liberation Organisation, Foreign policy 522w
Persian Gulf, Shipping safety 515w
South Africa, Uranium 53w
Syrian Arab Republic, Foreign policy 510w
USSR, Broadcasting external services 514w
USSR, Educational exchanges 132w
USSR, Emigration 516-7w
USSR, Human rights 510w, 515-7w, 1079
USSR, Political prisoners 273-4w
USSR, Postal services 1079
USSR, Religious freedom 516w
Verification Technology Information Centre, Arms control negotiations 242w
Warsaw Pact, Nuclear free zones 520w

Members
Civil service 314w
House of Commons Standing Committees 122w

Members' allowances
522w

Members' attendance
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:88) 343

Members' conduct
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 158, (23:03:88) 342, 345, 350-1, 353, 467, (24:03:88) 506, 508, 530, (29:03:88) 872

Members' correspondence
Administrative delays 14w, 120w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board 562w
Trident 409w

Members' interests
Michael Forsyth Limited 646-7w
Speaker's rulings & statements (30:03:88) 1109, 1193-4

Members' interventions
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 109, (22:03:88) 227, 299, 334, (23:03:88) 447, (28:03:88) 846, 852, (29:03:88) 1028, (30:03:88) 1108, 1110, 1128, (31:03:88) 1333

Members' seating
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:03:88) 516-7

Members' speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 41, (22:03:88) 249, 259, (24:03:88) 603, (28:03:88) 839, 846, (29:03:88) 986

Mental handicap
Nurses' training 160w

Mental health
Medical research 271-2w

Mental health community care
Finance 657-8w
Mentally handicapped 549-50w
NHS finance 560w
Northern Ireland 697w

Mental health community care—continued
Regional health authorities 333w
Scotland 402w

Mental hospitals
Homelessness 202w
Hospital beds 442w, 444w, 698w
Hospital staff 439-40w
Hostels 333w, 402-3w, 560w
Northern Ireland 310w, 560-1w, 698w
Property transfer 251w, 331-2w
Scotland 251w, 401-3w
Shipilov, Vasili 273-4w

Mental illness
Abortion 542w

Mental patients
Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority 651w
Hospital discharges 402w
Housing & handicapped 657-8w
Medical treatments 651w
NHS finance 538w
Northern Ireland 560w, 697-8w
Schizophrenia 441-4w
Scotland 251-2w, 503w

Mentally handicapped
Mental health community care 549-50w

Mentally ill
Homelessness 188w
Residential care 331w, 697w
Scotland 284-5w

Merchant Shipping Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1164-250

Merchant Shipping (Closing of Openings in Enclosed Superstructures & in Bulkheads above the Bulkhead Deck) (Application to Non-UK Ships) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(21:03:88) 172

Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) (Application to Non-UK Ships) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(21:03:88) 172

Merksworth School Paisley
Official engagements 232-3w, 255w
School closures 142w

Metropolitan districts
Emergency planning 384-5w

Metropolitan Police
184w, 678-9w
Complaints against police 685w
Consultants 387-8w, 493w
Forensic science 117w
Manpower 67w

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Questions
Coal mining, Wales 2-3
Electricity tariffs 712
Single European Act 518w
Welsh National Opera 6

Michael, Mr Alun
Questions
NHS finance, Disclosure of information 10-1

Michael Forsyth Limited
Scottish Office 646-7w

Michie, Mr Bill
Questions
Building industry, Industrial health & safety 423w
RAF Greenham Common, Bye laws 101w

Michie, Mrs Ray
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 847-8

Michie, Mrs Ray—continued
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1176, 1212, 1214
Questions
Community charge, Scotland 348
Fish farming 1259-60
Postal rates, Highlands of Scotland 139w

Mid Glamorgan
Employment 127-8w

Mid Glamorgan Health Authority
15

Middle East
Foreign policy 511w
Ministers' visits abroad 511w
Nuclear free zones 241w
Official engagements 511-2w
Peace negotiations 511-2w, 1080
USA 512w

Middlesbrough
Dept of Trade & Industry 62w

Midland Professional Cleaning Services
64w
Insolvency 12-3w, 875-6

Midwives
East Anglian Regional Health Authority 159w

Military aircraft
190-1
Air accidents 622-3w
Air force 100w
Early warning systems 363w
Falkland Islands 115w
Low flying 6-7w, 625-7w

Military balance
Conventional weapons 112-3w
Warsaw Pact 518-9w
Weapons 463w

Military exercises
Canada 9w
Falkland Islands 110w, (31:03:88) 1331-7

Military Police
360w
Low flying 628w

Milk
Milk Marketing Board 206w
Production quotas 566-7w, 635w
Scotland 346

Milk Marketing Board
Milk 206w
Official engagements 637w

Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 291-3, 305
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 967-8, 972, 990
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1134-5
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1101, 1103
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 906
Questions
NHS charges 86-7w
Nurses, Project 2000 656w
School administration, Scotland 1275-6

Miller, Mr Hal
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 889, (31:03:88) 1301-3

Mills, Mr Iain
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 898

Mineral waters
House of Commons catering 17

Minerals
Antarctic 133w

Mines
NATO 187
Navy 105-6w, 186

Mines & Quarries Inspectorate
164-5w
Civil service manpower 432w

Minimum wage
Child workers 12w
Treaties 193w

Mining
Tin (29:03:88) 1056-64

Ministerial duties
Companies 572w
Dept of Transport 456w
Forestry 278w

Ministerial powers
304w, (28:03:88) 733-832

Ministerial speeches
Speaker's rulings & statements (28:03:88) 776, (31:03:88) 1342

Ministerial statements
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1083-98
Rover Group (29:03:88) 885-901
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 26, 32, 35, (29:03:88) 898, 906, 916, 920, (30:03:88) 1092, 1096, 1109, 1110
Terrorism (21:03:88) 21-36
Urban areas (29:03:88) 902-17

Ministers
Arts 725
Tax allowances 496w

Ministers' correspondence
35w

Ministers' visits abroad
Afghanistan 511w
China 372-3w
East Germany 1072-3
Middle East 511w
South East Asia 519w

Ministry of Agriculture
Civil service dispersal 65w
Consultants 400w, 565-6w
Departmental publications 160w
Inner city areas 639w

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food
see Ministry of Agriculture

Ministry of Defence
98-100w, 137w, 467w, 726-8
Central London 110w
Civil service dispersal 188-9
Civil service manpower 235-6w, 724
Consultants 411w, 464-7w
Departmental publications 7w
Empty property 236w
Inner city areas 623w
Journalists 115w
North West region 188-9
Pay incentives 463w
Rechem International 236w
Vacancies 875
Waste disposal 236w

Ministry of Defence police
364w
Codes of practice 464w
Greenham Common 411w

Mink
Animal husbandry 190-1w, 200w, 206w, 646w
Licensing 200w, 206w, 566w
Scotland 646w
Wales 200w, 583w

Mink (Keeping) Order 1987
Questions
582w

Minors' Contracts (Northern Ireland) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(21:03:88) 37

Mitchell, Mr Andrew
Questions
Coal mining, Productivity 291w, 1273
Defence contracts 103w
Employment level 418w

Mitchell, Mr Austin
Questions
Exchange rates, Interest rates 613w
Manufacturing industries, Exchange rates 586w
Sinn Fein, Broadcasting controls 495w

***Mitchell, Mr David**, Minister of State for Transport*
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1174-6, 1177-8, 1181, 1190, 1194-6, 1228-30, 1239-40, 1246, 1249-50
Questions
British Rail, Fraud 457w
Bus services 41-2w
Central London Rail Study 618-9w
Coastguard, Equipment 355w
Concessionary fares, Pensioners 43-5w
Docklands Light Railway, Southwark 553w
Ferries, Safety standards 47w
Ferries, Shipbuilding 47w
Ferries, Shipping safety 46-7w
Helicopters, Coastguard 354w
Herald of Free Enterprise, Marine surveys 353-4w
Inter-city rail transport 615w
London Regional Transport, Government grants 266w
Marine surveys, Shipping safety 353w
Mobility of disabled, Greater London 131w
National Bus Company, Privatisation 558w
Passenger transport executives, Local government finance 559w
Pilotage, Radio engineering 619-20w
Portsmouth City Transport, Privatisation 460-1w, 559w
Public transport, Privatisation 461-2w
Railway electrification, Government grants 614-5w
Railway industry, Public records 553-4w
Railway land, Blood sports 46w
Railway transport, Transport police 47w
Railway travel 457w
Rolling stock, Network SouthEast 554w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Shipping safety 353w, 557w
Ships, Radios 620w
Transport fuel consumption 42w
Waste disposal, Channel tunnel 61w

Mobility of disabled
Greater London 131w

MOD
see Ministry of Defence

Modernisation
Lance missiles 102w
Nuclear weapons 190
Nuclear weapons deployment 102w, 183-4

Molyneaux, Rt Hon James
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1041-2, 1051
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 26
Questions
Funerals, Northern Ireland 503
Security, Northern Ireland 221w

Monklands
Employment schemes 77w

Monopolies
Postal services 592-3w

Monopolies & Mergers Commission
British Waterways Board 368-70w
Consultants 381-2w, 482w
Trade unions 883

Monro, Sir Hector
Debates etc.
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1152-3
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1101
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 906
Questions
Cheese, Production 346
Community charge, Scotland 340
Fireworks, Injuries 482-4w
Ford Motor Company 350
Forestry, Scotland 138-9w
Petroleum production licences, Offshore drilling 179-80w

Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 638-42

Monuments
Repairs & maintenance 121w

Moonie, Dr Lewis
Debates etc.
Acute beds, Fife Health Board (21:03:88) 180
Questions
Artillery 112w
Childbirth, Scotland 344
Community charge, Interest charges 405w
Community charge, Prisoners on remand 405w
Community charges register, Police 405w
Community charges register, Scotland 404-6w
Employment training 415w
Scottish Health Education Group 354

***Moore, Rt Hon John**, Secretary of State for Social Services*
Questions
Consultants, Dept of Health & Social Security 446w, 539-41w

Morgan, Mr Rhodri
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 72, 108
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 564-5
Questions
Availability for work, Unemployment benefits 424w
Business statements 1283
Electricity generation, Nuclear power stations 294w
Rented housing 718w
Surgery, Heart diseases 278-9w

Morley, Mr Elliot
Questions
Employment training, Handicapped workers 416w

Morris, Rt Hon Alfred
Questions
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Charities 341w
Handicapped, Access to buildings 447w
Handicapped, United Nations 447w
Inner city areas, Handicapped 382w
Manchester Airport, Air routes 131w
Shipping accidents, Government assistance 123w
Social Fund, Manchester City Council 656w

Morris, Rt Hon John
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 567
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1088
Questions
Manhattan 100, Informative labelling 246w

Morris, Mr Michael
Questions
NHS Management Board, Departmental circulars 445-6w
Security, Northern Ireland 508

Morrison, Sir Charles
Questions
Common agricultural policy, Competition 1269

Morrison, Mr Peter, Minister of State for Energy
Debates etc.
Electricity supply industry, Research (24:03:88) 626-8
Questions
Combined heat & power 714
EC energy policy 711
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 719
Energy conservation, Buildings 509-10w
Energy Efficiency Office, Energy conservation 291w
Gas disconnections 179w
Gas disconnections, Codes of practice 289w
Gas disconnections, Gas Consumers' Council 289w
Heating, Coal 713
Heating, Smoke control areas 713
North Sea oil, Offshore suppliers 711
Petroleum production licences, Offshore drilling 292w
Uranium, South Africa 290w

Mortgage relief
Cohabitation 91w

Mortgages
Elderly 604w

Moss, Mr Malcolm
Questions
EC Agriculture Council 567-8w
Education & industry 430w
Rate increases, Scotland 141-2w

Motherwell
Unemployment 15w

Motor industry
Inter-union disputes (23:03:88) 358-61

Motor vehicle registration
42w
Cherished number plates 459w
Indictable offences 130w

Motor vehicle safety
Retail trade 352w

Motor vehicles
Computer applications 352w

Motorcycles
Injuries 559w, 621-2w, 667w
Protective clothing 459w
Road accidents 553w, 621-2w

Mowlam, Ms Marjorie
Questions
EC Agriculture Council 638-9w
Health services, Northern Ireland 220-1w
RAF Greenham Common, Bye laws 101w
Tax burden, Single people 497w, 614w
Youth employment, Sex discrimination 429w
Youth training scheme 69w

Moynihan, Mr Colin, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Sport)
Debates etc.
Tree conservation (22:03:88) 335-8
Questions
Air pollution, Nitrogen dioxide 717w
Amateur Rowing Association, Sports Council 716w
Animal experiments, Netherlands 368w
British Canoe Union, Sports Council 715-6w
British Waterways Board, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 368-70w
Brompton Hospital, Listed buildings 722w
Chlorofluorocarbons, EC countries 365-6w

Moynihan, Mr Colin—continued
Chlorofluorocarbons, ICI 713w
EC Environment Council 186-8w
Glanville fritillary 720w
Lead free petrol, Cars 57-9w
Lead free petrol, Garages & petrol stations 304-6w
Litter, North East region 368w
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1987/88 474w
North Sea, International conferences 711-2w
Ozone layer 722w
Ozone layer, Air pollution 366w
Public footpaths, Maps 475-6w
Radiation hazards, Industrial health & safety 718-9w
Radioactive waste disposal, International conferences 717w
Radioactive wastes, Transport of radioactive materials 121w
Rugby, South Africa 714-5w
Sites of special scientific interest 121w
Sites of special scientific interest, Cereals 238w, 722w
Sports facilities, Local government services 309-10w
Tree conservation, Preservation orders 297w
Unleaded Petrol Group, Public appointments 306w
Waste disposal, English channel 4w
Waste disposal, Spoil heaps 308w
Water authorities, Mailing lists 310w
Water authorities, Sewage 716w
Water charges, Publicity 302w
Water distribution 710w
Water meters, Codes of practice 301-2w
Water meters, Water supply 301w
Water pollution, Chemicals 710w
Water pollution, EC law 303w
Water pollution, Houghton 303w
Water pollution, Nitrates 1w
Water supply, Water pollution 710-1w
Water supply disconnections 302-3w

MRC
see Medical Research Council

MSC
see Manpower Services Commission

Mudd, Mr David
Questions
Bridges, Repairs & maintenance 615w
Hospital closures 338-9w
Road construction, Administrative delays 617w
Road traffic, M6 462w
Traffic forecasting 617w

Mullin, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Central government (31:03:88) 1338-42
Sub judice (24:03:88) 532
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Homicide 707w
Civil service, Consultants 724
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 423w
Laos, British embassies 182w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear disarmament 182-3
Republic of Ireland, Official engagements 222w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Homicide 703w
Taxation 227-8w

Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
Royal assent (24:03:88) 493

Multiple occupation
Housing benefits 701w

Murphy, Mr Paul
Questions
Aspartame 243-4w
Housing insulation, Insulation grants 31w
Private companies, Safety 554w
Rechem International, Ministry of Defence 236w
Safety belts, Ford Motor Company 42w
Waste disposal, Channel tunnel 61w

Museums & galleries
Corporate plans 351w
Management 351-2w

Mutual & balanced force reductions
Arms control negotiations 53w, 113-4w

MV Saga Moon
Criminal investigation 705w

Myalgic encephalomyelitis
Wales 30w

NALGO
see National Association of Local Government Officers

Namibia
South Africa 512w
Uranium 53w, 411w

NAO
see National Audit Office

Narcolepsy
Ritalin 453w

National anthems
Theatres 161w

National Association of Local Government Officers
Sinn Fein 880-1

National Audit Office
BAOR 110w
House of Commons debates 14

National Blood Transfusion Service
342w

National Bus Company
Privatisation 558w

National Coal Board
see British Coal Corporation

National Farmers' Union
Common agricultural policy 636w
Green pound 637w
Official engagements 1264-5

National finance
see Treasury

National Garden Festival 1988
Expenditure 145w

National grid
719-20

National Identification Bureau
678-9w

National income
497w
Per capita costs 18w

National Museum of Wales
Finance 196-7w

National Nuclear Corporation
Upper waiting hall 296w

National Theatre
349w

National Union of Mineworkers
370w

Nationalised industries
Expenditure 95-7w

NATO
106w, 182-3, 359w, 463w, 520w
Arms control negotiations 132w

NATO—continued
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 517w
Chemical weapons 108w
Conventional weapons 521w
Mines 187
Nuclear weapons 521w
Warsaw Pact 518-9w

NATO Nuclear Planning Group
109w, 184
Nuclear disarmament 102-3w, 182-3
Nuclear weapons deployment 7-8w, 184

Navigational aids
Trident missiles 136w
Vanguard submarines 136w

Navy
Antisubmarine warfare 108w, 184-6
Armed forces training 363-4w
Exercise Outback 88 358-9w
Frigates 104w
Mines 105-6w, 186
Warships 184-6

Nazi war crimes
Waldheim, Kurt 1068-9

NCB
see British Coal Corporation

Near misses
Air safety 458w

***Needham, Mr Richard**, Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland*
Questions
Antrim Hospital, Construction 500-1
Child care, Northern Ireland 169-72w
Children, Northern Ireland 169w
District development officers, Northern Ireland 223w
Dog licences, Northern Ireland 167w
Dogs, Northern Ireland 48w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, NHS finance 499
Environmentally sensitive areas, Northern Ireland 221w
Forestry grants, Northern Ireland 167-8w
Health services, Northern Ireland 220-1w
Health services finance, Northern Ireland 220w, 223w
Homelessness, Government grants to voluntary organisations 239-40w
Hospitals, East Antrim 219w
Housing Bill 1987/88, Northern Ireland 223w
Incontinence, Northern Ireland 48w
NHS finance, North Down 500
NHS finance, Northern Ireland 500-1, 504-5
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Arbitration schemes 169w
Nurses' training, Northern Ireland 311w
Nursing homes, Antrim 166w
Residential care, Antrim 166-7w
Residential care, Northern Ireland 166w
Single homeless, Temporary accommodation 239w
Training, Northern Ireland 239w
Water pollution, Planning permission 240-1w

Negligence
Armed forces casualties 505
Dept of Health & Social Security 248w

Nellist, Mr Dave
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 890
Questions
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 416w
F111 aircraft 109w
Litter, Publicity 373w
Pay, Northern Ireland 219w

Nelson, Mr Anthony
Debates etc.
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 38-9
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1042-3

Nepal
Maskey, Sita Ram 273w
Political prisoners 273w

Netherlands
Animal experiments 368w
Daily Mail & General Trust 97w

Network SouthEast
Rolling stock 554w

New Forest
Rents 880

"New Life for Scotland"
(29:03:88) 902-17

New towns development corporations
Local government revenue 711w

Newark bypass
Road construction 460w

Newcastle upon Tyne
Enterprise initiative 62w

Newport
Unemployment 28w

Newry
Customs 92w

News International
Public order policing 184w

Newspaper press
Ownership 232w

Newton
Official engagements 173w

***Newton, Rt Hon Tony**, Minister of State for Health*
Questions
Abortion 89-92w
Abortion, Drugs 655w
Abortion, Finks, Arnold 245w
Abortion, Foreign patients 451-2w
Abortion, Mental illness 542w
Acute beds, NHS finance 35w
AIDS 159w
AIDS, Advisory services 37w
AIDS, Death 32-3w
AIDS, Screening 336w
Benzodiazepines, Drug abuse 247w
Benzodiazepines, Drug hazards 659-60w
Benzodiazepines, Prescriptions 330-2w, 660w
Child Abuse in Cleveland Judicial Inquiry, Government grants to local authorities 248w
Children in care, Local authorities 36-7w
Clinical physicists, Pay settlements 446w
Community care, Expenditure 332-3w
Community Care Review 441w, 539w
Community Care Review, Departmental circulars 333-4w
Community Care Review, Health service staff 334w
Community Care Review, Social workers 334w
Community health councils, Birmingham 35w
Community health councils, Expenditure 651-5w
Community nurses, Psychiatric nurses 443w
Cruelty to children, Cleveland 651w
Dental charges 542w
District health authorities, Health service staff 667-71w
District health authorities, Public appointments 33w

Newton, Rt Hon Tony—continued
Drug abuse, AIDS 453-5w
Drug side effects, Disclosure of information 446-7w
Drugs, Raw materials 33-4w
East Anglian Regional Health Authority, Tourists 34w
Family doctors, Fees & charges 650-1w
Family doctors, Greater London 245w
Family doctors, Hygiene 337w
Family practitioner committees, Public appointments 453w
General Practice Finance Corporation, Public appointments 453w
Health service ancillary staff 440w
Health service staff, Crewe Health Authority 210w
Health service staff, Manpower 323-4w, 455w
Health service staff, Trent Regional Health Authority 82-3w
Home care services, Carers 153w
Hospital waiting lists 538w
Hospital waiting lists, Brighton Health Authority 454-8w
Hospital waiting lists, Crewe Health Authority 209-10w
Hospital waiting lists, Ear disorders 246w
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 246-7w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS & private practice 538w
Hospital waiting lists, NHS finance 323w
Inner city areas, Dept of Health & Social Security 655-6w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 334w, 448w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Manpower 448-9w
Medical laboratory scientific officers, Pay settlements 448-9w
Medicines Commission, Appeals 34-5w
Mental health community care, Regional health authorities 333w
Mental hospitals, Hospital staff 439-40w
Mental patients, NHS finance 538w
Midwives, East Anglian Regional Health Authority 159w
NHS, Cost effectiveness 154w
NHS, Laboratories 334w
NHS, Performance indicators 342-4w
NHS charges 86-7w
NHS finance 88w
NHS finance, Trust funds 663w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Administrative costs 453w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Finance 213-4w
Northern Regional Health Authority, Performance indicators 659-60w
Nurses, Complaints 657w
Nurses, Geriatrics 455-6w
Nurses, Manpower 149w
Nurses, Pay 150w
Nurses, Pay systems 85w
Nurses, Project 2000 656w
Nurses, Sunderland Health Authority 214w
Nurses' training, Expenditure 149-50w
Nurses' training, Mental handicap 160w
Oldham Health Authority, Hospitals 452w
Ophthalmic services, Hospital waiting lists 83w
Prescription charges 542-3w
Regional health authorities, Contracts for services 335w
Ritalin, Narcolepsy 453w
Salford Health Authority, Finance 339-40w
South Manchester Health Authority, Finance 339-40w
South Manchester Health Authority, Official engagements 658w
Surgery, Regional health authorities 544-6w
White Hart Training Centre, Cost per student 84w

NFU

see National Farmers' Union

NHS
Compensation 662w
Conferences 646w
Cost effectiveness 154w
Hospital admissions 541w
Laboratories 334w
Medical treatments 194
Performance indicators 342-4w
Scotland 342-3
Tenders 646w

NHS administration
Northern Regional Health Authority 39-41w
Scottish health boards 647w

NHS & private practice
Hospital patients 553w
Hospital waiting lists 538w

NHS charges
86-7w

NHS finance
88w, (25.03.88) 665-9
Acute beds 35w
Disclosure of information 10-1
District health authorities 15
Eastern Health & Social Services Board 499
Hospital waiting lists 322w
Mental health community care 560w
Mental patients 538w
North Down 500
Northern Ireland 500-1, 504-5
Scotland 143-4w
Trust funds 663w
Wales 8, 10-1, 15

NHS Management Board
Departmental circulars 445-6w

NHS reciprocal arrangements
Medical treatment abroad 31-2w

NI Office
see Northern Ireland Office

Nicaragua
1067-8
Export Credits Guarantee Department 591w
Peace negotiations 518w
Technical assistance 602w

***Nicholls, Mr Patrick**, Under-Secretary of State for Employment*
Questions
Accidents, Agriculture 434w
Agricultural Inspectorate, Manpower 419w
Building industry, Industrial health & safety 423w
Child workers, Pay 12w
Closed shop, Mass media 536-7w
Dock labour scheme, East Anglia 674w
Dock labour scheme, Greater London 674-6w
Dock labour scheme, Grimsby 675-6w
Dock labour scheme, Kingston upon Hull 675-6w
Dock labour scheme, Scotland 675-8w
Dock labour scheme, Tyne & Wear 675-6w
Dock workers, Redundancy 161-2w
Employment protection, Complaints 532w
Employment protection, Insolvency 875-6
Employment training 255w
Employment training, Community programme 164w
Employment training, Handicapped workers 416w
Employment training, Sex discrimination 429w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w
Employment training, Training allowances 417w, 432-3w
Employment training, Training Commission 417w

***Nicholls, Mr Patrick**—continued*
Employment training, Travelling expenses 416w
Enterprise in higher education 429-30w
Factory Inspectorate, Manpower 423w
Government assistance to industry, Corby 879
Health & Safety Executive 424w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 164-5w, 413w, 426-8w
Health & Safety Executive, Privatisation 673w
Health & Safety Executive, Research finance 530w
Health & Safety Executive, Wolfson College 425-6w
Industrial accidents, Death 435w
Industrial diseases, Death 436w
Industrial health & safety 425w
Industrial health & safety, Channel tunnel 430w
Industrial health & safety, Fines 428w
Industrial health & safety, Health & Safety Executive 413w
Industrial health & safety, Prosecutions 427-8w
Industrial health & safety, Small businesses 437w
Industrial tribunals, Compensation 674w
Iron & steel industry 877
Iron & steel industry, Manpower 876-7
Local employer network scheme, Costs 430w
Lost working days, Industrial accidents 436-7w
Manpower Services Commission, Contracts 283w
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 878-9
Maternity leave 432w
Midland Professional Cleaning Services, Insolvency 12-3w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 432w
Minimum wage, Treaties 193w
Non-statutory training organisations 414w
Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, Manpower 434w
Redundancy, Employment discrimination 162w
School leaving, Take-up of employment 429w
Skilled workers, East Anglia 422w
Trade union elections, Secret ballot 434w
Training, Government grants 413w
Training, Income support scheme 528w
Training, Tax allowances 259-60w
Training, Travelling expenses 672-3w
"Training for Employment White Paper" 432w
"Training for Employment White Paper", Derbyshire 874
"Training for Employment White Paper, South Yorkshire 874
Unemployed, Literacy 422w
Youth employment, Sex discrimination 429w

Nicholson, Mr David
Questions
Body armour, Offenders 118w
Driving tests, Bristol 457-8w
Export promotion, Saudi Arabia 24-6w
Farm woodland scheme, Agricultural land 1267
Gangmasters, Inquiries 533w
Gypsies, Planning permission 1-2w
Housing benefits, Capital rules 323-4w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 496w
Iran-Iraq war, Peace negotiations 514w
M5, Road works 60-1w
Milk, Production quotas 566-7w
Political refugees, Turkey 388w
Post Office, Social security payments 63w
Regional health authorities, Contracts for services 335w
Road signs, Tourism 620w

***Nicholson, Mr David**—continued*
School meals 596-8w
Turkey, Political refugees 394w

Nicholson, Miss Emma
Questions
Coastguard 42-3w

NII
see Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

Nimrod aircraft
116w

NIREX
see Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive

Nissan
Trade unions 357w

Nitrates
Fertilisers 1264
Water pollution 1w

Nitrogen dioxide
Air pollution 717w

Non-alcoholic drinks
Armed forces 8w

Non-domestic rates
Devon 57-8w
Scotland 503w
Sports facilities 503w

"Non-Domestic Rates Consultation Paper"
368w

Non-metropolitan counties
Local government expenditure 721w
Rates & rating 305-7w

Non-statutory training organisations
414w

Norfolk
Roads 61w

Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1987/88
Questions
474w

Norfolk County Council
Public libraries 348w

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
see NATO

North Committee
see Road Traffic Law Review Committee

North Down
NHS finance 500

North East region
Litter 368w

North Killingholme Cargo Terminal Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

North Sea
Defence contracts 363w
Defence equipment 624w
International conferences 711-2w
White fish 313w

North Sea oil
Offshore suppliers 711
Petroleum production 644w

North Tees Health Authority
651w

North West Hertfordshire Health Authority
882

North West region
Defence contracts 189
English Tourist Board 255w

North West region—continued
Manufacturing industries 178w
Ministry of Defence 188-9
Road safety barriers 42w
Tax reform 607w
Tourist industry 328-29w
Unemployment 418-9w

North Western Regional Health Authority
Hospital closures 334w

Northern General Hospital, Sheffield
Hospital admissions 452w

Northern Health & Social Services Board
166-7w

Northern Ireland (25.03.88) 650-3
Action for Community Employment 700w
Armed forces deployment 136w
Arms trade 78w
Betting & gaming duties 315w
Building industry 169w
Building regulations 699-700w
Child care 169-72w
Children 169w
"Community Care" 563w
Community charge 47w, 222w
Community development 223-4w
Companies 165w
Compulsory purchase 700-1w
Councillors 311w
Crime 502-3
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 79w
Design 22w
Devolution 48w, 222w
District development officers 223w
Dog licences 167w
Dogs 48w
EC internal trade 233w
Electronic surveillance 241w, 311-2w, 494
Employment 700w
Employment discrimination 504, 698w
Employment schemes 504, 563w
Environmental health 699-700w
Environmentally sensitive areas 221w
Exceptional needs payments 703-4w
Fishing 219w
Forestry grants 167-8w
Funerals 194, 497-9, 502-3
General Commissioners of Income Tax 498-9w
Health services 220-1w, 564w
Health services finance 220w, 223w
Homelessness 239w, 312w, 706-7w
Homicide 80w
Homosexuality 310w
Hospital waiting lists 310-1w
Housing associations 701-2w
Housing benefits 701w
Housing Bill 1987/88 223w
Incontinence 48w
Insulation grants 563w, 704w
Intelligence services 49-50w, 360w, 494
Investment 699w
Labour mobility 226w
Mental health community care 697w
Mental hospitals 310w, 560-1w, 698w
Mental patients 560w, 697-8w
NHS finance 500-1, 504-5
Nurses 708w
Nurses' training 311w
Orthopaedics 565w
Pay 219w
Police informers 702w
Pollution monitoring 238-9w
Pre-school education 169w, 226w
Prison sentences 81w
Prisoners' release 79-81w
Prisoners' transfers 119-20w
Private health services 311w
Psychiatric nurses 698-9w
Public appointments 81w
Radiation hazards 699w
Radioactivity 704-5w
Refuse disposal 562-3w
Religious discrimination 223w
Residential care 166w

Northern Ireland (25.03.88) 650-3—continued
Schizophrenia 697w
Security 221w, 501-2, 508
Small businesses 218w
Social security reform 355w
Social services 220w
Student grants 565w
Teachers 565w
Terrorism 78-9w, 218w, 438w, 495-6, 501-3
Training 239w
USA 224w
Water pollution 240-1w
Young offenders 219w

Northern Ireland Audit Office
Pay 14

Northern Ireland Comptroller & Auditor General
see Northern Ireland Audit Office

Northern Ireland Dept of Agriculture
Civil servants 701w

Northern Ireland Dept of Health & Social Services
166-7w

Northern Ireland government
(28:03:88) 732

Northern Ireland Health & Social Services Boards
166w, 220-1w, 239-40w, 504-5, 708w
Cash limits 220w
Official engagements 220w

Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Arbitration schemes 169w
Architects 699w
Homelessness 312w
Housing completions 699w

Northern Ireland Life Sentence Review Board
81w

Northern Ireland Office
698w
Consultants 705w, 707-10w
Departmental publications 78w
Ethnic monitoring 224w
Information 494
Inner city areas 702w

Northern Ireland (Termination of Jurisdiction) Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
1R (28:03:88) 732

Northern region
Arts finance 227w
Jobclubs 431w
Unemployment 418w

Northern Regional Health Authority
Accident & emergency departments 550-1w
Administrative costs 453w
Finance 213-4w
Geriatric patients 208w
Hospital beds 39-41w
NHS administration 39-41w
Nurses 214w
Ophthalmic services 83w
Performance indicators 659-60w

Norton School, Stoke-on-Trent
(23:03:88) 484

Norwich
Hospitals 308w

Nottingham
Civil servants 725
Community charge 713w
Council house sales 719w
Council tenants 298w
Elderly (25:03:88) 697-708

Nottinghamshire
British Coal Corporation 20w

Nuclear accidents
370w
Electricity supply industry 135w

Nuclear accidents—continued
Sellafield 562w, 699w

Nuclear disarmament
East Germany 1073
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 102-3w, 182-3

Nuclear free zones
Middle East 241w
Warsaw Pact 520w

Nuclear fuel reprocessing
Plutonium 585w
Radioactive wastes 584w
Sellafield 584w

Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive
717w
Official engagements 291w

Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
164-5w
Manpower 434w

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty
Israel 241-2w, 630w

Nuclear power
Privatisation 583w
Space technology 261w

Nuclear power stations
370w
Electricity generation 21-2w, 294w
Insurance 289w

Nuclear reactors
Nuclear submarines 100w, 109w

Nuclear safeguards
Sellafield 261w
Uranium 68-9w, 261w

Nuclear submarines
Nuclear reactors 100w, 109w

Nuclear weapons
Arms control negotiations 114w
Exercise Outback 88 358w
Israel 242w
Modernisation 190
NATO 521w

Nuclear weapons deployment
Cruise missiles 189-90
Europe 114w
Modernisation 102w, 183-4
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 7-8w, 184
USSR 101-2w

NUKEM
296w

NUM
see National Union of Mineworkers

Nursery schools
Scotland 355-6

Nurses
Carstairs Hospital 504w
Complaints 657w
Geriatrics 455-6w
Manpower 149w
Northern Ireland 708w
Northern Regional Health Authority 214w
Pay 150w
Pay systems 85w
Project 2000 656w
Scottish health boards 71-2w, 505-6w
Sunderland Health Authority 214w
Wales 579-81w

Nurses' training
Expenditure 149-50w
Mental handicap 160w
Northern Ireland 311w
Scotland 71w, 140w

Nursing homes
Antrim 166w
Expenditure 82w

Nutrition labelling 633w

Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects
Charities 494w

OAL
see Office of Arts & Libraries

O'Brien, Mr William
Questions
Community Care Review, Social workers 334w
Conventional weapons, Military balance 113w
Inland waterways, Fees & charges 873-4

Occupational pensions
Earnings rules 152-3w

Occupations
Youth training scheme 531-2w

ODA
see Overseas Development Administration

OECD
see Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development

OECD countries
Young offenders 275w

Offenders
Body armour 118w

Office of Arts & Libraries
Consultants 397-8w, 495w
Management 724-5

Office of Fair Trading
234w
Consultants 382w, 481-2w

Offices
Canary Wharf 55w
Dept of Agriculture & Fisheries for Scotland 644-6w

Official engagements
54w, 173-4w, 374w, 572-3w
Agriculture 639w
Beekeeping 260w
Bradford 173w
British Coal Corporation 294w, 717-8
British Wool Marketing Board 636-7w
Central Electricity Generating Board 714-5
China 514w
Country Landowners' Association 634w
Cyprus 518w
EC Finance Council 607w
Electricity area boards 292w
Electricity Consumers' Council 709
Electricity Council 291w
Falkland Islands 518w
Forestry Commission 634w
France 513w
Gibraltar 1075
Leicester 12-3
Mauritius 519w
Merksworth School Paisley 232-3w, 255w
Middle East 511-2w
Milk Marketing Board 637w
National Farmers' Union 1264-5
Newton 173w
Northern Ireland Health & Social Services Boards 220w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive 291w
Republic of Ireland 222w, 495-6
Royal Ulster Constabulary 78w
Scotland 372w
Small Farmers' Association 400w
South Africa 513w
South Manchester Health Authority 658w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 351-2
Tenant Farmers' Association 636w
Torry research station 634w
Trinidad & Tobago 517w
Turkey 54w
Vacant land 571w

Official engagements—continued
Wales Tourist Board 5

Official hospitality
115w
Journalists 623w
Local press 173w

Official publications
342w

Official visits
Fiji 393w

Offset arrangements
362-3w
Early warning systems 116w

Offshore drilling
Petroleum production licences 179-80w, 292w

Offshore suppliers
North Sea oil 711

OFT
see Office of Fair Trading

Old people's homes
Public libraries 347w

Oldham
Magistrates 382-3w

Oldham Health Authority
Hospitals 452w

Olympia & York
54-5w

£1 coins
123w

O'Neill, Mr Martin
Debates etc.
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1102, 1103
Questions
Cruise missiles 190
Devonport dockyard, Redundancy 412-3w
Early warning systems, Employment opportunities 362-3w
Early warning systems, Military aircraft 363w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 184

Onslow, Rt Hon Cranley
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 75-7
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1040-1, 1047
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1107
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 30
Questions
Amateur Rowing Association, Sports Council 716w
British Canoe Union, Sports Council 715-6w
Business statements 512
Palace of Westminster, Parliamentary security 597-8w
Water authorities, Sewage 716w

Open University
Upper waiting hall 395w

Opera
349w
Craig-y-nos castle 6
Wales 6

Operating costs
Maghaberry Prison 438w

Operation Fire Focus
Falkland Islands 517w

Ophthalmic services
Hospital waiting lists 83w
Northern Regional Health Authority 83w

Oppenheim, Mr Phillip
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 50
Rover Group (29:03:88) 900
Questions
Coal mining 718
Community charge, Scotland 348
Hospital patients, Scotland 140-1w
"Training for Employment White Paper, Derbyshire 874

Optical charges
86-7w
Wales 11

Oral questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:88) 359-61, (24:03:88) 531-2

Orange Order
703w

Order paper
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 209

Orders & regulations
Abolition of Domestic Rates etc (Scotland) Act 1987 143w
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 306, (24:03:88) 530-1, (28:03:88) 729-32

Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
275w

Origin marking
Manufactured goods 23w

Orthopaedics
Northern Ireland 565w

Out-patients
Scotland 140-1w

Outdoor advertising
Business premises 479w

Overseas aid
Bophuthatswana 131-2w
Cameroon 601w
Central America 484-5w
Contracts 601w
Ethiopia 601-2w
Expenditure 601w
Fiji 483w
Kampuchea 602w

Overseas development
see Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Overseas Development Administration
601w
Fiji 483w

Overseas investment
Income 613w

Overseas students
China 396w
Community charge 190w

Overseas trade
Bananas 629w

Owen, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
AIDS, Scotland (31:03:88) 1300
Questions
AIDS, Drug abuse 1273
Hospital length of stay 41w

Own resources
EC budget repayments 399w

Ownership
Broadcasting 232w
Newspaper press 232w

Oxford University
425-6w

Ozone layer
722w
Air pollution 366w

P & O
(30:03:88) 1164-250

PAC
see Public Accounts Committee

Page, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 898-9
Questions
EC Internal Market Council 483w
Financial Services Act 1986, Commencement orders 179w
Postal services, Monopolies 592-3w
UK companies abroad, South Africa 481w

Paice, Mr James
Questions
Land drainage, Environment protection 13w

Paisley, Rev Ian
Questions
Children, Northern Ireland 169w
Pre-school education, Northern Ireland 226w

Palace of Westminster
Aerosols 18, 20
House Magazine 599-600w
Parliamentary security 597-8w

Palestine
Israel 1074-5, 1080
Peace negotiations 1073-4
Refugees 519-20w

Palestine Liberation Organisation
Arms exports 278w, 317w, 356w
Defence equipment 278w
Foreign policy 522w

Panama
53w
British residents abroad 631-3w

Paper industry
Employment opportunities 643w
Government assistance to industry 643w

Parent & child
Young offenders 183w

***Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil**, Secretary of State for Energy*
Questions
Alternative energy, Research finance 293-4w
Amersham International, Government shareholding 371w
British Coal Corporation, Official engagements 294w, 717-8
British Coal Corporation, Redundancy pay 718
British Coal Corporation, Trade unions 370w
British Coal Corporation Enterprise, Employment opportunities 293w
Central Electricity Generating Board 289w
Central Electricity Generating Board, Official engagements 714-5
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Energy 135w
Coal, South Africa 294w
Coal, Sulphur 295w
Coal fired power stations, Kingsnorth 292w
Coal fired power stations, Pollution control 289-90w
Coal fired power stations, Scotland 716-7
Coal mining 293w, 718
Coal mining, Dismissal 291-2w
Coal mining, Government assistance to nationalised industries 293w
Coal mining, Productivity 291w
Coal mining, Scotland 291w
Coal mining, South Wales 718-9
Combined heat & power 292-3w
Consultants, Dept of Energy 371w, 509w
Departmental publications, Dept of Energy 68w

***Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil**—continued*
Electric cables, Cancer 715-6
Electricity, Iceland 295-6w
Electricity area boards, Interest charges 710
Electricity area boards, Official engagements 292w
Electricity Consumers' Council, Official engagements 709
Electricity Council, Official engagements 291w
Electricity distribution 715
Electricity generation 296w
Electricity generation, Nuclear power stations 294w
Electricity supply industry, Emergency planning 719-20
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 289-90w, 709-10, 712-3, 715-6
Electricity supply industry, Radioactive waste disposal 295w
Electricity tariffs 710-2
Electricity tariffs, Price increases 290w
Fast reactors 712
Hinkley Point C, Public inquiries 294w
Hinkley Point C, Somerset County Council 717
House of Commons questions 583w
Industrial energy prices 294w
Inner city areas, Dept of Energy 583w
Magnox reactors, Bradwell power station 585w
National Nuclear Corporation, Upper waiting hall 296w
Nuclear accidents 370w
Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive, Official engagements 291w
Nuclear power, Privatisation 583w
Nuclear power stations 370w
Nuclear power stations, Electricity generation 21-2w
Nuclear power stations, Insurance 289w
Petroleum production licences, Offshore drilling 179-80w
Plutonium, Exports 296w
Plutonium, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 585w
Power stations 710
Power stations, Construction 716
Radioactive wastes, Magnox reactors 584w
Radioactive wastes, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 584w
Severn barrage, Energy research 261w
Sizewell B, Contracts 370-1w
"This Week", Television programmes 20w
Uranium, Magnox reactors 583-4w
Wind power 292w

Parliamentary Communications
599-600w

Parliamentary press gallery
296w

Parliamentary security
Palace of Westminster 597-8w

Parole
Thain, Ian Richard 185w

Parry, Mr Robert
Questions
Nuclear submarines, Nuclear reactors 109w
Republic of Ireland, Official engagements 495-6
Unemployment 419w

Part-time education
Youth training scheme 12w

Passenger ships
VAT 125-6w

Passenger transport executives
Local government finance 559w

Passengers
Airports 353w

Passive smoking
158-9w

Passports
Administrative delays 231w, 681-3w, 686w
Civil service manpower 682-3w

Passports—continued
Post Office 65w

Patchett, Mr Terry
Questions
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 184-5
Departmental coordination, Housing standards 120-1w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 712
Housing stock, Building repairs 121-2w
Local government services, House purchase 188w
Mines & Quarries Inspectorate, Civil service manpower 432w

Pathology
Scotland 285-6w

Patnick, Mr Irvine
Questions
EC Environment Council 186-8w
Fire services, Conditions of employment 229w
Heating, Coal 713
Local government services, Competition 719w
Tenant Farmers' Association, Official engagements 636w
Youth training scheme, Take-up of employment 421w

***Patten, Mr Chris**, Minister of State for Overseas Development*
Questions
Cameroon, Overseas aid 601w
Central America, Overseas aid 484-5w
Ethiopia, Overseas aid 601-2w
Fiji, Overseas aid 483w
Fiji, Overseas Development Administration 483w
Kampuchea, Overseas aid 602w
Malaysia, Biwater 601w
Nicaragua, Technical assistance 602w
Overseas aid, Expenditure 601w

***Patten, Mr John**, Minister of State at the Home Office*
Questions
Civil defence 387w
Civil defence, Government grants 386-7w
Civil defence, Greater London 385-6w
Civil defence, London boroughs 384-5w
Crime prevention, Inner city areas 9w, 387w
Crime prevention, Women 492-3w
Crimes of violence 9w
Criminal proceedings, Time limits 492w
Custodial treatment, Fine defaulters 229-30w
Custodial treatment, Rates & rating 276w
Emergency planning, Guided weapons 117w
Extradition, Belgium 230w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 495w
False imprisonment, Convictions 117w
Fire prevention, Kent 185-6w
Fire Service Inspectorate 383w
Fire services, Conditions of employment 229w
Fires, Housing occupancy 486-91w
London Fire & Civil Defence Authority, Greater London Coordination Centre 684w
Oak Tree Farm Rural Projects, Charities 494w
Video recordings, Prosecutions 277w
Young offenders 230-1w
Young offenders, EC countries 275w
Young offenders, Habitual offenders 231w
Young offenders, Parent & child 183w

Pattie, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey

Questions
Business statements 514
Defence contracts, Small businesses 181-2

Pawsey, Mr James
Debates etc.
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 202
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 205, 209, 225-6, 254, 289, (23:03:88) 371, 432, 437
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 815-7
Questions
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 238w
Defence research 107w
Educational finance, Capital investment 176w
Newton, Official engagements 173w
Official engagements 54w

Pay
673-4w
Child workers 12w
Consultants 603w
Northern Ireland 219w
Northern Ireland Audit Office 14
Nurses 150w
Young people 219w

Pay beds
Income 339-40w
Tayside Health Board 204-5w

Pay incentives
Civil servants 463w
Higher civil servants 463w
Ministry of Defence 463w
Tax rates & bands 316w

Pay settlements
Civil servants 607w
Clinical physicists 446w
Medical laboratory scientific officers 448-9w
Top Salaries Review Body 883-4

Pay systems
Nurses 85w

Peace negotiations
Central America 515w, 631w, 1067-8
Iran-Iraq war 514w
Middle East 511-2w, 1080
Nicaragua 518w
Palestine 1073-4

Pendry, Mr Tom
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 72-5
Questions
NHS, Laboratories 334w
Rugby, South Africa 714-5w
South Africa, Sporting tours 630w

Pensioners
Age allowances 605-6w, 611w
Budget, March 1988 506-7
Concessionary fares 43-5w
Housing benefits 649-50w, 1273-4
Identity cards 153w
Social security reform 212w
Television licences (25:03:88) 631

Pentonville Prison
678-82w

Per capita costs
Hospital patients 508-9w
Local education authorities 596w
National income 18w

Performance indicators
NHS 342-4w
Northern Regional Health Authority 659-60w

Perinatal mortality
Airedale Health Authority 247-8w
Wales 26w

Persian Gulf
Armed forces deployment 186
Armilla patrol 515w
Shipping safety 515w

Personal income
Taxation 500-2w

Personal records
Local government social services 507w

Personal savings
Housing benefits 207w

Petrol
Tax harmonisation 91w
Tax yields 498w

Petroleum production
North Sea oil 644w

Petroleum production licences
Offshore drilling 179-80w, 292w

Photography
Arts finance 721-2
Schools 721-2

Pigment
1265
Production 1264-5

Pigs
Animal husbandry 635w, 640w
Government assistance 640w
Subsidies 635w

Pike, Mr Peter L
Questions
Bus services 41-2w
Custodial treatment, Rates & rating 276w
GATT, Trade agreements 178-9w
Guided weapons 191
Industrial energy prices 294w
International Fund for Ireland, USA 167w
Manufacturing industries, North West region 178w
Mental patients, Burnley Pendle & Rossendale Health Authority 651w
Minimum wage, Treaties 193w
North Western Regional Health Authority, Hospital closures 334w
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w, 374w
Origin marking, Manufactured goods 23w
Public libraries 348w
Road safety barriers, North West region 42w
South Africa, Diplomatic relations 513w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1078
Sports facilities, Local government services 309-10w
Textile industry, European Regional Development Fund 365w
Tourist industry, North West region 529-30w

Pilotage
Radio engineering 619-20w

Pink, Angela
Prosecutions 485w

Pirate radio stations
Prosecutions 481w

Pirelli
87-8w

Pit Bull News
485-6w

Pittenweem harbour
148w
Government grants 147-8w

Planning appeals
Suffolk 304w

Planning inquiries
Hospitals 307-8w

Planning permission
718w
Animal husbandry 190-1w, 200w

Planning permission—continued
Gypsies 1-2w
McDonald's Hamburgers 712w
Water pollution 240-1w

Plastic surgery
154w

Plastics
Upper waiting hall 356w

Playgrounds
Injuries (30:03:88) 1252-8

Playhouse Theatre, Liverpool
720-1

Plutonium
Exports 296w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 585w
Pressurised water reactors 583-4w

Pneumoconiosis etc (Workers' Compensation) (Payment of Claims) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

Points of order
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 37, 106-7, (24:03:88) 510, 557, 579, (28:03:88) 857-8, (30:03:88) 1101-7, 1109, 1118, (31:03:88) 1286

Police
Community charges register 405w
Conservative Party 186w
Dunmore shooting centre 696-7w
Economic League 275w
Manpower 388-90w
Police authorities 646w

Police Act 1964
Questions
684-5w

Police authorities
Police 646w
Scotland 646w

Police Authority for Northern Ireland
Disciplinary proceedings 222w

Police civilians
687-8w, 690-3w, 696w

Police custody
183w

Police firearms
186w
Codes of practice 681w
Wild animals 681w

Police informers
Northern Ireland 702w
Royal Ulster Constabulary 702w

Police records
Computer privacy 387w

Police surgeons
Scotland 285-6w

Political activities
Regional health authorities 335w

Political parties
EC grants & loans 395w
Inheritance tax 603-4w

Political prisoners
Nepal 273w
South Africa 133w, 1080-1
USSR 273-4w

Political refugees
Iran 388w, 394w
Turkey 388w, 394w

Pollution control
Acid rain 508w
Agriculture 637-8w
Coal fired power stations 289-90w

Pollution control—continued
Scotland 507-8w

Pollution monitoring
Chlorofluorocarbons 366w
Northern Ireland 238-9w
Radioactivity 568w
Scotland 252w
Sheep 641-2w
Surveying 286w

Polytechnics
Further education 5w

Polytechnics & Colleges Funding Council
5w, (24:03:88) 534-621

Pontefract Health Authority
Health service staff 38-9w

Pontypridd
Blind 7

Population
Inner city areas 586-90w

Port of London
Ports 409-10w
USA 409w

Portcullis
House Magazine 600w

Porter, Mr Barry
Debates etc.
Standing Order No 20 applications (22:03:88) 198
Questions
Business statements 1285

Porter, Mr David
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 644-6
Questions
East Anglian Regional Health Authority, Tourists 34w
Fishing, Prosecutions 64-5w
Fishing quotas, Lowestoft 313w
Midwives, East Anglian Regional Health Authority 159w
Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Bill 1987/88 474w
Planning appeals, Suffolk 304w
Road traffic, Sizewell 459w
Roads, Norfolk 61w
School population, Suffolk County Council 396w
Sizewell B, Contracts 370-1w
White fish, North Sea 313w

Portillo, Mr Michael, Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security
Debates etc.
Elderly, Nottingham (25:03:88) 702-8
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 306-10, 326-8
Questions
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Health & Social Security 151-2w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Bradford 340w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Charities 341w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Research 217w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices, Tottenham 211w
Electronic Data Systems, Government data network 443w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Unemployment benefits 452w
Exceptional needs payments, Birmingham 35w
Exceptional needs payments, Bradford 552w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security recipients 151w
Family credit, Free school meals 542w
Family credit, Lewisham 157w

Portillo, Mr Michael—continued
Family credit, Scotland 447-8w
Family credit, Sunderland 342w
Free school meals, Family credit 342w
Housing benefits, Capital rules 323-4w
Housing benefits, Dundee 207-8w
Housing benefits, Employment training 243w
Housing benefits, Lewisham 157w
Housing benefits, Local authorities in England & Wales 324-30w
Housing benefits, Married women 243w
Housing benefits, Personal savings 207w
Housing benefits, Scotland 448w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 242w, 649-50w
Housing benefits, Sunderland 342w
Income support scheme, Birmingham 36w
Income support scheme, Handicapped 216w
Income support scheme, Lewisham 157w
Income support scheme, Pregnant women 36w
Income support scheme, Scotland 447w
Income support scheme, Social security reform 662-3w
Industrial injury benefit, Administrative delays 160w
Low incomes, Family income 449-50w
Sheltered housing, Greenwich 658w
Shift work, Unemployment benefits 87-8w
Social Fund, Civil service manpower 212w
Social Fund, Manchester City Council 656w
Social Fund, Training 212w
Social security abuse, Civil service manpower 215w
Social security abuse, Costs 215w
Social Security Act 1986, Social security finance 542w
Social security appeals, Civil service manpower 215w
Social security appeals, Disciplinary proceedings 444w
Social security appeals tribunals 663w
Social security appeals tribunals, Codes of practice 444w
Social security benefits disqualification, Cohabitation 31w
Social security benefits disqualification, Dundee 551-2w
Social security benefits reductions, Electricity tariffs 212w
Social security claims, Tottenham 211-2w
Social security recipients, Dundee 216w
Social security recipients, Lewisham 155-7w
Social security reform, Disposable income 335w
Social security reform, Lewisham 157w
Social security reform, Voluntary organisations 341w
Social security reform, Wales 31w
Supplementary benefits, Average earnings 338w
Supplementary benefits, Departmental forms 150w
Supplementary benefits, Departmental leaflets 151w
Supplementary benefits, Lewisham 155w, 157w
Supplementary benefits, Sunderland 338w

Ports
Freight transport 92-3w
Government grants 147w
Port of London 409-10w
Scotland 147w

Portsmouth City Transport
Privatisation 460-1w, 559w

Positive discrimination
504

Post Office
145w, 592-3w
Passports 65w
Social security payments 63w

Postal rates
Highlands of Scotland 139w, (23:03:88) 485-92

Postal services
Highlands of Scotland 145w
Monopolies 592-3w
USSR 1079
Wales 280w
Western Isles 145w

Potassium
Waste disposal 4w

Potatoes
Agricultural subsidies 568w

Poultry
Government assistance 635w

Powell, Mr Ray
Questions
Blind, Pontypridd 7
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 290w
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 416w
Unemployment, Wales 27-8w

Powell, Mr William
Questions
Government assistance to industry, Corby 879

Power station closures
Research finance 20w

Power stations
710
Air pollution control 196
Construction 716

Pregnant women
Income support scheme 36w

Pre-school education
Northern Ireland 169w, 226w

Prescott, Mr John
Questions
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 716
Electricity tariffs 710-1
Electricity tariffs, Price increases 290w
MV Saga Moon, Criminal investigation 705w

Prescription charges
542-3w

Prescriptions
Benzodiazepines 330-2w, 660w

Preservation orders
Tree conservation 297w

Pressurised water reactors
Plutonium 583-4w

Prestwick Airport
Air freight transport 91-2w

Price, Sir David
Debates etc.
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1170, 1183-4
Questions
AIDS, Screening 336w

Price increases
Electricity tariffs 290w

Primarolo, Ms Dawn
Questions
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 189

Primary education
Welsh language 197-200w

Prime Minister
373w
Treasury 880

Prime Minister's questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:03:88) 506, (29:03:88) 882

Prison education services
Evening courses 678w

Prison employment
Prisons 680-2w
Working hours 679-80w

Prison escapes
Ashwell Prison 232w

Prison medical services
Drug abuse 683w

Prison overcrowding
Leicester Prison 491w
Ministerial statements (30:03:88) 1083-98

Prison population
Ethnic groups 384w
Ethnic minorities 183-4w

Prison sentences
Northern Ireland 81w

Prison visits
IRA 225-6w

Prisoners
AIDS 641-3w
Alcoholism 647-8w
Disclosure of information 66w
Drug abuse 683w
Exercise 276-7w
Scotland 647-8w

Prisoners of war
Japan 6w

Prisoners on remand
Community charge 405w

Prisoners' release
Northern Ireland 79-81w

Prisoners' transfers
Northern Ireland 119-20w
Republic of Ireland 491-2w

Prisons
Land acquisition 66w
Prison employment 680-2w
Recreation spaces 276-7w

Private companies
Safety 554w

Private health services
Contracts for services 142w
Manpower 280w
Northern Ireland 311w
Scotland 142w
South Glamorgan Health Authority 278-9w
Wales 280w

Private patients
Hospital length of stay 344-8w

Privatisation
Armed forces catering services 411w
Bees 1268
British Steel Corporation 585w
Consultants 604-6w
Crown Suppliers 238w, 305w, 720w
Electricity supply industry 20w, 68w, 135w, 137w, 281w, 289-90w, 353-4, 509w, 572w, (24:03:88) 622-30, 709-10, 712-6, 719
Health & Safety Executive 673w
Iron & steel industry 876-7
Local government services 479-80w
National Bus Company 558w
Nuclear power 583w
Portsmouth City Transport 460-1w, 559w
Professional & Executive Recruitment 422w
Public transport 461-2w
Scottish Bus Group 142-3w

Privy Council
(21:03:88) 41

Procedure Select Committee
House of Commons debates 524-8w
Publishing 524-8w

Product safety
Consumer protection 62-3w

Production quotas
Milk 566-7w, 635w

Productivity
Coal mining 291w, 1273

Professional & Executive Recruitment
Privatisation 422w

Professional misconduct
Barristers 176-7w

Professional qualifications
Teachers 127w

Project 2000
140w
Nurses 656w

Property development
Castle Court Belfast 564-5w
Howbury Park 190w
Local authorities 1w

Property Services Agency
121w, 237w, 299-301w, 719-20w
Competition 719w
Consultants 122w, 367w, 471-3w

Property transfer
Cairndhu Hospital 561-2w
Coal mining 20w
Council housing 298w
Empty housing 189-90w
Mental hospitals 251w, 331-2w
Public sector assets 319w

Proscribed organisations
Sinn Fein 706w

Prosecutions
Death (31:03:88) 1324-30
Dog fighting 485-6w
Fishing 64-5w
Industrial health & safety 427-8w
Pink, Angela 485w
Pirate radio stations 481w
Video recordings 277w

Protective clothing
Motorcycles 459w

Provisional Sinn Fein
see Sinn Fein

PSA
see Property Services Agency

Psychiatric nurses
Community nurses 443w
Northern Ireland 698-9w
Scotland 402w

Psychiatry
Army 360-1w

Psychology
Armed forces training 359w

Public Accounts Commission
Public Accounts Committee 14

Public Accounts Committee
(25:03:88) 696
Public Accounts Commission 14

Public appointments
Council For National Academic Awards 176w
District health authorities 33w, 341w
Family practitioner committees 453w
General Practice Finance Corporation 453w
Independent Commission for Police Complaints for N Ireland 80w
Leeds Western Health Authority 451w
Northern Ireland 81w
Special health authorities 33w
Unleaded Petrol Group 306w

Public Bills
Guillotine 598-600w

Public buildings
Rate rebates 237-8w
Uniform business rate 237-8w

Public companies
Audit (22:03:88) 199-200
Building societies 502w
Company accounts 233w

Public expenditure
318-20w
Civil service 313-4w
Homelessness 249-50w

Public footpaths
Maps 475-6w

Public inquiries
Harrogate bypass 60w
Hinkley Point C 294w
Knaresborough bypass 60w
Road construction 263w

Public libraries
348-9w
Business 349w
Fees & charges 574-5w, 722-3
Norfolk County Council 348w
Old people's homes 347w
Southwark 350w

Public opinion
Scotland 140w

Public order policing
News International 184w

Public petitions
Diego Garcia (30:03:88) 1251
Educational standards (23:03:88) 484
Health & Safety Executive (29:03:88) 1055
Health services (28:03:88) 859
Television licences (25:03:88) 631

Public records
Railway industry 470w, 553-4w

Public relations
Welsh Office 576w

Public sector assets
Property transfer 319w

Public sector borrowing
318w

Public service obligation grant
British Rail 557w

Public transport
Councillors 461-2w
Privatisation 461-2w

Publicity
EC internal trade 119-20w
Inner cities initiative 591w
Litter 278w, 373w
Local authorities 714w
Screening 213w
Wales Tourist Board 8-9
Water charges 202w

Publishing
China 381w
Dept of Employment 671w
Finance (No 2) Bill 1987/88 194w
Procedure Select Committee 524-8w
Social Security Advisory Committee 661w

Punishment
Dog fighting 493-4w

Pupils
School discipline 505w

Quangos
Government grants 711-2w

Queen's Medical Centre Nottingham
Computers in National Health Service 32w

Quin, Ms Joyce
Questions
Combined heat & power 714
Fish farming, Water pollution 1259
Youth training scheme, Job substitution rates 421w

Racal Decca Marine Navigation
619-20w

Radiation hazards
Industrial health & safety 718-9w
Northern Ireland 699w

Radio
Gaming 118w
Licensing 118w

Radio Authority
118w

Radio engineering
Pilotage 619-20w

Radio programmes
Spicer, Michael 583w

Radioactive waste disposal
Electricity supply industry 68w, 295w
International conferences 717w
Scotland 17w

Radioactive wastes
Dounreay 21w
EC action 121w
Magnox reactors 584w
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 584w
Transport of radioactive materials 121w

Radioactivity
1261-2
Food contamination 1260-2
Northern Ireland 704-5w
Pollution monitoring 568w
Scotland 286-7w
Sheep 206w, 228-30w, 238-9w, 252w, 641-2w, 704-5w
Sheep meat 5, 29w
Surveying 286-7w

Radios
Ships 620w

RAF Coltishall
467w

RAF Feltwell
Satellites 7w
Space technology 364w

RAF Greenham Common
Bye laws 101w

RAF Lossiemouth
116w

RAF Molesworth
7w

RAF Wethersfield
Stansted Airport 7w

Raffan, Mr Keith
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 99-100
Questions
Craft industries, Wales 6-7
NHS finance, Wales 15
Unemployment 4

Railway electrification
Government grants 614-5w

Railway industry
Public records 470w, 553-4w

Railway land
Blood sports 19w, 46w

Railway network
Greater London 264w

Railway transport
Greater London 618-9w
Transport police 47w

Railway travel
457w
Budget, March 1988 501-2w

Railway travel—continued
Customs 398-9w

Railways Act 1974
Questions
557-8w

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 269, 274-7, 278, (23:03:88) 368, 372-3, 380, 408-9, (24:03:88) 582-3, 585, 601
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 808-9

Randall, Mr Stuart
Questions
Benzodiazepines, Prescriptions 330-2w
Health & Safety Executive, Privatisation 673w

Raspberries
Scotland 148w

Rate increases
Scotland 141-2w

Rate limitation
Basildon District Council 718w

Rate rebates
Public buildings 237-8w
Shetland Islands Council 148-9w

Rates & rating
368w
Appeals 478-9w
Custodial treatment 276w
Debts 118w
Non-metropolitan counties 305-7w
Stoke-on-Trent 118w
Wales 11-2

Rathbone, Mr Tim
Questions
Drugs, Customs 608w
Outdoor advertising, Business premises 479w
Water pollution, Chemicals 710w

Raw materials
Drugs 33-4w

RCN
see Royal College of Nursing

Reading Prison
66w

Recess motions
(25:03:88) 632-73

ReChem International
Ministry of Defence 236w

Recreation spaces
Prisons 276-7w

Redmond, Mr Martin
Questions
Civil defence 387w
Civil defence, Government grants 386-7w, 403w
Civil defence, Greater London 385-6w
Civil defence, London boroughs 384-5w
Civil defence, Scotland 403-4w
Council of Europe, Treaties 628-9w
EC energy policy 711
Government buildings, Greater London 719-20w
Ministry of Defence, Central London 110w
Motor vehicles, Computer applications 352w

Redundancy
Coal mining 712
Devonport dockyard 412-3w
Dock workers 161-2w
Employment discrimination 162w
Manufacturing industries 878-9

Redundancy pay
British Coal Corporation 718

Redundancy Payments (Local Government) (Modification) (Amendment) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(28:03:88) 732

Redwood, Mr John
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 80-3, 103-4
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 914
Questions
Hospital waiting lists, NHS finance 323w
NHS, Performance indicators 342-4w

Rees, Rt Hon Merlyn
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 446
Questions
Business statements 515

Refugees
Hong Kong 274w
Human rights 519-20w
Infant mortality 520w
Palestine 519-20w

Refuse disposal
Northern Ireland 562-3w

Regional aid
875
Houghton 595-6w

Regional development grants
Dept of Employment 874-5

Regional health authorities
Contracts for services 335w
Hospital waiting lists 544-6w
Mental health community care 333w
Political activities 335w
Surgery 544-6w

Regional selective assistance
595-6w

Reid, Dr John
Debates etc.
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 361
Oral question time intervention (23:03:88) 353
Questions
Armed forces medical services, Ambulance services 103w
Business statements 526
Central Electricity Generating Board, Official engagements 714-5
Child benefit 440w
Community charge 713w
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Official engagements 351-2
Unemployment, Motherwell 15w

Religion
Books 13-4

Religious discrimination
Northern Ireland 223w

Religious education
6w
Christianity 13

Religious freedom
USSR 516w

Religious orders
Community charge 714w

Remand in custody
Greater London 66w

Rent increases
Greenwich 720w
Sheltered housing 720w

Rent officers
(30:03:88) 1115-63

Rented housing
718w
London Docklands Development Corporation 236w

Renton, Mr Tim, Minister of State at the Home Office
Questions
Debts, Rates & rating 118w
Entry clearances 10-1w, 685w

Renton, Mr Tim—continued
Entry clearances, Birmingham 494w
Foreign tourists, Indian subcontinent 119-20w
Hulton Picture Library 685w
Immigration officers, Birmingham 685w
Passports, Administrative delays 231w, 681-3w
Passports, Post Office 65w
Political refugees, Turkey 388w
Radio, Gaming 118w
Radio, Licensing 118w
Sinn Fein, Broadcasting controls 495w
Sunday trading, Scotland 231w
Telephone systems, Lunar house 686-7w
Visas, Immigration controls 389-91w

Rents
New Forest 880

Repairs & maintenance
Bridges 615w
Monuments 121w

Repatriation
Vietnamese refugees 631-2w

Report stage
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:88) 365

Republic of Ireland
Extradition 486w, 495w, 705-6w
IRA 497
Official engagements 222w, 495-6
Prisoners' transfers 491-2w
Terrorism 439w
UK companies abroad 234w
VAT 227w

Rescue services
Helicopters 467w

Research
Air conditioning 208-9w
Block grant 3-4w
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 217w
Electricity supply industry (24:03:88) 622-30
Ventilation 208-9w

Research finance
Agricultural research 1267
Alternative energy 293-4w
Health & Safety Executive 530w
Medical research 336-7w
Power station closures 20w
Science & technology research 471w

Resettlement
Vietnamese refugees 632w

Residential care
Antrim 166-7w
Fire prevention 185w
Mentally ill 331w, 697w
Northern Ireland 166w

Residential care of children
Homosexuality 310w

Resignations
Armed forces 191

Restart programme
259w, 434w
Availability for work 163w
Departmental forms 162-3w

Restrictive labour practices
883
Television 283-4w

Retail price index
Exchange rates 613w

Retail prices
Common agricultural policy 640w
Food exports 640w

Retail trade
Motor vehicle safety 352w

Retirement pensions
Administrative delays 88w
Married women 441-2w

Retirement pensions—continued
Social security benefits uprating 452w

Rhodes James, Mr Robert
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 447-8

Rhymney Valley
Employment 127-8w

Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Debates etc.
Companies (Audit Committees) Bill, 1R (22:03:88) 199-200
Questions
Austria, EC external relations 519w
Housing benefits, Social security recipients 242w
Social security benefits, Marginal tax rates 244-6w
Standard of living 651w

Richardson, Ms Jo
Questions
McDonald's Hamburgers, Planning permission 712w
Maternity leave 432w

Richmond house
237w
Crown lands & estates 299-301w

Riddick, Mr Graham
Debates etc.
Urban planning (31:03:88) 1345-9
Questions
Trade union elections, Secret ballot 434w

***Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas**, Secretary of State for the Environment*
Questions
Block grant, Research 3-4w
Building industry, EC integration 716-7w
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 192w
Civil service dispersal, Dept of the Environment 297w
Community charge 478w
Community charge, Government grants to local authorities 307w
Community charge, Local government services 714w
Community charge, Married women 2w
Community charge, Religious orders 714w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 367w, 473-4w
Consultants, Property Services Agency 367w, 471-3w
Council tenants, Nottingham 298w
Dept of the Environment, Market research 299w
House of Commons Works of Art Advisory Committee 192-3w
Inner city areas, Dept of the Environment 715w
Litter, Government grants 59-60w
Local government expenditure 4w
Local government expenditure, Block grant 722w
Quangos, Government grants 711-2w
Sports facilities, Local government services 476-7w

***Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm**, Secretary of State for Scotland*
Debates etc.
British Railways Order Confirmation Bill, 1R (23:03:88) 339
Urban areas, Ministerial statements (29:03:88) 902-17
Questions
Consultants, Scottish Office 404w, 648-9w
Economic situation, Scotland 349
Ford Motor Company 349-51
Ford Motor Company, Dundee 287w
Forestry, Scotland 138-9w
Higher civil servants, Scottish Office 287w
Hospital waiting lists, Scotland 342-3

Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm—continued
Local authorities in Scotland, Cash limits 507w
Michael Forsyth Limited, Scottish Office 646-7w
NHS, Scotland 342-3
Pathology, Scotland 285-6w
Public opinion, Scotland 140w
Road construction, Scotland 288w
Scottish Office, Ethnic monitoring 146w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 353
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Official engagements 351-2
Surgery, Scotland 341-2

Rio Tinto Zinc
(29:03:88) 1056-64
Cornwall 63w
Standing Order No 20 applications (23:03:88) 357

Ritalin
Narcolepsy 453w

River Dee
15-6

River pollution
Agricultural products 635w

Rivers
Tourism 873

Riverside Health Authority
Hospital closures 334-5w

RNAD Coulport
Construction 54w, 368w

Road accidents
354w
A256 261-2w
A258 261-2w
Heart diseases 456w
Motorcycles 621-2w
Summertime 619w

Road construction
Administrative delays 617w
Chester bypass 554w
Disley bypass 616w
London Docklands 263w
M25 615w
M40 557w
Newark bypass 460w
Public inquiries 263w
Scotland 288w

Road safety
Kelsall bypass 554w

Road safety barriers
North West region 42w

Road signs
Tourism 620w
Woolwich ferry 355w

Road tax
Administrative costs 556w
Tax yields 556w

Road traffic
A2 129-30w
A50 267w
Hayes bypass 617-8w
M6 267w, 462w
Sizewell 459w
Stoke-on-Trent 267-8w
Thelwall 462w
Urban areas 267-8w

Road traffic control
Speed limits 130w

Road Traffic Law Review Committee
61-2w, 557w

Road works
A38 556w
A55 27w

Road works—continued
A96 144w
Forestry 285w
Local government expenditure 474-5w
London Docklands 262-3w
M5 60-1w
M25 615w
Tourism 456w

Roads
Norfolk 61w
Suffolk 61w

Roberts, Mr Allan
Questions
Aerosols, Palace of Westminster 18
Lorries, Defence contracts 106w

Roberts, Mr Wyn, Minister of State for Wales
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 566-71
Questions
A55, Road works 27w
Arson, Wales 5-6
Education & industry, Comprehensive schools 29-30w
Educational maintenance allowance, Wales 575w
Employment schemes, Wales 280w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 9-10
Hotels, Wales 52w
Hotels, Wales Tourist Board 200w
Opera, Craig-y-nos castle 6
Opera, Wales 6
Sheep meat, Radioactivity 5
Tourist industry, Employment opportunities 27w
Wales Tourist Board 9
Wales Tourist Board, Official engagements 5
Wales Tourist Board, Publicity 8-9
Welsh language 28w
Welsh language, Primary education 197-200w
Welsh language, Secondary education 527w
Welsh National Opera 6

Robertson, Mr George
Questions
Chemical weapons 1072
EC internal trade, Conferences 383w
Harmonisation of standards, EC action 592w
Investor protection, EC action 383w
Middle East, Peace negotiations 512w
Pathology, Scotland 285-6w
VAT zero rated goods 93w

Robinson, Mr Peter
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 28-9
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 497-8

Roe, Mrs Marion, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc.
Council house sales, Sutton (28:03:88) 863-6
Questions
Asbestos, Housing estates 121w
Bed & breakfast accommodation 715w
Council house sales, Nottingham 719w
Council housing, Property transfer 298w
Empty housing, Council housing 189-90w
Gypsies, Planning permission 1-2w
Homelessness, Government grants to voluntary organisations 237w
Homelessness, Housing 298-300w
Homelessness, Mentally ill 188w
House prices 717-8w
House renovation grants, Defective housing 309w
Housing estates, Rushmoor 57w

Roe, Mrs Marion—continued
Housing finance 711w
Housing investment programmes 712w
Housing standards 3w
Housing starts 2w
Insulation grants, Stoke-on-Trent 1w
Local government property, Local government audit 719w
Local government services, House purchase 188w
McDonald's Hamburgers, Planning permission 712w
Planning permission 718w
Rent increases, Sheltered housing 720w
Rented housing 718w
Superglass Insulation, Housing insulation 308w
Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation, Factories 297-8w, 721w

Rogers, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 566, 568
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1048
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 310, 326
Rover Group (29:03:88) 895
Questions
Defence contracts, Fraud 188
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 289-90w

Rollestone camp
(30:03:88) 1083-98

Rolling stock
Network SouthEast 554w

Roll-on roll-off ships
47w, (30:03:88) 1164-250
Shipping safety 353w, 557w

Rooker, Mr Jeff
Questions
Employment protection, Insolvency 875-6
IHV Industrial Investments, Company reports 64w
Midland Professional Cleaning Services, Insolvency 12-3w
Tax yields 97-8w
Taxation, Personal income 500-2w

ROSPA
see Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

Ross, Mr William
Debates etc.
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 40
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 32, 36
Terrorism, Standing Order No 20 applications (22:03:88) 197-8
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Homicide 438w
Burns, Brendan, Extradition 48-9w
Dunmore shooting centre, Firearms certificates 688-9w
Dunmore shooting centre, Gun sports 695-6w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 495w, 705-6w
Firearms certificates, Departmental forms 689w
Firearms certificates, Gwent 388w
Gibson, Lord Justice, Criminal investigation 439w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Arbitration schemes 169w
Public appointments, Northern Ireland 81w
Radioactivity 1261-2
Radioactivity, Northern Ireland 704-5w
Ryan, Michael, Dunmore shooting centre 690w, 694-7w
Ryan, Michael, Firearms 688w, 694-6w
Ryan, Michael, Firearms certificates 687-94w, 696w

Ross, Mr William—continued
Ryan, Michael, Wiltshire shooting centre 692-3w
Terrorism, Cross border cooperation in Ireland 439w
Terrorism, Death 438-9w
Water pollution, Planning permission 240-1w
Wiltshire shooting centre, Gun sports 694w

Rossi, Sir Hugh
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 398-401, 403, 417-8, 426

Rost, Mr Peter
Questions
Combined heat & power 714

Rotherham
Youth employment 429w

Rover Group
95-7w
British Aerospace (29:03:88) 885-901, (31:03:88) 1301-7
Ministerial statements (29:03:88) 885-901

Rowe, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 51
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 255-6, 296, (23:03:88) 371, 378, 442-4, (24:03:88) 549-50, 595, 602-3
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1093
Tree conservation (22:03:88) 334-5
Questions
Children in care, Homelessness 229-30w, 254w, 664-7w
Finance (No 2) Bill 1987/88, Publishing 194w

Rowlands, Mr Ted
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 253-5, (24:03:88) 563-4, 567
Questions
Educational maintenance allowance, Wales 575w
Health, Wales 26w
Public Bills, Guillotine 598-600w
St Tydfils Hospital 11

Royal Black Preceptory Institution
703w

Royal College of Nursing
880

Royal Engineers
361-2w

Royal family
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 18

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
619w

Royal Ulster Constabulary
(21:03:88) 21-36, (22:03:88) 197-8, 360w, 438w, 494, 508-10
Complaints against police 221w
Disclosure of information 702-3w
Ethnic minorities 221w
Homicide 703w
Official engagements 78w
Police informers 702w
Secret societies 703w

RUC
see Royal Ulster Constabulary

Ruddock, Mrs Joan
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 761, 764-7
Questions
Combined heat & power 292-3w

Ruddock, Mrs Joan—continued
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 189-90
Enterprise allowance scheme, Lewisham 282-3w
European Social Fund, Greater London 70w
Family credit, Lewisham 157w
Fire Service Inspectorate 383w
Food contamination, Radioactivity 1260-1
Free school meals, Inner London Education Authority 127w
Hospital consultants, South East Thames Regional Health Authority 344w
Housing benefits, Lewisham 157w
Income support scheme, Lewisham 157w
Industrial development, Lewisham 585w
Radioactive waste disposal, Scotland 17w
Social security recipients, Lewisham 155-7w
Social security reform, Lewisham 157w
Supplementary benefits, Lewisham 155w, 157w
Youth training scheme, Lewisham 284w

Rugby
South Africa 714-5w
Sporting tours 630w

***Rumbold, Mrs Angela**, Minister of State for Education and Science*
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Money res (21:03:88) 167-9
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 260-3, (23:03:88) 390-4, 434, (24:03:88) 534-6
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 776-81, 791-3, 827-9
Questions
Civil service dispersal, Dept of Education & Science 67-8w
Consultants, Dept of Education & Science 396w, 470w
Departmental publications, Dept of Education & Science 5-6w
Examinations, Costs 596w
Examinations, Ethnic minorities 395w
Languages education, GCE 272w
Local education authorities, Per capita costs 596w
Religious education 6w
Schools broadcasting, Sex education 174-5w
Teachers, Professional qualifications 127w

Rural areas
Employment 876
Unemployment 259w

Rush Park flats
Building damage 561w

Rushmoor
Housing estates 57w

Ryan, Michael
Dunmore shooting centre 688w, 690w, 694-7w
Firearms 688w, 694-6w
Firearms certificates 687-94w, 696w
Wiltshire shooting centre 690w, 692-3w

Sackville, Mr Tom
Questions
EC Foreign Affairs Council, Human rights 133-4w
Fishing, Northern Ireland 219w
Foreign tourists, USA 434w
Iron & steel industry 877

Safer cities scheme
9w

Safety
Private companies 554w
Transport 554w

Safety belts
Ford Motor Company 42w

"Safety Representatives & Safety Committee Regulations"
413w

Safety standards
Electricity 374w
Ferries 47w

***Sainsbury, Mr Tim**, Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement*
Questions
Armed forces catering services, Privatisation 411w
Armed forces medical services, Ambulance services 103w
Artillery 112w, 364w
Challenger tanks, Defence procurement 623w
Chemical & biological warfare, Defence research 99w
Civil service manpower, Ministry of Defence 235-6w
Consultants, Ministry of Defence 411w, 464-7w
Defence contracts 103w, 111-2w, 116w, 187-8
Defence contracts, Fraud 188
Defence contracts, Marconi 187, 624w
Defence contracts, North Sea 363w
Defence contracts, North West region 189
Defence contracts, Small businesses 109w, 181-2
Defence equipment, Defence expenditure 464w
Defence equipment, North sea 624w
Defence procurement 106-7w
Defence procurement, Disclosure of information 468w
Defence research 107w
Departmental publications, Ministry of Defence 7w
Devonport dockyard, Redundancy 412-3w
Early warning systems, Employment opportunities 362-3w, 412w
Early warning systems, Military aircraft 363w
Early warning systems, Offset arrangements 116w
European fighter aircraft 105w, 192
European fighter aircraft, Costs 104w
European fighter aircraft, Production 192
Frigates, Defence procurement 104w
Frigates, Navy 104w
Guided weapons 112w, 191
Guided weapons, USA 410w
Lorries, Defence contracts 106w
Ministry of Defence, Civil service dispersal 188-9
Ministry of Defence, Pay incentives 463w
Ministry of Defence police 364w
Ministry of Defence police, Codes of practice 464w
Ministry of Defence police, Greenham Common 411w
Rechem International, Ministry of Defence 236w
Strategic defence initiative, Defence contracts 464w
Tanks, Defence procurement 623w
Trident 99w
Trident, Members' correspondence 409w
Type 23 frigates, Defence procurement 104w
Uranium, Namibia 411w
Vanguard submarines, Navigational aids 136w

St Bede's School Balornock
Handicapped pupils 142w

Saint Bennet Fink Burial Ground (City of London) Bill (HL) 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R* (30:03:88) 1065

St George's Hill Weybridge Estate Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

St Thomas' Hospital
Hospital closures 192-3

St Tydfil's Hospital
11

Salford Health Authority
Finance 339-40w

Salmon
Fishery protection 639w
World Wildlife Fund 639w

Salmond, Mr Alex
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 465
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1176-8, 1204-5, 1217, 1219
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 908
Questions
Freight transport, Ports 92-3w
Scottish Council (Development & Industry) 144w

Satellites
RAF Feltwell 7w

Saudi Arabia
Export promotion 24-6w

Sayeed, Mr Jonathan
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 892
Questions
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 185-6
Cabotage, Shipping 559w
Chemical weapons, USSR 113w

"Scene"
174-5w

Schizophrenia
271-2w, 331w, 560w, 697w
Homelessness 251w, 331w
Hospital discharges 251-2w, 284-5w, 697w
Mental patients 441-4w
Northern Ireland 697w

School administration
Educational policy 235w
Scotland 1275-6

School admission
6w

School closures
Merksworth School, Paisley 142w

School discipline
Inquiries 176w
Pupils 505w

School leaving
Take-up of employment 429w

School meals
596-8w

School population
Fife 73-6w
Suffolk County Council 396w

Schools
Photography 721-2

Schools & parents
(21:03:88) 159-72, (22:03:88) 204-305, (23:03:88) 366-463, (24:03:88) 534-621, (28:03:88) 733-832

Schools broadcasting
Sex education 174-5w

Science & technology research
Research finance 471w
Tobacco 153-4w
Wales 3

Scientists
Marconi 624w

Scope of debate
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 213, 251, 252, 259, (23:03:88) 436, (28:03:88) 742, 839, 845, (29:03:88) 955, 995, (31:03:88) 1340, 1341

Scorriton down
410w
Bomb disposal 410w

Scotland
341
Acid rain 508w
Agricultural research 1267-8
Agriculture 644-5w
AIDS 406-8w, 503-4w, 641-3w, (31:03:88) 1294-300
Air force 411w
Air pollution control 507-8w
Ancient monuments 141w
Body searches 643w
British Rail (23:03:88) 339
Broadleaved woodlands 402w
Business 145w
Cheese 346-7
Childbirth 343-4
Children in care 254w
Civil defence 403-4w
Coal fired power stations 716-7
Coal mining 141w, 291w, 351-2
"Community Care" 504w
Community charge 15w, 72-4w, 143w, 204w, 340-1, 345-9, 405w, (28:03:88) 833-58
Community charge rebates 405w
Community charges register 14w, 143w, 404-6w, 641w
Company registration 119w
Conifers 402w
Council house rents 141w
Crime prevention panels 144w
Crofting 1262-3
Curriculum 141w
Disposable syringes 504w
Dock labour scheme 675-8w
Drinking & driving 77-8w
EC integration 70-1w
Economic situation 349
Electric cables 354
Electricity 286w
Electricity supply industry 137w, 351-2, 354, 572w
Electricity tariffs 353-4
Emergency planning 403-4w
Employment schemes 355
Factory Inspectorate 423w
Family credit 447-8w
Foreign investment in UK 140w
Forestry 137-9w
Forestry grant scheme 286w
Forestry grants 75-7w
Government grants to voluntary organisations 253-4w
Grant Thornton Management Consultants 15-6w
Health 355
Heart diseases 204w
Historic buildings 202w
Homelessness 248-51w
Hospital beds 144w
Hospital patients 140-1w, 508-9w
Hospital waiting lists 342-3
Hotels 76w
Housing (29:03:88) 920-1036, (30:03:88) 1115-63
Housing association grant 253w
Housing benefits 448w
Income support scheme 447w
Incontinence 15w
Industrial accidents 435w
Industrial diseases 436w
Industrial health & safety 427-8w
Industrial production 145-6w
Leukaemia 341-2
Local government social services 507w
Local government staff 344-5
Location of industry 408-9w
Mental health community care 402w
Mental hospitals 251w, 401-3w
Mental patients 251-2w, 503w
Mentally ill 284-5w
Milk 346
Mink 646w

Scotland—continued
NHS 342-3
NHS finance 143-4w
Non-domestic rates 503w
Nursery schools 355-6
Nurses' training 71w, 140w
Official engagements 372w
Out-patients 140-1w
Pathology 285-6w
Police authorities 646w
Police surgeons 285-6w
Pollution control 507-8w
Pollution monitoring 252w
Ports 147w
Prisoners 647-8w
Private health services 142w
Psychiatric nurses 402w
Public opinion 140w
Radioactive waste disposal 17w
Radioactivity 286-7w
Raspberries 148w
Rate increases 141-2w
Road construction 288w
School administration 1275-6
Shareholders 122-3w
Sick leave 436-7w
Social security abuse 215w
Solicitors 16w
Student grants 506-7w
Sunday trading 231w
Surgery 139-40w, 341-2
Surveying 286w
Teachers 148w
Tree planting 402w
Unemployment 254w
Urban areas (29:03:88) 902-17
Woodland grant scheme 137-9w

***Scott, Mr Nicholas**, Minister of State for Social Security and the Disabled*
Debates etc.
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 464-6, 479-83
Questions
Child benefit 440w
Earnings rules, Occupational pensions 152-3w
Handicap benefits, Social security recipients 537-8w
Handicapped 440w
Handicapped, Access to buildings 447w
Handicapped, United Nations 447w
Heating allowances, Elderly 83w
Housing benefits, Social security reform 216-7w
Independent Living Fund 661-2w
Invalid care allowances 86w
Invalid care allowances, Carers 86w
Low incomes, Marginal tax rates 450w
Pensioners, Identity cards 153w
Pensioners, Social security reform 212w
Retirement pensions, Administrative delays 88w
Retirement pensions, Married women 441-2w
Retirement pensions, Social security benefits uprating 452w
Severe weather payments, Earnings rules 153w
Social Security Advisory Committee, Publishing 661w
Social security benefits, Community charge 149-50w
Social security benefits, Marginal tax rates 244-6w
Standard of living 547-50w, 651w

Scottish & Newcastle Breweries
Standing Order No 20 applications (30:03:88) 1099

Scottish Bus Group
Privatisation 142-3w

Scottish Council (Development & Industry)
144w

Scottish Development Agency
308w
Consultants 648w
Inverclyde initiative 15-6w, 142w
Superglass Insulation 408w

Scottish health boards
Computers in National Health Service 647w
NHS administration 647w
Nurses 71-2w, 505-6w

Scottish Health Education Group
354

Scottish Homes
(29:03:88) 920-1036, (30:03:88) 1115-63

Scottish Lay Observer
Law Society of Scotland 16w

Scottish Milk Marketing Board
346

Scottish Office
Consultants 404w, 648-9w
Ethnic monitoring 146w
European Year of the Environment 406w
Higher civil servants 287w
Inner city areas 644w
Michael Forsyth Limited 646-7w

Scottish Solicitors' Discipline Tribunal
Legal malpractice 16w

Scottish Special Housing Association
(29:03:88) 920-1036, (30:03:88) 1115-63
Shetland 201w

Scottish Trades Union Congress
349

Screening
AIDS 336w
Breast cancer 282w
Cancer 213w
Cervical cancer 213w, 336w
Computer applications 213w
Congenital abnormalities 217w
Publicity 213w

SDA
see Scottish Development Agency

Sea King helicopters
467w

Secondary education
Welsh language 527w

Secret ballot
Trade union elections 434w

Secret societies
Royal Ulster Constabulary 703w

Secure tenancies
(29:03:88) 920-1036

Security
Firearms certificates 691-2w
Northern Ireland 221w, 501-2, 508

Sedgemore, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 83-6
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 537, 606-8
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 745, 752, 820-1
Questions
Inner London Education Authority 596w
Public libraries, Fees & charges 722-3
RAF Greenham Common, Bye laws 101w

Select Committee evidence
Codes of practice 523w

Sellafield
20w
Nuclear accidents 562w, 699w

Sellafield—continued
Nuclear fuel reprocessing 584w
Nuclear safeguards 261w

Set-aside schemes
Cereals 260-1w
Expenditure 638w

Severe weather payments
83w
Earnings rules 153w

Severn barrage
Energy research 261w

Sewage
Water authorities 716w

Sex change operations
154w

Sex discrimination
Employment training 429w
Youth employment 429w

Sex education
Schools broadcasting 174-5w

SF
see Sinn Fein

SFA
see Small Farmers' Association

Shareholders
Scotland 122-3w

Sharpeville six
133w, 513w, 1080-1

Shaw, Mr David
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 48
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1185-7, 1193-4
Questions
A2, Cost benefit analysis 354w
A2, Road traffic 129-30w
Coal mining, Government assistance to nationalised industries 293w
Enterprise allowance scheme, Employment opportunities 429w
Health service ancillary staff 440w
Nationalised industries, Expenditure 95-7w
Plastic surgery 154w
Quangos, Government grants 711-2w
Road accidents, A256 261-2w
South East Thames Regional Health Authority, Accident & emergency departments 154-6w
Tobacco advertising 157-8w
Trade unions, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 883
USSR, Human rights 510w
Waste disposal, English Channel 4w, 14w

Shaw, Sir Giles
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 894

Shaw, Sir Michael
Questions
Armed forces medical services, Hospital patients 467w

Sheep
Cumbria 206w, 312-3w, 400-1w
Exports 312-3w, 400-1w
Pollution monitoring 641-2w
Radioactivity 206w, 228-30w, 238-9w, 252w, 641-2w, 704-5w
Wales 228-30w

Sheep meat
Radioactivity 5, 29w
Wales 5, 29w

Sheerman, Mr Barry
Questions
Education & industry 867-8
Mental hospitals, Hospital staff 439-40w
Monuments, Repairs & maintenance 121w

Sheerman, Mr Barry—continued
Motorcycles, Injuries 559w, 667w
Motorcycles, Protective clothing 459w
Motorcycles, Road accidents 553w, 621-2w
Non-statutory training organisations 414w

Sheffield
Unemployment 418w

SHEG
see Scottish Health Education Group

Sheldon, Rt Hon Robert
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 64-8, 81
Rover Group (29:03:88) 889
Questions
Hooks, Export controls 574w

Sheltered housing
Council house rents 658w
Elderly (25.03.88) 657-60
Greenwich 658w
Rent increases 720w

Shephard, Mrs Gillian
Questions
Defence research 107w
Emigration, USSR 516w

Shepherd, Mr Colin
Debates etc.
Playgrounds, Injuries (30:03:88) 1252-5, 1256-7

Shetland
Scottish Special Housing Association 201w

Shetland Islands Council
Rate rebates 148-9w

Shift work
Unemployment benefits 87-8w

Shipbuilding
Orders 47w

Shipilov, Vasili
Dental hospitals 273-4w

Shipping
(30:03:88) 1164-250
Sabotage 559w

Shipping accidents
Government assistance 123w

Shipping safety
Ferries 46-7w
Marine surveys 353w
Persian Gulf 515w
Roll-on roll-off ships 353w, 557w

Ships
Radios 620w

Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 89-93
Health services, Public petitions (28:03:88) 159

Short, Ms Clare
Questions
Air force, Military aircraft 100w
Availability for work 259w
Housing benefits, Employment training 43w
RAF, Gibraltar 218w
Restart programme, Availability for work 63w
Restart programme, Departmental forms 62-3w
Training, Income support scheme 528w

Shotgun certificates
Dundee 203w

Sick leave
Scotland 436-7w

Sims, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1089-90
Questions
Business statements 1278-9

Sims, Mr Roger—continued
Deaf, Training 672w
House of Commons annunciator system 16-7
Youth training scheme, Deaf 11w

Single European Act
518w

Single homeless
Government grants to voluntary organisations 253-4w
Temporary accommodation 239w

Single people
Tax burden 496-7w, 614w

Sinn Fein
Broadcasting controls 495w
National Association of Local Government Officers 880-1
Proscribed organisations 706w

Sites of special scientific interest
121w
Cereals 238w, 722w

Sizewell
Road traffic 459w

Sizewell B
396w
Contracts 370-1w

Skeet, Sir Trevor
Questions
Coal, Sulphur 295w
Electricity Consumers' Council, Official engagements 709
Lead free petrol, Cars 58-9w
Petrol, Tax harmonisation 91w

Skill shortages
Computer industry 397w

Skillcentres
419-20w

Skilled workers
East Anglia 422w

Skinner, Mr Dennis
Debates etc.
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 202
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 732
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 741
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1190-2
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1084, 1085
Rover Group (30:03:88) 1109-10
Questions
Business statements 525
Civil service 724
Coal mining, Dismissal 291-2w
Coal mining, Property transfer 20w
Custodial treatment, Fine defaulters 229-30w
Developing countries, Debts 132w
Drug crimes, Forensic science 117w
Manufacturing industries, Redundancy 878-9
Metropolitan Police, Forensic science 117w
Ministry of Defence, Central London 110w
Remand in custody, Greater London 66w

Skoal Bandits
153-4w, 449w
Consumer protection 449w
Health warnings 245w

Small businesses
Defence contracts 109w, 181-2
Employment 432w
Government assistance 218w
Industrial health & safety 437w
Northern Ireland 218w

Small Farmers' Association
Official engagements 400w

Small Firms Service
433w

Smallthern School Stoke-on-Trent
(23:03:88) 484

Smith, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 249-51, (24:03:88) 582, 599-602, 615
Rover Group (29:03:88) 892
Questions
Air safety, Departmental publications 614w
Animal experiments, Laboratories 184-5w
British Coal Corporation, Official engagements 294w
Central America, Peace negotiations 1067-8
Community charge 713w
Developing countries, Debts 628w
Health & Safety Executive, Wolfson College 425-6w
Nutrition labelling 633w
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w
Sites of special scientific interest 121w

Smith, Mr Chris
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 746, 752
Questions
Council housing, Property transfer 298w
Employment training, Social security benefits disqualification 415w
Homelessness, Housing 298-300w
Housing finance 711w
Housing investment programmes 712w
North Sea, International conferences 711-2w
Prison employment, Prisons 680-2w
Prison employment, Working hours 679-80w

Smith, Mr Cyril
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 438-42

Smith, Sir Dudley
Questions
Chlamydia, Disease control 657w
Exercise Arrowhead Express, Armed forces deployment 623-4w
Hepatitis, Disease control 655-6w
Passports, Administrative delays 681w
Plastics, Upper waiting hall 356w
Prison medical services, Drug abuse 683w
Tobacco, Science & technology research 153-4w

Smith, Mr Tim
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 899-900
Questions
Air safety, Near misses 458w
Consultants, Attorney-General 371w
Consultants, Cabinet Office 373w, 468-70w
Consultants, Customs & Excise 498w, 611-2w
Consultants, Dept of Education & Science 396w, 470w
Consultants, Dept of Employment 437w, 535w
Consultants, Dept of Energy 371w, 509w
Consultants, Dept of Health & Social Security 446w, 539-41w
Consultants, Dept of the Environment 367w, 473-4w
Consultants, Dept of Trade & Industry 381w, 593-5w
Consultants, Dept of Transport 554-5w
Consultants, Foreign & Commonwealth Office 393w, 521-2w
Consultants, HMSO 398w, 497-8w
Consultants, Inland Revenue 498w, 612w
Consultants, Land Registry Office 372w, 485w

Smith, Mr Tim—continued
Consultants, Lord Chancellor 371-2w, 485w
Consultants, Manpower Services Commission 437w, 533-6w
Consultants, Metropolitan Police 387-8w, 493w
Consultants, Ministry of Agriculture 400w, 565-6w
Consultants, Ministry of Defence 411w, 464-7w
Consultants, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 381-2w, 482w
Consultants, Northern Ireland Office 705w, 707-10w
Consultants, Office of Arts & Libraries 397-8w, 495w
Consultants, Office of Fair Trading 382w, 481-2w
Consultants, Property Services Agency 367w, 471-3w
Consultants, Scottish Development Agency 648w
Consultants, Scottish Office 404w, 648-9w
Consultants, Treasury 398w
Consultants, Welsh Office 391w, 579w

Smoke control areas
Heating 713

Smoking
246w
Health hazards 158-9w, 543w
Industrial health & safety (24:03:88) 533

Smyth, Rev Martin
Debates etc.
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 40
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1042-3
Questions
Anglo-Irish Agreement 498
Bophuthatswana, Overseas aid 131-2w
Business statements 514
Child care, Northern Ireland 169-72w
Councillors, Local authorities in Northern Ireland 311w
Electric cables, Scotland 354
Employment discrimination, Ethnic minorities 870
Ethnic monitoring, Welsh Office 197w
Health services finance, Northern Ireland 223w
Judges, Ethnic minorities 19w
Magistrates, Ethnic minorities 19w
Orthopaedics, Northern Ireland 565w
Scottish Office, Ethnic monitoring 146w
Sinn Fein, Proscribed organisations 706w
Student grants, Terrorism 565w
Unemployment, Ethnic groups 69w
USSR, Postal services 1079

Snape, Mr Peter
Questions
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Health services finance, Northern Ireland 220w

Soames, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Afghanistan, Ministers' visits abroad 511w
Chemical weapons 1072
Submarines, USSR 105w

Social Fund
151w
Civil service manpower 212w
Manchester City Council 656w
Training 212w

Social security abuse
Civil service manpower 215w
Costs 215w
Scotland 215w

Social Security Act 1986
Questions
341w

Social Security Act 1986—continued
Social security finance 542w

Social Security Advisory Committee
Publishing 661w

Social security appeals
Civil service manpower 215w
Disciplinary proceedings 444w
Dundee 215w

Social security appeals tribunals
663w
Codes of practice 444w

Social security benefits
(21:03:88) 172
Community charge 149-50w
Marginal tax rates 244-6w

Social security benefits disqualification
Cohabitation 31w
Dundee 551-2w
Employment schemes 415-6w
Employment training 415w

Social security benefits reductions
Electricity tariffs 212w
Gas tariffs 212w
Youth training scheme 205w

Social security benefits rules
Family credit (22:03:88) 306-31
Housing benefits (23:03:88) 464-83
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 306-31

Social security benefits uprating
Retirement pensions 452w

Social security claims
Tottenham 211-2w

Social security finance
Social Security Act 1986 542w

Social security payments
Post Office 63w

Social Security (Payments on Account Overpayments & Recovery) Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(21:03:88) 172

Social security recipients
Dundee 216w
Exceptional needs payments 151w
Handicap benefits 537-8w
Housing benefits 242w, 649-50w
Lewisham 155-7w
Social security reform 216w, 882

Social security reform
507-8, 881-2, 1274
Disposable income 335w
Housing benefits 216-7w, 1271-3
Income support scheme 662-3w
Lewisham 157w
Northern Ireland 335w
Pensioners 212w
Social security recipients 216w, 882
Voluntary organisations 341w
Wales 31w

Social services
Northern Ireland 220w

Social workers
Community Care Review 334w

Soley, Mr Clive
Debates etc.
Terrorism, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 35
Questions
Bed & breakfast accommodation 715w
Dystonia, Medical treatments 83w
Housing estates, Rushmoor 57w
Members' allowances 522w
Railway travel, Customs 398-9w

Solicitors
Codes of practice 16w
Legal aid 176-7w

Solicitors—continued
Scotland 16w
Thain, Ian Richard 137w

Somerset County Council
Hinkley Point C 717

South Africa
Administration of justice 512w
African National Congress 1077
Angola 512w
Arms trade 629-30w
Coal 294w
Diplomatic relations 513w
EC external relations 512-3w
EC external trade 629-30w
Economic sanctions 1076-8, 1081-2
Freedom of expression 513w
Namibia 512w
Official engagements 513w
Political prisoners 133w, 1080-1
Rugby 714-5w
Sporting tours 630w, 880, 1078-9
UK companies abroad 481w
Uranium 53w, 261w, 290w

South Africa house
Arrests 492w

South America
Export Credits Guarantee Department 591w

South Bank
575w

South Bank Board
575w
Jubilee gardens 161w

South Bank Centre
575w

South Cumbria Health Authority
Finance 152w
Health service staff 209-10w

South East Asia
Ministers' visits abroad 519w

South East region
Tax reform 607w

South East Thames Regional Health Authority
Accident & emergency departments 154-6w
Hospital consultants 344w

South Glamorgan Health Authority
10-1
Hospital consultants 279w
Private health services 278-9w

South Manchester Health Authority
Finance 339-40w
Official engagements 658w

South of Scotland Electricity Board
145w, 353-4
Official engagements 351-2

South Wales
Coal mining 718-9
Housing 4-5

South West region
Vacancies 433w

South Yorkshire
"Training for Employment White Paper" 874
Unemployment 418w

Southern Water Authority Bill 1987/88
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

Southwark
Docklands Light Railway 553w
Public libraries 350w
Youth training scheme 871

Space technology
Horizon 2000 357w
Nuclear power 261w
RAF Feltwell 364w

Spacecraft
USA 356-7w

Spain
Gibraltar 1075

Speaker and his deputies, For rulings & statements see separate heading
Speaker's rulings & statements
Debates etc.
Amendments & new clauses (22:03:88) 206, 244, 267, 286, (23:03:88) 366, 398-9, 426-7, 430, 457, (24:03:88) 534, 536-7, 557-9, 574-5, 587-9, (28:03:88) 733-4, 786, 797-8, (29:03:88) 921-1034 passim, 1037, (30:03:88) 1115, 1165-6, 1175, 1178-9, 1201, 1229
Disallowed questions (24:03:88) 515, (29:03:88) 881
Orders & regulations motions (22:03:88) 198, (28:03:88) 732, (30:03:88) 1111
Procedure (21:03:88) 56, 107, 114, 119, 143, 149, 154, (22:03:88) 194-5, (23:03:88) 356, 424, (24:03:88) 505, 532-3, (29:03:88) 911, 912, 1084, (30:03:88) 1123, (31:03:88) 1286
Standing Order No 20 applications, Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 358
Standing Order No 20 applications, Rio Tinto Zinc (23:03:88) 357
Standing Order No 20 applications, Scottish & Newcastle Breweries (29:03:88) 1099
Standing Order No 20 applications, Terrorism (22:03:88) 197-8
Questions
National Association of Local Government Officers, Sinn Fein 880-1

Speaker's rulings & statements
Adjournment debates (22:03:88) 334, (31:03:88) 1333
Business questions (24:03:88) 516, 519, 525, (31:03:88) 1278
Calling of Members (21:03:88) 21, 36, 38-40, 41, (22:03:88) 301, (23:03:88) 351, 365, (28:03:88) 850, (29:03:88) 882
Civil servants' box (22:03:88) 201-2
Diplomatic relations (30:03:88) 1111-2
Guillotine (22:03:88) 204-5, 244, 289-90, 301, 305, (28:03:88) 776
House of Commons chamber (22:03:88) 331
House of Commons debates (29:03:88) 1040
House of Commons Select Committees (22:03:88) 198
House of Commons Standing Committees (24:03:88) 532
Members' attendance (23:03:88) 343
Members' conduct (21:03:88) 158, (23:03:88) 342, 345, 350-1, 353, 467, (24:03:88) 506, 508, 530, (29:03:88) 872
Members' interests (30:03:88) 1109, 1193-4
Members' interventions (21:03:88) 109, (22:03:88) 227, 299, 334, (23:03:88) 447, (28:03:88) 846, 852, (29:03:88) 1028, (30:03:88) 1108, 1110, 1128, (31:03:88) 1333
Members' seating (24:03:88) 516-7
Members' speeches (21:03:88) 41, (22:03:88) 249, 259, (24:03:88) 603, (28:03:88) 839, 846, (29:03:88) 986
Ministerial speeches (28:03:88) 776, (31:03:88) 1342
Ministerial statements (21:03:88) 26, 32, 35, (29:03:88) 898, 906, 916, 920, (30:03:88) 1092, 1096, 1109, 1110
Oral questions (23:03:88) 359-61, (24:03:88) 531-2
Order paper (22:03:88) 209
Orders & regulations (22:03:88) 306, (24:03:88) 530-1, (28:03:88) 729-32

Speaker's rulings & statements—continued
Points of order (21:03:88) 37, 106-7, (24:03:88) 510, 557, 579, (28:03:88) 857-8, (30:03:88) 1101-7, 1109, 1118, (31:03:88) 1286
Prime Minister's questions (24:03:88) 506, (29:03:88) 882
Report stage (23:03:88) 365
Royal family (21:03:88) 18
Scope of debate (22:03:88) 213, 251, 252, 259, (23:03:88) 436, (28:03:88) 742, 839, 845, (29:03:88) 955, 995, (31:03:88) 1340, 1341
Standing Order No 20 applications (22:03:88) 198
Sub judice (24:03:88) 532
Supplementary questions (23:03:88) 340, 348, 351, 352, (24:03:88) 507, (29:03:88) 872, 874
Unparliamentary expressions (21:03:88) 88, (28:03:88) 844, (30:03:88) 1069, 1193, (31:03:88) 1283

Spearing, Mr Nigel
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Allocation of time motion (23:03:88) 365
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 384-7, 390, 423, 450
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 748-53, 760, 780
European Court of First Instance (25:03:88) 675, 679-83, 690-1
House of Commons broadcasting (25:03:88) 695-6
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1224-5
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 666
Questions
Business statements 1280
Central London Rail Study 618-9w
EC law, European Court of Justice 177w
European Court of Justice, Administration of justice 181w
European Court of Justice, Court jurisdiction 181w
Excise duties, Tax harmonisation 124-6w
Family doctors, Greater London 245w
Rented housing, London Docklands Development Corporation 236w
VAT zero rated goods 195-6w

Special aids to employment scheme
256-8w

Special educational needs
(22:03:88) 204-305

Special health authorities
Public appointments 33w

Speed, Mr Keith
Questions
Telephone systems, Lunar house 686-7w

Speed limits
A51 616w
Road traffic control 130w

Speller, Mr Tony
Questions
Defence contracts 103w
Marginal land, Land tribunals 634w

Spicer, Mr Michael, Under-Secretary of State for Energy
Questions
Coal mining, Property transfer 20w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 20w, 135w, 509w
Electricity supply industry, Radioactive waste disposal 68w
Nuclear safeguards, Uranium 261w
Power station closures, Research finance 20w
Radioactive wastes, Dounreay 21w
Sellafield, Nuclear safeguards 261w
Space technology, Nuclear power 261w

Spicer, Mr Michael—continued
Uranium, Nuclear safeguards 68-9w, 261w

Spicer, Michael
Radio programmes 583w

Spoil heaps
Waste disposal 308w

Sporting tours
Rugby 630w
South Africa 630w, 880, 1078-9

Sports Council
Amateur Rowing Association 716w
British Canoe Union 715-6w

Sports facilities
Local government services 309-10w, 476-7w
Non-domestic rates 503w

Squire, Mr Robin
Questions
Low incomes, Family income 449-50w
Low incomes, Marginal tax rates 450w

SSEB
see South of Scotland Electricity Board

SSHA
see Scottish Special Housing Association

Staffordshire
Unemployment 870-1

Stanbrook, Mr Ivor
Questions
Business statements 519-20, 1280-1

Standard of living
547-50w, 651w

Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights
223w

Standing Order No 20 applications
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 358-61
Rio Tinto Zinc (23:03:88) 357
Scottish & Newcastle Breweries (30:03:88) 1099
Speaker's rulings & statements (22:03:88) 198
Terrorism (22:03:88) 197-8

Stanley, Rt Hon John, Minister of State for Northern Ireland
Questions
Army in Northern Ireland, Homicide 438w, 707w
Burns, Brendan, Extradition 48-9w
Civil service dispersal, Down 701w
Companies, Northern Ireland 165w
Complaints against police, Royal Ulster Constabulary 221w
Consultants, Northern Ireland Office 705w, 707-10w
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 494-5
Diplock courts 48w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 504
Employment schemes, Northern Ireland 504
Ethnic monitoring, Northern Ireland Office 224w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 705-6w
Gibson, Lord Justice, Criminal investigation 439w
Harland & Wolff, Cost effectiveness 222w
Homosexuality, Residential care of children 310w
Inner city areas, Northern Ireland Office 702w
International Fund for Ireland 224w
International Fund for Ireland, EC grants & loans 495
International Fund for Ireland, USA 167w
International Investments, Criminal Investigation 699w
MacBride principles, Foreign investment in UK 224w

Stanley, Rt Hon John—continued
Maghaberry Prison, Operating costs 438w
MV Saga Moon, Criminal investigation 705w
Prison visits, IRA 225-6w
Prisoners' transfers, Northern Ireland 119-20w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Homicide 703w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Official engagements 78w
Royal Ulster Constabulary, Secret societies 703w
Terrorism, Cross border cooperation in Ireland 439w
Terrorism, Death 438-9w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 495
Young offenders, Northern Ireland 219w

Stansted Airport
619w
RAF Wethersfield 7w

State Scheme Premiums (Actuarial Tables) Amendment Regulations 1988
Debates etc.
(21:03:88) 172

Stationery Office
see HMSO

Steel, Rt Hon David
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 58-61, 104
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 1034-5
Oral question time intervention (23:03:88) 351
Questions
Ettrick & Lauderdale District Council, Housing finance 503w
Ford Motor Company 506
South of Scotland Electricity Board, Official engagements 351-2
Sporting tours, South Africa 880

Steele-Russell, Ian
184-5w

Steen, Mr Anthony
Questions
A38, Road works 556w
Coastguard, Equipment 355w
Helicopters, Rescue services 354w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 14w
Official engagements, Vacant land 571w
Scorriton down 410w
Scorriton down, Bomb disposal 410w

Steinberg, Mr Gerry
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 221-2
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 818, 823-4
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1094
Questions
Poultry, Government assistance 635w
Youth training scheme, Unemployment 879

Sterling
Exchange rates 195

Stern, Mr Michael
Debates etc.
Electricity supply industry, Research (24:03:88) 625
Rover Group (29:03:88) 895
Questions
Inter-city rail transport 615w
Jobclubs 164w
Official engagements 374w, 572-3w
Retirement pensions, Married women 441-2w
Severn barrage, Energy research 261w

Stevens, Mr Lewis
Questions
Trident 99w

Stewart, Mr Allan
Debates etc.
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 360
Questions
AIDS, Drug abuse 406-8w
Ford Motor Company, Trade unions 193
Industrial production, Scotland 145-6w
Local government social services, Scotland 507w
NHS, Scotland 342
Road construction, Scotland 288w
Scottish health boards, Computers in National Health Service 647w
South of Scotland Electricity Board 353
Student grants, Scotland 506-7w
Tobacco 86w

Stewart, Mr Andy
Questions
British Coal Corporation, Redundancy pay 718
Community charge, Local authorities in Scotland 143w
Community charge, Scotland 341
Unemployment, East Midlands 419w

Stewart, Mr Ian, Minister of State for Defence
Questions
Air force, Cruise missile sites 114w
Air force, Military aircraft 100w
Air force bases, Treaties 180w
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 108w, 184-6
Armed forces deployment, Belize 191w
Armed forces deployment, Northern Ireland 136w
Armed forces deployment, Persian Gulf 186
Armed forces training, Bangladesh 180-1w
Army in Northern Ireland 112w
Artillery, BAOR 111w
Chemical weapons, NATO 108w
Chemical weapons, USSR 113w
Conventional weapons 100w
Conventional weapons, Military balance 112-3w
Conventional weapons, USSR 101w
Cruise missiles 108w, 190
Cruise missiles, Nuclear weapons deployment 189-90
Defence, France 114w
Early warning systems 136w
Exercise Arrowhead Express, Armed forces deployment 623-4w
Exercise Outback 88 358w
Exercise Outback 88, Navy 358-9w
Exercise Outback 88, Nuclear weapons 358w
F111 aircraft 108-9w
Falkland Islands, Armed forces deployment 180w
Falkland Islands, Military exercises 110w
Frigates, Navy 104w
Hercules aircraft, Uruguay 115w
INF Treaty 103-4w
Inner city areas, Ministry of Defence 623w
Journalists, Belize 115w, 623w
Journalists, Ministry of Defence 115w
Lance missiles, Modernisation 102w
Military aircraft 190-1
Mines, Navy 105-6w
Mutual & balanced force reductions, Arms control negotiations 113-4w
NATO 106w
NATO, Mines 187
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 109w, 184
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear disarmament 182-3
NATO Nuclear Planning Group, Nuclear weapons deployment 184
Navy, Mines 186
Navy, Warships 186

Stewart, Mr Ian—continued
Nuclear disarmament, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 102-3w
Nuclear submarines, Nuclear reactors 100w, 109w
Nuclear weapons, Arms control negotiations 114w
Nuclear weapons, Modernisation 190
Nuclear weapons deployment, Europe 114w
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 102w, 183-4
Nuclear weapons deployment, NATO Nuclear Planning Group 7-8w
Nuclear weapons deployment, USSR 101-2w
Port of London, Ports 409-10w
Port of London, USA 409w
RAF Lossiemouth 116w
RAF Molesworth 7w
Submarines, USSR 105w, 185
Tornado aircraft 190
Weapons, Military balance 463w

Stirling University
316w

Stockbridge Village Trust
Housing improvement 479w

Stockport
Block grant 308-9w

Stoke-on-Trent
Insulation grants 1w
Rates & rating 118w
Road traffic 267-8w
Transport supplementary grants 266-7w

Stokes, Mr John
Questions
Armilla patrol, Persian Gulf 515w
Business statements 517

Stott, Mr Roger
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 373-5, 440, 445, 446
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1183, 1189-90
Questions
Cruise missiles 108w

Strabane
Exceptional needs payments 703w

Strang, Mr Gavin
Debates etc.
AIDS, Scotland (31:03:88) 1294-8
Questions
FIII aircraft 109w
Health & Safety Executive, Manpower 164-5w
Unemployment 878

Strategic defence initiative
Defence contracts 464w

Strathclyde
Free school meals 406w

Stratospheric Ozone Review Group
366w

Straw, Mr Jack
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 204, 205, 235, 259, 281, (23:03:88) 392-433 passim, (24:03:88) 545, 553, 592-7, 613, 616, 617
Education Reform Bill, Allocation of time motion (23:03:88) 364
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 733-807 passim
Questions
Inner London Education Authority, Departmental publications 235w

Stray dogs
10w

Strikes
872
Lost working days 420w, 871-2

Strontium 90
Bone marrow disorders 658w

STUC
see Scottish Trades Union Congress

Student grants
471w
Farrell, Mairead 564w
Northern Ireland 565w
Scotland 506-7w
Terrorism 565w

Students
Community charge 222w, 307w

Sub judice
Speaker's rulings & statements (24:03:88) 532

Submarines
USSR 105w, 185

Subsidies
Airbuses 64w
Pigs 635w

Suffolk
Employment 413w
Planning appeals 304w
Roads 61w

Suffolk County Council
School population 396w

Sulphur
Coal 295w

Sumberg, Mr David
Questions
Nuclear weapons deployment, Modernisation 102w
Unemployment, North West region 418-9w
USSR, Emigration 516w

Summerson, Mr Hugo
Debates etc.
Urban planning (31:03:88) 1347
Questions
Dock labour scheme, East Anglia 674w
Tax yields, Income tax 228w

Summertime
685-6w
Road accidents 619w

Sunday trading
Scotland 231w

Sunderland
Family credit 342w
Family income supplements 338w
Housing benefits 342w
Income support scheme 342w
Supplementary benefits 338w

Sunderland Health Authority
39-41w, 83w
Administrative costs 453w
Geriatric patients 208w
Nurses 214w

Superglass Insulation
Housing insulation 308w
Scottish Development Agency 408w

Supermarkets
Unfair trading practices 234w

Supplementary benefits
Average earnings 338w
Departmental forms 150w
Departmental leaflets 151w
Lewisham 155w, 157w
Sunderland 338w

Supplementary questions
Speaker's rulings & statements (23:03:88) 340, 348, 351, 352, (24:03:88) 507, (29:03:88) 872, 874

Surgery
Ear disorders 246-7w
Heart diseases 278-9w

Surgery—continued
Industrial disputes 139-40w
Regional health authorities 544-6w
Scotland 139-40w, 341-2

Surplus land
District health authorities 655w
Voluntary organisations 655w

"Survey of Expertise in the Northern Ireland Health Care Sector"
564w

Surveying
Pollution monitoring 286w
Radioactivity 286-7w
Scotland 286w

Sutton
Council house sales (28:03:88) 860-6

Swansea City Council
11-2

Swansea Prison
66w

Syrian Arab Republic
Foreign policy 510w

Taiwan Power Company
68-9w

Take-home pay
317w

Tanks
Defence procurement 623w

Tax allowances
Business expansion scheme 607-8w
Capital gains tax 496w
Cohabitation 97w
Corporation tax 498w
House renovation grants 99w
Loans 604w
Ministers 496w
Training 259-60w

Tax burden
321-2w
Income tax 314-6w, 320w
Single people 496-7w, 614w

Tax evasion
Animal experiments 497w

Tax harmonisation
Excise duties 124-6w
Petrol 91w

Tax rates & bands
Income tax 93-6w, 496w, 608-9w
Inheritance tax 496w
Pay incentives 316w

Tax reform
Inland Revenue 228w
North West region 607w
South East region 607w

Tax repayment
Inland Revenue 499-500w

Tax thresholds
Low incomes 320w

"Tax Training & Education"
259-60w

Tax yields
97-8w, 320-1w, 602-3w
Banks 501w
Income tax 228w, 314w
Petrol 498w
Road tax 556w
VAT 228w

Taxation
(21:03:88) 115-58, 227-8w
Defence expenditure 98-100w
Personal income 500-2w

Taylor, Mr Ian
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 49
Tree conservation (22:03:88) 334
Questions
Business expansion scheme, Tax allowances 607-8w
France, Official engagements 513w
General Commissioners of Income Tax, Northern Ireland 498-9w
USSR, Human rights 1079

Taylor, Rt Hon John David
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1043, 1049
Questions
Austria 1069
Brucellosis 563w
Community charge, Scotland 341
Design, Northern Ireland 22w
Eastern Health & Social Services Board, Members' correspondence 562w
EC internal trade, Northern Ireland 233w
Employment discrimination, Northern Ireland 698w
Environmental health, Northern Ireland 699-700w
Ethnic monitoring, Northern Ireland Office 224w
Farrell, Mairead, Student grants 564w
Northern Ireland Dept of Agriculture, Civil servants 701w
Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Housing completions 699w
Refuse disposal, Northern Ireland 562-3w
VAT, Veterinary services 227w

Taylor, Mr John M
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1097-8
Questions
Air pollution, Nitrogen dioxide 717w
Ancient monuments, Scotland 141w
Arts sponsorship 350w
Business statements 522
Gibraltar, Official engagements 1075
M40, Road construction 557w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 218w
Wind power 292w

Taylor, Mr Matthew
Debates etc.
Rio Tinto Zinc, Standing Order No 20 applications (23:03:88) 357
Rover Group (29:03:88) 890
Tin, Mining (29:03:88) 1056-9, 1061, 1064
Questions
Alternative energy, Research finance 293-4w
Combined heat & power 714
Cross border cooperation in Ireland, Northern Ireland 79w
Employment, Rural areas 876
Green pound 280w
Kampuchea, Overseas aid 602w
Sharpeville six 1080-1

Taylor, Mr Teddy
Debates etc.
European Court of First Instance (25:03:88) 679, 683-6, 691
Questions
Agricultural stabilisers 571w
Airbuses, Subsidies 64w
Business statements 518, 1279
Common agricultural policy, Retail prices 640w
EC budget, Currency movements 572w
European Council 572w
European Court of First Instance 182-3w
European Court of Justice, Administration of justice 182w
European Court of Justice, Court jurisdiction 182w
Political parties, EC grants & loans 393w

Taylor, Mr Teddy—continued
Retirement pensions, Administrative delays 88w
Road accidents, Summertime 619w
UK contributions to EC budget 603w
UK trade with EC, Balance of trade 372w
Unemployment, EC countries 868-9

Tayside Health Board
Dental services 288w
Expenditure 203w
Eye tests 288w
Finance 203w
Pay beds 204-5w

Tayside Regional Council
Educational finance 202-3w
Free school meals 203w

Teacher training
Deaf 147w
Welsh language 527w

Teachers
Fife 73-6w
Leave 565w
Northern Ireland 565w
Professional qualifications 127w
Scotland 149w

Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 737, 742, 778

Technical assistance
Nicaragua 602w

Teignmouth Quay Company Bill 1985/86
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

Telecommunications industry
France 374-6w
West Germany 374-6w

Telephone systems
Dept of Employment 672w
Lunar house 686-7w

Televising Proceedings of the House Select Committee
(29:03:88) 1037-55

Television
Restrictive labour practices 283-4w
Terrorism 505

Television licences
Pensioners (25:03:88) 631
Public petitions (25:03:88) 631

Television programmes
"This Week" 20w

Temple-Morris, Mr Peter
Questions
Iran-Iraq war, United Nations 1066
Prisons, Land acquisition 66w

Temporary accommodation
Single homeless 239w

Tenant Farmers' Association
Official engagements 636w

"Tendering for Government Contracts"
433w

Tenders
146w
NHS 646w

Territorial Army
Armed forces strength 105w

Terrorism
195-6
Armed forces deployment 571w
Broadcasting 193-4
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 439w

Terrorism—continued
Death 438-9w
Funerals (21:03:88) 21-36
Ministerial statements (21:03:88) 21-36
Northern Ireland 78-9w, 218w, 438w, 495-6, 501-3
Republic of Ireland 439w
Standing Order No 20 applications (22:03:88) 197-8
Student grants 565w
Television 505

Textile industry
European Regional Development Fund 365w

TGWU
see Transport & General Workers' Union

Thain, Ian Richard
Custodial treatment 136w
Parole 185w
Solicitors 137w

Thames Valley Police
687-93w, 696w

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret, Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service
Questions
Agricultural stabilisers 571w
AIDS, Drug abuse 1273
Amnesty International 1274
Armed forces casualties, Negligence 505
Arms exports, Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w
Army in Northern Ireland 1274-5
Bradford, Official engagements 173w
Broadcasting, Terrorism 193-4
Charities 196
China, Ministers' visits abroad 372-3w
Coal mining, Productivity 1273
"Community Care" 571w
Community charge 879-80
Companies, Ministerial duties 572w
Consultants, Cabinet Office 373w, 468-70w
Defence equipment, Palestine Liberation Organisation 278w
Departmental coordination, Housing standards 120-1w
Diplomatic service, Berlin 173w
EC budget, Currency movements 572w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 572w
European Council 572w
Examinations, Disclosure of information 19w
Football, Hooliganism 1271
Ford Motor Company 193, 506
Ford Motor Company, Trade unions 193
Forestry, Ministerial duties 278w
Funerals, Northern Ireland 194
Health insurance, Elderly 571w
Housing benefits, Pensioners 1273-4
Housing benefits, Social security reform 1271-3
"Interception of Communications" 373w
Litter, Publicity 278w, 373w
Malaysia, Water supply 19-20w, 468w
Members' correspondence, Administrative delays 120w
Merksworth School, Paisley, Official engagements 232-3w
New Forest, Rents 880
Newton, Official engagements 173w
NHS, Medical treatments 194
North West Hertfordshire Health Authority 882
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w, 374w, 572-3w
Official engagements, Scotland 372w
Official engagements, Vacant land 571w
Official hospitality, Local press 173w
Pay settlements, Top Salaries Review Body 883-4
Pensioners, Budget, March 1988 506-7
Power stations, Air pollution control 196

Thatcher, Rt Hon Margaret—continued
Prime Minister, Treasury 880
Royal College of Nursing 880
Royal Ulster Constabulary 508-10
St Thomas Hospital, Hospital closures 192-3
School administration, Scotland 1275-6
Security, Northern Ireland 508
Social security reform 507-8, 881-2, 1274
Social security reform, Social security recipients 882
Sporting tours, South Africa 880
Sterling, Exchange rates 195
Television, Terrorism 505
Terrorism 195-6
Terrorism, Armed forces deployment 571w
Trade unions, Monopolies & Mergers Commission 883
Transport & General Workers' Union 507
Turkey, Official engagements 54w
UK trade with EC, Balance of trade 372w
VAT, Church buildings 1273
Waite, Terry, Hostages 1276

Theatre
Business sponsorship incentive scheme 350w
Leicester 722

Theatre Royal, Stratford
721

Theatres
Liverpool 720-1
National anthems 161w

Thelwall
Road traffic 462w

"This Week"
Television programmes 20w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 210, 229-30, 256-8, (24:03:88) 542-4, 562-3, 570
Questions
Council housing, Wales 28w
EC Finance Council, Official engagements 607w
EC Transport Council 459w
General Certificate of Secondary Education, Wales 10
Horizon 2000, Space technology 357w
House of Commons questions 583w
Iran-Iraq war 1066-7
Israel, Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty 241-2w, 630w
Israel, Nuclear weapons 242w
Israel, Vanunu, Mordechai 242w, 630w
Low flying, Crime prevention 628w
Low flying, Disciplinary proceedings 627-8w
Low flying, Military aircraft 6-7w, 625-7w
Magnox reactors, Bradwell power station 585w
Maple Flag exercises, Air force 9w
Middle East, Nuclear free zones 241w
Nuclear power, Privatisation 583w
Nuclear safeguards, Uranium 261w
Overseas aid, Expenditure 601w
Plutonium, Exports 296w
Plutonium, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 585w
Radioactive waste disposal, International conferences 717w
Radioactive wastes, Magnox reactors 584w
Radioactive wastes, Nuclear fuel reprocessing 584w
Radioactive wastes, Transport of radioactive materials 121w
Science & technology research, Wales 3
Sellafield, Nuclear safeguards 261w
South Africa, EC external trade 629-30w
South Africa, Uranium 53w
Space technology, Nuclear power 261w
Spacecraft, USA 356-7w
Strontium 90, Bone marrow disorders 658w
"This Week", Television programmes 20w

Thomas, Dr Dafydd Elis—continued
Unemployment, EC countries 868-9
Uranium, Magnox reactors 583-4w
Uranium, Nuclear safeguards 68-9w, 261w
Verification Technology Information Centre, Arms control negotiations 242w

Thompson, Mr Donald, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Farmers 568-9w
Agricultural research, Research finance 1267
Agricultural research, Scotland 1267-8
Animal feed, Food contamination 312w
Beekeeping, Official engagements 260w
Bees, Privatisation 1268
British Wool Marketing Board, Official engagements 636-7w
Civil service dispersal, Ministry of Agriculture 65w
Common agricultural policy, Retail prices 640w
Common sheep meat regime 635w
Consultants, Ministry of Agriculture 400w, 565-6w
Food contamination, Radioactivity 1260-2
Food labelling, Hormone growth promoters 206-7w
Foxes, Animal husbandry 639w
Inner city areas, Ministry of Agriculture 639w
Irradiated food 207w, 639-40w
Irradiated food, Food labelling 313w
Milk, Milk Marketing Board 206w
Milk, Production quotas 635w
Milk Marketing Board, Official engagements 637w
Mink, Animal husbandry 206w
Mink, Licensing 566w
Nutrition labelling 633w
Pigs, Animal husbandry 635w, 640w
Potatoes, Agricultural subsidies 568w
Poultry, Government assistance 635w
Radioactivity 1261-2
Radioactivity, Pollution monitoring 568w
Sheep, Cumbria 206w
Sheep, Exports 312-3w, 400-1w
Sheep, Radioactivity 641-2w

Thompson, Mr Jack
Questions
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 109w

Thompson, Mr Patrick
Questions
Hospitals, Norwich 308w
Hospitals, Planning inquiries 307-8w
INF Treaty 104w
Vacancies, East Anglia 431w

Thorne, Mr Neil
Questions
Conventional weapons, USSR 101w

Thornton, Mr Malcolm
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 216

Thurnham, Mr Peter
Questions
Central Electricity Generating Board 289w
Civil service, Public expenditure 313-4w
Company registration, Scotland 119w
Dental health, Health education 449w
Electricity, Safety standards 374w
House of Commons annunciator system, House of Commons statements 16
Interest rates 398w
Irradiated food 639-40w
Languages education, GCE 272w
Mortgage relief, Cohabitation 91w
NATO, Arms control negotiations 132w
Road Traffic Law Review Committee 557w
Teachers, Professional qualifications 127w
Waste disposal, Spoil heaps 308w

Tidy Britain Group
59-60w, 278w, 373w

Tiger Super Puma helicopter
263-4w

Tighe, Michael
Homicide 241w, 311-2w

Time limits
Criminal proceedings 492w

Tin
Cornwall 63w, (23:03:88) 357
Mining (29:03:88) 1056-64

Tobacco
86w
Health warnings 246w
Labelling 154w
Science & technology research 153-4w

Tobacco advertising
157-8w

"Today"
583w

Tokyo Electric Company
68-9w

"Tolerability of Risk from Nuclear Power Stations"
370w

Top Salaries Review Body
Pay settlements 883-4

Tornado aircraft
190

Torry research station
Agricultural research 634w
Civil service manpower 634w
Official engagements 634w

Tottenham
Dept of Health & Social Security local offices 211w
Social security claims 211-2w
Vacancies 194w

Tour operators
Fees & charges 357-8w, 482w

Tourism
Fishing 219w
Government grants 424w
Inland waterways 873
Inner city areas 255-6w
Rivers 873
Road signs 620w
Road works 456w

Tourist industry
Bradford 282w
Caravan sites 428-9w
Catering 433w
Dundee 205w
Employment opportunities 27w, 424w, 529-30w
Industries 434-5w
Lancashire 423-4w
North West region 529-30w
Wales 27w

Tourists
China 438w
East Anglian Regional Health Authority 34w

Tower Hamlets
Housing estates 121w

Tower Hamlets Health Authority
(28:03:88) 859

Town & country planning
718w
Greenbelt 190w

Town & Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on Mineral Working) (Amendment) Regulations 1988

Town & Country Planning (Compensation for Restrictions on Mineral Working) (Amendment) Regulations 1988—*continued*
Debates etc.
(30:03:88) 1250

Townsend, Mr Cyril D
Debates etc.
Exercise Fire Focus (31:03:88) 1331-3, 1336
Questions
Cross border cooperation in Ireland 494
Nuclear weapons deployment, USSR 101-2w
Submarines, USSR 185

Tracey, Mr Richard
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 220-1
Education Reform Bill, Rep & 3R (28:03:88) 738, 740, 744, 751, 756, 780
Questions
Nuclear weapons deployment, USSR 101-2w
School administration, Educational policy 235w

Trade agreements
GATT 178-9w

Trade fairs
Chile 591w
China 380-2w

Trade union elections
Secret ballot 434w

Trade union membership
Broadcasting 283-4w

Trade unions
878
British Coal Corporation 370w
Employment opportunities 877
Ford Motor Company 193, 877-8
Monopolies & Mergers Commission 883
Nissan 357w

Trades Union Congress
Employment training 432-3w

Trading standards departments
352w

Traffic forecasting
617w

Traffic wardens
London boroughs 684w

Training
Deaf 672w
Government grants 413w
Health service staff 84w
Income support scheme 528w
Northern Ireland 239w
Social Fund 212w
Tax allowances 259-60w
Travelling expenses 672-3w
Young people 871, 879

Training allowances
Employment training 417w, 432-3w
Job release scheme 537w

Training Commission
429-30w
Employment training 417w

"Training for Employment White Paper"
432w
Derbyshire 874
South Yorkshire 874

Trains
Customs 398-9w

Transplant surgery
Human organs 208w

Transport
Injuries 460w
Safety 554w

Transport Act 1968
Questions
470w, 553-4w

Transport & General Workers' Union
(23:03:88) 358-61, 507
Community charge 348
Industrial relations 871-2

Transport fuel consumption
42w

Transport of hazardous materials
Dartford tunnel 46w

Transport of radioactive materials
Radioactive wastes 121w

Transport police
Railway transport 47w

Transport subsidies
British Rail 557-8w

Transport supplementary grants
Stoke-on-Trent 266-7w

Travelling expenses
Employment training 416w
Training 672-3w
Youth training scheme 420-1w

Treasury
316w
Consultants 398w
Departmental publications 123w
Prime Minister 880

Treaties
Air force bases 180w
Bananas 629w
Council of Europe 628-9w
Minimum wage 193w

Tree conservation
Compensation (22:03:88) 332-8
Preservation orders 297w

Tree felling
201-2w
Licensing 202w

Tree planting
505-6w, 639w, 1266-7, 1271
Flow country 643w
Scotland 402w

Trent Regional Health Authority
Health service staff 82-3w

Trident
99w
Members' correspondence 409w

Trident missiles
Navigational aids 136w

Trinidad & Tobago
Official engagements 517w

Trippier, Mr David, Under-Secretary of State for the Environment
Debates etc.
Urban planning (31:03:88) 1349-52
Questions
Buildings, Log books 303w
Canary Wharf, Employment opportunities 54-5w
Canary Wharf, Offices 55w
Cash limits, Dept of the Environment 238w
Derelict land, Humberside 56w
G-Mex exhibition centre, Government grants 2-3w
Rented housing, London Docklands Development Corporation 236w
Textile industry, European Regional Development Fund 365w
Urban development corporations, Land values 55-6w
Urban development grants, Housing construction 55-6w

Trust funds
NHS finance 663w

TUC
see Trades Union Congress

Turkey
Official engagements 54w
Political refugees 388w, 394w

Turner, Mr Dennis
Questions
Business statements 527
Employment schemes, Social security benefits disqualification 416w
MacBride principles, Foreign investment in UK 224w

Twin towns
China 394w

Twinn, Dr Ian
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (24:03:88) 612-3
Questions
Catering, Tourist industry 433w
Defence contracts 103w
Extradition, Republic of Ireland 486w
Railway network, Greater London 264w

Tyne & Wear
Dock labour scheme 675-6w

Type 23 frigates
Defence procurement 104w

UGC
see University Grants Committee

UK Central Council for Nursing Midwifery & Health Visiting
657w

UK companies abroad
China 379-80w
Location of industry 234w
Republic of Ireland 234w
South Africa 481w

UKAEA
see United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority

UKCC
see UK Central Council for Nursing Midwifery & Health Visiting

UN
see United Nations

UN Commission on Human Rights
11w
Ethiopia 11w

UN Convention on Torture
134w

UN Economic Commission for Europe
868-9

Unemployed
Literacy 422w

Unemployment
4, 418-9w, 869-70, 878
Basingstoke 417w
Belfast 499
Clwyd 15-6
East Midlands 419w
East Sussex 876
EC action 430w
EC countries 868-9
Eddisbury 193w
Ethnic groups 69w
Greenock 75-6w
Langbaurgh 532w
Motherwell 15w
Newport 28w
North West region 418-9w
Northern region 418w

Unemployment—continued
Rural areas 259w
Scotland 254w
Sheffield 418w
South Yorkshire 418w
Staffordshire 870-1
Wales 3-4, 15-6, 27-8w
West Glamorgan 4
West Midlands 419w
Yorkshire & Humberside 417w
Youth training scheme 879

Unemployment benefit offices
162-3w

Unemployment benefits
Availability for work 424w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme 452w
Shift work 87-8w

Unfair trading practices
Supermarkets 234w

Uniform business rate
713w
Devon 57w
Public buildings 237-8w

United Brand
246w

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority
261w

United Nations
134w, 1070
Handicapped 447w
Iran-Iraq war 1066

Universities Funding Council
(22:03:88) 204-305, (24:03:88) 534-621

University Grants Committee
(22:03:88) 204-305, (24:03:88) 534-621

Unleaded Petrol Group
Public appointments 306w

Unparliamentary expressions
Speaker's rulings & statements (21:03:88) 88, (28:03:88) 844, (30:03:88) 1069, 1193, (31:03:88) 1283

Upper waiting hall
Chartered Institute of Management Accountants 179w
Guinness Trust 471w
National Nuclear Corporation 296w
Open University 395w
Plastics 356w

Uranium
Magnox reactors 583-4w
Namibia 53w, 411w
Nuclear safeguards 68-9w, 261w
South Africa 53w, 261w, 290w

Urban areas
Ministerial statements (29:03:88) 902-17
Road traffic 267-8w
Scotland (29:03:88) 902-17

Urban development corporations
Land values 55-6w

Urban development grants
Employment opportunities 55-6w
Housing construction 55-6w

Urban planning
(31:03:88) 1345-52

"Urban Renaissance"
Expenditure 351w

Uruguay
Hercules aircraft 115w

USA
Aircrew 135-6w
Chlorofluorocarbons 365-6w
Foreign policy 517w

USA—continued
Foreign tourists 434w
Guided weapons 410w
International Fund for Ireland 167w
Manchester Airport 131w
Middle East 512w
Northern Ireland 224w
Port of London 409w
Spacecraft 356-7w

USSR
Afghanistan 511w
Broadcasting external services 514w
Chemical weapons 113w
Conventional weapons 101w
Educational exchanges 132w
Emigration 516-7w
Foreign policy 510w
Human rights 510w, 515-7w, 1079
Nuclear weapons deployment 101-2w
Political prisoners 273-4w
Postal services 1079
Religious freedom 516w
Submarines 105w, 185

Vacancies
414w
East Anglia 431w
Greater London 417w
London Docklands 162w
Ministry of Defence 875
South West region 433w
Tottenham 194w

Vacant land
Official engagements 571w

Vaccination
Whooping cough 244w

Vaccine damaged children
Compensation 244w

Valuation & community charge tribunals
478-9w

Value Added Tax (Confectionery) Order 1988
Debates etc.
(28:03:88) 732

Vanguard submarines
Navigational aids 136w

Vanunu, Mordechai
Israel 242w, 630w

VAT
Books 13-4
Church buildings 1273
EC internal trade 358w
Passenger ships 125-6w
Republic of Ireland 227w
Tax yields 228w
Veterinary services 227w

VAT exempted goods
93w

VAT zero rated goods
93w, 195-6w

Vaz, Mr Keith
Questions
Examinations, Ethnic minorities 395w
Fiji, Official visits 393w
Frigates, Navy 104w
Leicester Prison, Prison overcrowding 491w
Youth training scheme, Bridging allowances 420w

Ventilation
Research 208-9w

Verification Technology Information Centre
Arms control negotiations 242w

VERTIC
see Verification Technology Information Centre

Veterinary services
VAT 227w

Victoria Place link
266-7w

Video recordings
Prosecutions 277w

Video Recordings Act 1984
Questions
277w

Vietnamese refugees
Repatriation 631-2w
Resettlement 632w

Visas
Immigration controls 389-91w

Visiting Arts
573-4w

Visual arts
Alcoholic drinks 444w
Exhibitions 444w

Voluntary organisations
Battered wives 239-40w
Social security reform 341w
Surplus land 655w

Voluntary restraint agreements
480-1w

Voluntary unemployment
(22:03:88) 306-31

Wages (Northern Ireland) Order
Questions
219w

Waite, Terry
Hostages 1276

***Wakeham, Rt Hon John**, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons*
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 113-4
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1037-40, 1048
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 669-73
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1102, 1103
Questions
Access to Parliament, House of Commons catering 296-7w
Aerosols, Palace of Westminster 18, 20
Business statements 511-29, 1277-86
House Magazine, Palace of Westminster 599-600w
House Magazine, Portcullis 600w
House of Commons annunciator system 16-7
House of Commons annunciator system, House of Commons statements 16
House of Commons Standing Committees, Members 122w
Members' allowances 522w
Palace of Westminster, Parliamentary security 597-8w
Parliamentary press gallery 296w
Procedure Select Committee, Publishing 524-8w
Public Bills, Guillotine 598-600w
Select Committee evidence, Codes of practice 523w
Welsh language 17-8
Welsh language, Welsh Grand Committee 17

***Waldegrave, Mr William**, Minister for Housing and Planning*
Questions
Greenbelt, Town & country planning 190w
Guinness Trust, Upper waiting hall 471w
Homelessness, Government grants to local authorities 191-2w

Waldegrave, Mr William—continued
Hospitals, Norwich 308w
Hospitals, Planning inquiries 307-8w
Housing insulation, Carcinogens 366-7w
Housing stock, Building repairs 121-2w
Outdoor advertising, Business premises 479w
Planning appeals, Suffolk 304w
Planning permission, Animal husbandry 190-1w
Property development, Howbury Park 190w
Stockbridge Village Trust, Housing improvement 479w

Walden, Mr George
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 451

Waldheim, Kurt
Nazi war crimes 1068-9

Wales
Age Concern 341w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279-80w
Agricultural land 51-2w
Agriculture 51w
AIDS 1-2, 29w
Arson 5-6
Breast cancer 282w
Bricks 280w
Children in care 229-30w
Coal mining 2-3
Community charge 281-2w, 392-4w
Council house rents 280w
Council housing 28w
Craft industries 6-7
District health authorities 15
EC grants & loans 200w
Education & industry 29-30w
Educational maintenance allowance 575w
Electricity supply industry 281w
Electronics industry 2-3
Employment level 27-8w
Employment schemes 280w
Export promotion 282w, 576w
Factory closures 392w
Foreign investment in UK 26w, 577-8w
Forestry grants 52w, 576w
General Certificate of Secondary Education 9-10
Health 26w
Health service staff 12
Home care services 281w
Hospital beds 581-2w
Hospital waiting lists 7-8
Hotels 52w
House condition survey 576w
House renovation grants 4, 30w
Housing insulation 31w
Incontinence 30w
Inner city areas 575-6w
Kidney patients 29w
Local government services 576-7w
Local government staff 281w
Low flying 6-7w
Manufacturing industries 578w
Maternity services 26w
Mink 200w, 583w
Myalgic encephalomyelitis 30w
NHS finance 8, 10-1, 15
Nurses 579-81w
Opera 6
Optical charges 11
Perinatal mortality 26w
Postal services 280w
Private health services 280w
Rates & rating 11-2
Science & technology research 3
Sheep 228-30w
Sheep meat 5, 29w
Social security reform 31w
Tourist industry 27w
Unemployment 3-4, 15-6, 27-8w
Youth training scheme 280w

Wales Tourist Board

Wales Tourist Board—continued
9
Hotels 200w
Official engagements 5
Publicity 8-9

Walker, Mr Bill
Debates etc.
Community charge, Scotland (28:03:88) 731
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 836-40
Education Reform Bill, Rep (22:03:88) 287, 293-4
Ford Motor Company (23:03:88) 359
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 927, 932, 940-1, 943, 945, 947, 980-1, 995
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 908
Questions
Crime prevention panels, Scotland 144w
European fighter aircraft 105w
Guinness, Company investigations 356w
Historic buildings, Scotland 202w
Industrial relations law 872
Local authorities in Scotland, Cash limits 507w
NHS, Scotland 343
Police authorities, Scotland 646w
Tornado aircraft 190
Transport & General Workers' Union, Community charge 348

Walker, Mr A Cecil
Debates etc.
Recess motions, Easter (25:03:88) 642-4
Questions
Housing Bill 1987/88, Northern Ireland 223w
Maghaberry Prison, Operating costs 438w

Walker, Rt Hon Peter, Secretary of State for Wales
Questions
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Farmers 279w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Income 279w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Manpower 279-80w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Wales 280w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service, Welsh language 279w
Agricultural land, Land values 51-2w
Agricultural land, Wales 51w
Agriculture, Income 51w
Blind, Pontypridd 7
Bricks, Manpower 280w
Coal mining, Wales 2-3
Connah's Quay power station 3
Consultants, Welsh Office 391w, 579w
Craft industries, Wales 6-7
Departmental publications, Welsh Office 29w
EC grants & loans, Gwynedd 128-30w
EC grants & loans, Wales 200w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 281w
Employment, Mid Glamorgan 127-8w
Ethnic monitoring, Welsh Office 197w
Export promotion, Wales 282w, 576w
Factory closures, Wales 392w
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 26w, 577-8w
Forestry grants, Wales 52w, 576w
Health service staff, Wales 12
House renovation grants, Wales 4
Housing, South Wales 4-5
Inner city areas, Expenditure 575-6w
Local government services, Competition 576-7w
Manufacturing industries, Wales 578w
Mink, Wales 200w, 583w
National Museum of Wales, Finance 196-7w
Postal services, Wales 280w
Rates & rating, Wales 11-2

Walker, Rt Hon Peter—continued
Science & technology research, Wales 3
Sheep, Radioactivity 228-30w
Sheep meat, Radioactivity 29w
Unemployment 4
Unemployment, Clwyd 15-6
Unemployment, Newport 28w
Unemployment, Wales 3, 27-8w
Unemployment, West Glamorgan 4
Welsh Office, Public relations 576w

Wall, Mr Pat
Questions
Conventional weapons, Military balance 113w
Employers' statutory sick pay scheme, Unemployment benefits 452w
Employment training 414-5w

Wallace, Colin
49-50w

Wallace, Mr James
Debates etc.
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1051-2
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 981-4, 1001
Merchant Shipping Bill (HL), Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1206, 1239, 1242-6
Postal rates, Highlands of Scotland (23:03:88) 485-8
Questions
Business statements 1279-80
Chemical weapons, Arms control negotiations 1070-1
"Curriculum & Assessment in Scotland Consultation Paper" 141w
Defence procurement 107w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 572w
Exceptional needs payments, Social security recipients 151w
Green pound 637w, 1266
Radioactive wastes, Dounreay 21w
Rate rebates, Shetland Islands Council 148-9w
Roll-on roll-off ships, Shipping safety 557w
Scottish Special Housing Association, Shetland 201w
Terrorism, Northern Ireland 78-9w
Uranium, South Africa 290w

Waller, Mr Gary
Questions
Cherished number plates, Indictable offences 129w
Defence contracts, Small businesses 109w
Motor vehicle registration, Indictable offences 130w
Perinatal mortality, Airedale Health Authority 247-8w
Public libraries, Business 349w
Tourist industry, Bradford 282w

Walley, Ms Joan
Debates etc.
Educational standards, Public petitions (23:03:88) 484
Questions
Entry clearances, Administrative delays 132w
Falkland Islands, Military exercises 110w
Insulation grants, Stoke-on-Trent 1w
Lead free petrol, Cars 57-8w
Redundancy, Employment discrimination 162w
River pollution, Agricultural products 635w
Water supply, Water pollution 710-1w

Walters, Mr Dennis
Questions
Middle East, Peace negotiations 511w
Palestine, Israel 1074

Ward, Mr John
Questions
Magistrates' courts, Disclosure of information 67w

Wardell, Mr Gareth
Questions
Antisubmarine warfare, Navy 108w
Factory closures, Wales 392w
Foreign investment in UK, Wales 577-8w
Manufacturing industries, Wales 578w
Rates & rating, Wales 11-2
Regional aid 875
Skillcentres 419-20w

Wareing, Mr Robert N
Questions
Artillery, BAOR 111w
Benzodiazepines, Council for Involuntary Tranquilliser Addiction 659w
Benzodiazepines, Drug hazards 659-60w
Benzodiazepines, Prescriptions 660w
Cancer, Screening 213w
Cervical cancer, Screening 213w
Employment training 255w
Forestry, Government grants 639w
Labour mobility, Northern Ireland 226w
Manufactured goods, Market share 355w
Official engagements 374w, 572-3w
Theatres, Liverpool 720-1

Warren, Mr Kenneth
Debates etc.
Rover Group (29:03:88) 888-9
Questions
EC internal trade, VAT 358w
Unemployment, East Sussex 876
VAT, Passenger ships 125-6w

Warrington & Runcorn Development Corporation
Factories 297-8w, 721w

Warsaw Pact
463w
Military balance 518-9w
NATO 518-9w
Nuclear free zones 520w

Warships
Navy 184-6

Waste disposal
Channel tunnel 61w
English Channel 4w, 14w
France 4w, 14w
Ministry of Defence 236w
Spoil heaps 308w

Water authorities
Mailing lists 310w
Sewage 716w

Water charges
Publicity 302w

Water distribution
710w

Water meters
Codes of practice 301-2w
Water supply 301w

Water pollution
Chemicals 710w
EC law 303w
Fish farming 1259
Houghton 303w
Nitrates 1w
Northern Ireland 240-1w
Planning permission 240-1w
Water supply 710-1w

Water supply
Cameroon 5w
Chile 5w

Water supply—continued
Malaysia 4-5w, 19-20w, 468w
Water meters 301w
Water pollution 710-1w

Water supply disconnections
302-3w

Watts, Mr John
Questions
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, NATO 517w
Electricity area boards, Official engagements 292w
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 712
Public companies, Company accounts 233w
South Africa, Economic sanctions 1078
"Tendering for Government Contracts" 433w

Ways & means resolutions
Budget, March 1988 (21:03:88) 115-58

Weapons
Military balance 463w

Wells, Mr Bowen
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 422
Questions
Business statements 518
Electricity supply industry, Privatisation 715
Nicaragua 1068
Overseas trade, Bananas 629w

Welsh, Mr Andrew
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 850
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 923, 925-6, 934, 945-6, 987, 1023-8
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep & 3R (30:03:88) 1118-20, 1123, 1126, 1159
Questions
Local government staff, Scotland 345
NHS finance, Scotland 143-4w

Welsh, Mr Michael
Questions
Heating, Smoke control areas 713

Welsh Grand Committee
Welsh language 17

Welsh language
17-8, 28w
Agricultural Development & Advisory Service 279w
Primary education 197-200w
Secondary education 527w
Teacher training 527w
Welsh Grand Committee 17

Welsh National Opera
6

Welsh Office
6-7
Consultants 391w, 579w
Departmental publications 29w
Ethnic monitoring 197w
Public relations 576w

Wessex helicopters
467w

West Cumbria
Employment 869

West Germany
Manufactured goods 586w
Telecommunications industry 374-6w

West Glamorgan
Unemployment 4

West Glamorgan County Council
11-2

West Midlands
Air pollution 717w
Hospital closures 246w

West Midlands—continued
Unemployment 419w

Western Isles Health Board
Contracts for services 146-7w

Westminster Children's Hospital
334-5w

Westminster City Council
Cemeteries 713w

Westminster Hospital
334-5w

Wheeler, Mr John
Questions
Broadcasting, Ownership 232w
Coinage, Design 123w
"Interception of Communications" 373w
Metropolitan Police, Manpower 67w
Visas, Immigration controls 389-91w

White fish
North Sea 313w

White Hart Training Centre
Cost per student 84w

Whiteabbey Hospital
219w

Whitney, Mr Ray
Debates etc.
Calling of Members, Northern Ireland (21:03:88) 39
Questions
Defence research 107w

Whooping cough
Vaccination 244w

Widdecombe, Miss Ann
Questions
Engineering education, Higher education 395w
NHS, Compensation 662w
Territorial Army, Armed forces strength 105w

Widows' benefits
Armed forces pensions 111w

Wigley, Mr Dafydd
Debates etc.
Budget, March 1988, Economic situation (21:03:88) 72, 96-9
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1038
Questions
Agriculture, Official engagements 639w
Community Care Review 441w
Foreign tourists 529w
Forestry grants, Wales 576w
Maternal mortality, Anaesthetics 245w
Mental health community care, Finance 657-8w
Mentally handicapped, Mental health community care 549-50w
National income 497w
National income, Per capita costs 18w
Nurses, Complaints 657w
Nurses, Geriatrics 455-6w
Nurses' training, Mental handicap 160w
Official engagements 54w, 173-4w, 374w, 572-3w
Prisoners of war, Japan 6w
Taxation, Defence expenditure 98-100w
Wales Tourist Board, Official engagements 5
Welsh language, Primary education 197-200w

Wild animals
Police firearms 681w

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
Questions
476w

Wilkinson, Mr John
Questions
Ethiopia, Human rights 11w
Ethiopia, UN Commission on Human Rights 11w

Wilkinson, Mr John—continued
Kampuchea 1070
London airports, Air traffic control 557w
Military aircraft 190-1
Republic of Ireland, IRA 497
Submarines, USSR 105w

Williams, Rt Hon Alan
Questions
Earned income 284w
Export promotion, Wales 282w, 576w
Income tax, Tax rates & bands 608-9w
NHS finance, Wales 8
Tax yields, VAT 228w
Unemployment, Wales 3
Welsh Office, Public relations 576w

Williams, Mr Alan W
Questions
AIDS, Wales 2
Ministry of Defence police, Codes of practice 464w
NATO Nuclear Planning Group 109w
Nitrates, Fertilisers 1264
Social security reform, Wales 31w
Water pollution, EC law 303w

Wilshire, Mr David
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1091
Questions
Dock labour scheme, Scotland 675-8w

Wilson, Mr Brian
Debates etc.
Community Charges (Registration) (Scotland) Regulations 1988 (28:03:88) 836, 841-4, 853, 857
House of Commons broadcasting (29:03:88) 1045, 1046, 1050-2
Housing (Scotland) Bill, Rep (29:03:88) 1002
School Boards (Scotland) Bill, Points of order (30:03:88) 1105-6
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 913-4
Questions
Agricultural Inspectorate, Manpower 419w
Business statements 526-7
Defence contracts, Small businesses 182
Health, Scotland 355
Hospital beds, Scotland 144w

Wiltshire shooting centre
Gun sports 694w
Ryan, Michael 690w, 692-3w

Wind power
292w

Winnick, Mr David
Debates etc.
Education Reform Bill, Rep (23:03:88) 404, 418
Housing Benefit Regulations (23:03:88) 477, 479
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 313, 326
Questions
Business statements 518, 1285
Health insurance, Elderly 571w
Hospital closures, West Midlands 246w
Hospital waiting lists, Ear disorders 246w

Winnick, Mr David—continued
Hospital waiting lists, Eye disorders 246-7w
South Africa, African National Congress 1077

Winterton, Mrs Ann
Questions
Crewe Health Authority, Manpower 37-8w

Winterton, Mr Nicholas
Questions
Surgery, Regional health authorities 544-6w

Wise, Mrs Audrey
Debates etc.
Income support scheme (22:03:88) 319, 328
Questions
Cruise missiles 108w

Withybush Hospital
11

Wolfson College
Health & Safety Executive 425-6w

Women
Crime prevention 492-3w
Judges 19w
Magistrates 19w

Wood, Mr Timothy
Questions
Dock labour scheme, Grimsby 675-6w
Japan, EC external relations 512w

Woodland grant scheme
640-1w, 644w
Scotland 137-9w

Woolwich ferry
Industrial disputes 131w, 266w
Road signs 355w

Working hours
Child workers 84-5w
Prison employment 679-80w

World Wildlife Fund
Salmon 639w

Worthing Health Authority
Family doctors 214-5w

Worthington, Mr Tony
Debates etc.
Prison overcrowding (30:03:88) 1096
Urban areas, Scotland (29:03:88) 911
Questions
Business statements 1286
Nursery schools, Scotland 355-6
Prisoners, Scotland 647-8w

Wray, Mr Jimmy
Questions
Coal, South Africa 294w
Drinking & driving, Death 77-8w
Early warning systems, Employment opportunities 412w
South Africa, Angola 512w
Torry research station, Agricultural research 634w

Yeo, Mr Tim
Questions
Employment, Suffolk 413w
Security, Northern Ireland 221w
Territorial Army, Armed forces strength 105w

York City Council Bill (HL) 1985/86
Debates etc.
2R order read (24:03:88) 493, (30:03:88) 1065

Yorkshire & Humberside
Company registration 22-3w
Unemployment 417w

Yorkshire Regional Health Authority
247-8w
District health authorities 450w

Young, Mr David
Questions
Mines, Navy 105w

Young, Sir George
Questions
Community charge 190w
Guinness Trust, Upper waiting hall 471w
USSR, Human rights 516-7w

Young offenders
230-1w, 273-4w
Custodial treatment 274w
EC countries 275w
Ethnic groups 273-4w
Habitual offenders 231w, 273-4w
Life imprisonment 219w
Northern Ireland 219w
OECD countries 275w
Parent & child 183w

Young people
183w
Pay 219w
Training 871, 879

Youth employment
Rotherham 429w
Sex discrimination 429w

Youth training scheme
69w, 421-2w
Bridging allowances 420w
Deaf 11w
Dundee 205w, 255w
Educational qualifications 421w
Job substitution rates 421w
Lewisham 284w
Occupations 531-2w
Part-time education 12w
Social security benefits reductions 205w
Southwark 871
Take-up of employment 420-1w, 673w
Travelling expenses 420-1w
Unemployment 879
Wales 280w

Youth unemployment
418w, 531-2w
Further education 69-70w